

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 1880

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.*Thursday, 9 September, 1880.*

Formal Business.—Railway and Tramway Extensions Bill—third reading.—Census Bill—third reading.—Question.—Proposed Line to Beaudesert.—Gladstone and Gracemere Surveyed Line.—Legislative Assembly Act of 1867—Closed Roads on Darling Downs.—Petition of Edward Malone.—Manufacture of Colonial Wine.—*Hansard*.—The "Scottish Hero."—Allora Post and Telegraph Office.—The Premier's Visit to England.—Progress of Business.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

FORMAL BUSINESS.

On the motion of Mr. GROOM, it was resolved—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the propriety of introducing a Bill to protect the Wages of Workmen employed on Railway and other Public Works.

On the motion of Mr. GROOM, it was resolved—

1. That the Bill to enable the Trustees of an allotment of Land in the Town of Toowoomba, granted for the purpose of the erection thereon of a Church in connection with the German Lutheran Church, to sell the same and apply the proceeds to the building of a Church and Parsonage in a more convenient situation, be referred for the consideration and report of a Select Committee.

2. That such Committee have power to send for persons and papers, and to sit during any adjournment of the House; and that it consist of Mr. Davenport, Mr. Thompson, Mr. Horwitz, Mr. Feez, Mr. Rutledge, Mr. Amhurst, and the Mover.

RAILWAY AND TRAMWAY EXTENSIONS BILL—THIRD READING.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Macrossan), this Bill was read a third time, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council with the usual message.

CENSUS BILL—THIRD READING.

On the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Palmer), this Bill was read a third time, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council with the usual message.

QUESTION.

Mr. DAVENPORT asked the Colonial Treasurer—

That in view of the large amount of funds now held by the Government, what step is the Colonial Treasurer taking towards apportioning any of the surplus funds amongst the monetary institutions of the colony at interest?

The PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith) replied—

Steps are being taken to secure for the Government the best terms for deposits. With that object the various institutions have been asked to tender rates and time.

PROPOSED LINE TO BEAUDESERT.

Mr. PERSSE moved—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider of an Address to the Administrator of the Government, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be

placed on the next Loan Estimate a sum of money to construct a line from some point between Brisbane and Goodna to Beaudesert. And, also, that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed on the Supplementary Estimates a sum sufficient for the immediate survey of the said line.

In speaking to the motion standing in his name, he would endeavour to point out to the House, and as clearly as he possibly could, the claims this portion of his electorate had for a railway, and to do so he should endeavour to show the many advantages that this district possessed over some others that had already been granted or promised a railway. In the first place, he wished to state that this portion of his electorate was one of the oldest, if not the oldest, settled district in the colony of Queensland. As far back as 1848 it was on record as being then established as a wheat district, for at that time it was well known to have grown some of the finest wheat that had ever been grown in Queensland. He referred to 1848 because he remembered that when the "Sovereign" was lost there was on board several bales of wool from the Logan, and at that time wheat was being brought down to the people of Brisbane. He would also endeavour to prove that this district was largely settled by as good a farming population as any other portion of Queensland, and that they raised a greater amount of produce in proportion to the number of the inhabitants than was raised in any other district. The week before last Mr. McLean brought forward a motion for a railway for the lower part of the Logan. This motion of his was totally different from that, as it was for the upper portion of the Logan district, which did not possess the advantage which it was known that Mr. McLean's portion had—that was, water communication. It was in order that this rich agricultural district might be brought into communication with capital that he asked for a line of railway. There were settled in this district between 5,000 and 6,000 inhabitants, and the amount of cultivation, with their proportion to the rest of the colony, was extremely large. The country was well watered and rich in the best of land, good timber, large coalfields, and minerals of different sorts. The district, with all these advantages, had been granted less facilities for competing with other districts than had been granted to any other portion of Queensland. People residing on the Darling Downs and elsewhere could bring their produce to market at a cheaper rate than could the people only 40 or 45 miles from Brisbane. At present it would cost the people in the Logan district to get their produce to market from £3 10s. to £4 per ton, whereas on the Southern and Western line they could get it to market for from 3s. to 4s. per ton for the same distance. Why this district should have been so much ignored was a mystery to him. When the branch lines were before the House last session he was very much disappointed to find that this Logan line was not put on the Estimates. The only reason by which he could account for it not being there was that another branch line had been granted to him, and that the Premier considered that two branch lines to one member would be too much. Unfortunately, he was differently situated to most members, by representing an electorate in which there were two watersheds of totally distinct natures, one having no connection with the other; and he felt perfectly certain that if the Premier could have had the matter before him again, with the additional information he (Mr. Persse) could give him, the Logan line would have been placed on the Estimates. He trusted that when the Premier heard what would be said by himself and others in favour of this motion, he would endeavour to have a sum of money placed on the

1880—2s

Estimates to enable this to be one of the first lines constructed. He (Mr. Persse) fully expected last year that some steps would have been taken by the Minister for Works to have a survey made for a railway from some point on the Southern and Western Railway between Brisbane and Goodna to Beaudesert, by which he might have been enabled to speak more fully and explicitly with regard to what the absolute cost of the railway would be. However, from all he could learn, and from the reports of engineers, he believed the line could be constructed as cheaply as, if not cheaper, than any of the other branch lines. There were no engineering difficulties to be overcome, no ranges to be got over, and only the Logan River to be crossed; and, as it would have to be crossed high up, the expenditure for a bridge over it would be very little. As he had said before, the natural advantages of this district were very great. The land there was second to none in the colony, and it was well watered in all seasons. They had there good country which had never suffered as severely from drought as the land on the Darling Downs, which was supposed to be the garden of Queensland. There had been some 908,000 acres of land alienated by the Crown to different people in the district, to men of the very best class—*bona fide* farmers—and year by year this district increased in settlement. Even in the hard times they had seen lately he could show that land had steadily been taken up in the Logan district, and last month, after the long time they had suffered from depression, over 5,000 acres of land were selected in the neighbourhood. That spoke volumes. He felt confident that if the railway was constructed the amount of land that would be taken up there would be increased year by year. There were at present half-a-million acres of land unalienated by the Crown. There were over half-a-million of acres of land belonging to the Crown, and this land was situated principally at the heads of the Logan and Albert rivers. On Maroon Run, at the principal head of the Logan, there were over 100 square miles; and at Tamrookum Run, adjoining, there were something like 77 square miles. At Telamon Run, also adjoining these, there were 60 square miles. All this was Government land which, if a railway was made to the Upper Logan, would be taken up by people, as it was land of the very best nature, principally scrub land containing the most valuable timbers in the colony—cedar, beech, pine, tulip, yellow-wood, and other woods, which at present could not be brought down owing to the distance they were from water carriage. After all this valuable timber was taken off these lands they would be put under crop at once. He would ask hon. members what Rosewood was before the railway passed through it? What had made the Rosewood was simply the advantages accruing from the construction of the railway; and he hoped it would not be many years before, in the Upper Logan, they saw His Excellency coming up and saying, as he did at Rosewood, that he could not believe so many people would be settled in so small a place. On the Upper Logan they had advantages equally good and people willing to settle, but the district had not gone ahead because the people were debarred from sending their produce to market, on account of the long distance and unsatisfactory means of communication. As he had said, there were there between 5,000 and 6,000 people, mostly the sort of people who made the very bone and sinews of any country, and they would cultivate treble the amount of land if they could get their produce to market. It would be cheaper and better for the State to construct a railway of an inexpensive character

than to go on everlastingly patching up roads year after year. He was certain that the Minister for Works would consider all the advantages he had pointed out, and that when he had done so he would have no opposition to the construction of this line. He heard the hon. gentleman pointing out, the other night, the amount of good that would be done by the mail contract, because amongst other things it would open up all the magnificent lands at the back of Cardwell, which would then become settled by people. The hon. gentleman said that at the back of Cardwell there were lands equal to the Darling Downs, and perhaps better watered. He (Mr. Persse) contended that at the Upper Logan they had plenty of land of that description, and they had, in addition, what there was not at the back of Cardwell—namely, population. Unless this line was constructed these people would not be able to compete with others who were even farther away from Brisbane. It seemed a very strange thing, seeing the amount of bad land around Brisbane and with such magnificent land as they had, that the railway had not been constructed long ago. It would be the means of bringing money into the State, and it would be one that would pay well. It had been said that the reason railways did not pay was because there was not enough produce in proportion to the people; but he could say that in his district they had both produce and population, and that this line, if constructed, would be a feeder of the trunk lines. They, in fact, wanted more branch lines. He would be one who would support the Premier if he were to go in for a loan of five millions in order to increase the trunk lines and make more branch lines. The State was well able to afford it, and would be able to bear a much heavier burden than it had at present. They should go in for a greater debt, construct more railways, and enable this and other districts which were deficient in water carriage in every way to bring out their many resources. He trusted with the few remarks which he had made, and that hon. gentlemen who supported him would make, that the Government would not be opposed to the motion.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member for Fassifern, in bringing this motion forward, had certainly said a great deal in favour of it, and he was not going to contradict him. He believed the Upper Logan was what the hon. gentleman had described it to be—a very rich country, and a country that had never had an opportunity of bringing its produce to market through the absence of water carriage and bad roads; but he thought that no Government would be justified in giving its adherence to a motion of this sort, brought forward by a private member. It was purely the work of the Government to say where branch lines should be made or where they should not be made. They should take the responsibility; but before any sum could be placed on the Estimates to make this railway, or any other, the Government must first know what amount of money would be required. There was no survey of this line, and that was one of the indispensable preliminaries before constructing a railway. If the hon. gentleman had confined himself to asking for a survey he would very probably get it; and he (Mr. Macrossan) was quite willing, as far as he could, to find the means of making a survey to determine the practicability of making a railway in this direction and of reserving the lands along the line of route. That was a course that should always be adopted where there was a railway to be made. The land should be reserved along the line, so that the State should not be put to the expense, afterwards, of buying it back again at ten times its first cost. The hon. member for Fassifern had said that this line would pay, but

there had never been a railway advocated in the House the advocates of which did not maintain that it would pay; and they certainly had not found the railways to pay yet in the way that the hon. member stated. Directly, they did not pay; they might pay indirectly. Probably this one, if made, would be amongst the non-paying ones. The hon. gentleman should be satisfied with having ventilated, as far as he possibly could, this subject in favour of his constituents, and rest content with the promise he (Mr. Macrossan) made of having a survey made for the purpose of ascertaining the practicability of making a survey at some point between Brisbane and Goodna and Beaudesert, and the cost.

Mr. McLEAN said he knew pretty well the district that the hon. gentleman was advocating the interests of for the construction of a railway, and he could bear him out in all he had said, and a little more. If there had been facilities for bringing produce to market a very considerable extent of land in that direction would be now under cultivation. He knew of land that had been under cultivation which had been allowed to go down in grass in consequence of the excessive cost of bringing produce to the nearest point where it could be shipped; and he was confident that if railway facilities had been afforded to that district a much larger area would have been under cultivation than at the present time. He would point out to the Secretary for Public Works that a considerable portion of land through which, in all probability, this railway would run, was still Crown property. At present there was a survey from Oxley Creek to the Village of Logan which might be brought into connection with this line, and a very considerable portion of the survey ran through Crown lands. A great portion of the district through which the line advocated by the hon. member for Fassifern would go was Crown land at the present time. If the Minister for Works would take action at once in providing for a survey the Government would be able to reserve the land along the proposed line, and thereby materially reduce the cost of its construction. He would here remark that the hon. member for Stanley (Mr. O'Sullivan) misunderstood a remark made by himself and the hon. member for Enoggera during the debate on the Railway and Tramway Bill. That hon. member said they were under the impression that those branch lines would act as suckers to the main line. The very reverse was the fact, for their opinion was that instead of being suckers they would be feeders to the main line, and add very materially to the railway receipts. He hoped the Minister for Works would take action in the matter as quickly as possible, so that he might be enabled to form some estimate of the probable cost of the line from some point between Brisbane and Goodna to Beaudesert.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said the hon. member (Mr. McLean) had mistaken his remark. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) was replying to a statement of the Minister for Works that branch lines in England did not pay. His remark was that such lines were called suckers in England, but that in this colony it would be different, because they might start at the right end by making railways instead of macadamised roads. He congratulated the hon. member (Mr. Persse) on making out so good a case for his line; but, of course, as the Minister for Works had said, works of that kind must originate with the Government. The Logan was the first district in Queensland he lived in, and he knew every inch of the country in question, and could endorse the hon. member's remark that it contained as fine land as there was in the colony.

The higher up the Logan the line was taken the better. The hon. member ought to be content with the promise of the Minister for Works that the survey would be made. He, at any rate, was satisfied with it. Every member could not come down and expect a railway line. The hon. member (Mr. Persse) had already got one, and it seemed as if he wanted one at every watershed he represented. That was a work of time, and if the survey was carried out, and the land reserved along the line, a good beginning would have been made. No doubt, after the promise of the Minister for Works, the hon. member would be glad to withdraw his motion.

The Hon. J. DOUGLAS said he had been quite interested in the facts set forth by the hon. member (Mr. Persse); and it was just as well, perhaps, that attention should be directed to the merits of that district. At the same time, he was amused at the remark of the hon. member that he felt he was quite entitled to two branch lines on his own account, but the Premier had only seen fit to give him one last session. No doubt the hon. member would have a second branch line accorded to him some time or other for his great abilities, but he would have to remain satisfied with one for some little time longer. He was glad the Minister for Works had met the proposition in the way he had done, because it was quite certain that those questions must emanate from the Government if they were to have any substantial bottom in them. Motions of this kind would, of course, be courteously received by the Government, but nothing more could be expected. He did not understand the Government to exactly oppose the line proposed some time ago by the hon. member (Mr. McLean) for a railway to Beenleigh. The hon. member seemed to be well grounded as to the paying capacity of the line, for he told them that there were half-a-million acres of unalienated land in the district, and that the line would benefit 5,000 or 6,000 people. It had struck him that if such was the case, and if those people would put their shoulder to the wheel, it might be desirable that a portion of those magnificent unalienated scrubs, rich in timber and future possibilities of grand crops, should be diverted to the purpose of making the line. There would then be more immediate probability of the hon. gentleman securing what he so much desired, than if he left it to the Government. The Government had recognised the principle of making railways by land grants in the short line from Maryborough to Burrum, on which it would be premature to express an opinion until the Bill was before them. If that principle was to be recognised in one case, surely it might be applied to another; and if the facts were as the hon. member had stated—if there were 5,000 people who would be benefited by the line, and half-a-million acres of rich agricultural land unalienated in the district—there were two conditions which would justify the expectation that a payable line might be made. Here was an opportunity for the hon. member to distinguish himself. Amongst those 5,000 people there must be a proportion who would be willing to contribute towards the promotion of the line by subscribing part of the capital—knowing that their land would be benefited by it—with the probability of receiving a grant from the Government for the purpose of carrying it out. They would certainly be able to construct it much cheaper, and perhaps they would be able to show some experiments in engineering and the management of railways of which others were in ignorance. Here was the very case that was wanted to illustrate what might be done by judicious private enterprise, backed up by a grant of land. He hoped, therefore, that the principle would be further developed, and that

they would hear of the hon. gentleman having organised some private enterprise by which his railway would be carried out more speedily than it would be under the auspices of the Government.

Mr. PERSSE said he would willingly accept the promise of the Minister for Works. Having pointed out, as clearly as he possibly could, the claims of the district to a railway, he was glad to have satisfied the hon. gentleman's mind in certain respects. Although the form of the motion was an error, it was the only way in which he could have brought the matter forward, as he could form no estimate of the cost of the line. He thought the district would decline to construct the railway in the manner suggested by the hon. gentleman (Mr. Douglas). He failed to see why the Logan district should be fixed upon for an experiment of that kind. For his own part, he should be very sorry to take his money out of cattle and horses and put it into a business he knew nothing about. He might manage to make a little money out of his cattle and horses, but he would make a tremendous mess of it if he went into railway building. The system could better have been tried on the Maryborough and Gympie line, or the Bundaberg and Mount Perry line, where far less land was alienated. People who had bought land would not put their money into constructing a railway on the land-grant system. He was able now to point out the exact quantity of unalienated land in the district. It was as follows:—Melcombe and Palan, 67,200 acres; Telemon, 65,280; Tamrookam, 42,240; Beaudesert, 3,840; Mundoonbah, 12,800; Bromilton, 10,880; Mundoolan, 2,560; Undullah, 4,500; Jimboomba, 1,600; Tabragalba, 3,300; Woogaroo, towards Logan parish, 29,440; Tambourine and Wickham, 11,520; parishes of Cedar, Withurn and Roberts, 170,880: making a total of 425,740 acres. That land, if offered for sale, would be readily bought if a line of railway was to be constructed, and that alone would pay for the cost of construction. He was convinced that the line would pay if made on the cheap system recommended by Captain Galton—platforms instead of station buildings, and with as few officials as possible. That was the principle on which the Canadian lines had been constructed, and if it was applied to branch lines in Queensland they might be made to pay both directly and indirectly. A speed of seven or eight miles an hour would be quite enough to bring produce to town. On the assurance of the Minister for Works that the survey would be commenced as soon as practicable, he begged to withdraw the motion.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

GLADSTONE AND GRACEMERE SURVEYED LINE.

Mr. NORTON, in moving—

That in the opinion of the House it is desirable that all Crown Lands requisite for Railway purposes along the surveyed line from Gladstone to Gracemere be reserved from selection or sale—

said that some years ago, at the recommendation of the Colonial Secretary, who was then the member for Port Curtis, a sum was voted for the survey of a line from Rockhampton or Gracemere to Port Curtis. The survey had been carried out, and the surveyor's report showed that the only engineering difficulty in the way was the necessity of placing a bridge over the Calliope River. His present object was not to urge the construction of the line, but simply to name the lands that would be necessary for the purpose of being reserved in order that selection might be prevented. One selection he understood had already been taken up which

included part of the survey; and if that was to be continued, and the line was ultimately made, the land would have to be re-purchased at a much higher price than it was actually worth. A few evenings since the Minister for Works read a memorandum to the House showing the prices that had been paid for resumed land on the different railway lines; and that alone was a strong argument in favour of the reservation of all land along lines surveyed for railway purposes. The fact of a survey having been made showed that the line might be required at some time for a railway, and sufficient land for the purpose should be at once reserved. He did not think there would be any objection to the motion. On a former occasion he anticipated that it would be allowed to pass as a formal motion. The leader of the Opposition, who objected, had since explained to him that his only reason for doing so was that the House might be informed of the reason why the matter was brought forward. A branch line connecting Rockhampton and Gracemere was surveyed. His first idea was to include that in the motion, but upon inquiry he found that the whole of the land along the line was already purchased or reserved for some particular purpose. The line from Gracemere to Gladstone was seventy-five miles in length, only eighteen of which was purchased land. All the rest was Crown lands with the exception of the selection to which he had referred. That that land should be reserved for the purpose of making the line was the only object he had in bringing the motion forward.

Mr. WELD-BLUNDELL said he fully endorsed what had been said by the hon. member (Mr. Norton). It was most important that land along which it was probable a line of railway would ultimately be formed should be kept entirely free from selection. His own opinion about Gladstone was that it would ultimately become a large port. No matter how much money was expended on the Fitzroy, he did not think it could be made a navigable river, and a sufficient amount of money had been wasted upon it already. If it was ultimately found impossible to obtain water sufficiently deep at the mouth of the river, where large vessels could lay alongside the wharves and carry away the produce of the interior of the colony, it would become necessary to resort to the waters of Gladstone. The question was a most important one, and he was glad the hon. member had brought it forward.

Mr. ARCHER said it was not his intention to oppose the motion, but if the hon. member (Mr. Weld-Blundell) had had a little more Parliamentary experience, he would not have mixed up two questions at once on a matter of that kind. If there had been the slightest chance of opposition to the resolution, the speech of the hon. member (Mr. Weld-Blundell) would certainly have caused it to be opposed. He had not the slightest jealousy towards Gladstone, and was quite prepared to support the motion. Whether the Fitzroy was deepened or not, he believed that a railway from Rockhampton to Gladstone would be made eventually, and that when the proper time came there would be no opposition. Meantime, it was no use to mix up two different subjects together, and he should advise the hon. member (Mr. Weld-Blundell), if that hon. member ever had a motion of his own to get through the House, to confine himself to the subject of it. While dissenting from the remarks of the hon. member, he should support the motion, because he considered it a very desirable one.

Mr. GROOM said he thought the hon. member for Clermont was perfectly right. As an old member of the House, he could say that the

amount of money which had been spent from time to time in deepening the Brisbane and the Fitzroy rivers would have sufficed to make not only a railway from Gladstone to Rockhampton, but also one from Brisbane to deep-water. The Brisbane River had been a perfect sink of expenditure. Tens of thousands of pounds had been spent on it, year after year, during the last eighteen years to his knowledge, sometimes at the rate of £100,000 a-year. He remembered when Sir Robert Mackenzie went hob-nobbing about in the Bay, sounding here, there, and everywhere, the result of which was a recommendation for the further expenditure of £100,000. What practical good had resulted? At the present time the Brisbane River was as bad as ever it was.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

Mr. GROOM repeated that it was. Of what use was the Francis Channel? He heard that the "Kate" stuck in the mud near Cleveland the other day.

The PREMIER: Forty miles away!

Mr. GROOM said that even in the Francis Channel he had heard of steamers being stuck in the mud. The time had come, he thought, to stop such expenditure. Nothing that could be done would make either the Brisbane or the Fitzroy navigable, and the proper plan in each case was to take a railway to deep-water, wherever the termini might be. The opinion of many men of experience in the southern colonies was, that if any port on the Queensland coast would ever be able to rival Port Jackson it would be Gladstone; and in any case there could be no doubt that Gladstone was a place which would rise into importance. The hon. member for Clermont had taken a sensible and practical view of the matter. He (Mr. Groom) should be prepared when the Estimates came on for discussion to assist in striking out every vote for deepening those rivers, with a view to having the money expended in railways to deep-water, which would be the means of helping every industry in the colony. It was the duty of Government, as he had always contended, to reserve from sale or selection all land along a surveyed line of railway. Striking proof of the land jobbing carried on had been given by the Minister for Works in the course of the debate on the Railway Bill, and the hon. gentleman might even have gone further. He knew parties who had received £8,000 an acre for land in addition to the enormous advantages accruing to them from having a railway running near their properties. In the few simple words addressed to the House by the hon. member for Clermont the key-note to the solution of the whole question had been sounded.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he should support the resolution as it stood. He thought it was time that the House should deal with the question of attempting to deepen the Fitzroy River. The attempted deepening was a most dangerous experiment. Enormous sums of money had been thrown into that river, with the result of making it much shallower than it ever was before. It would have been much better if a railway had been made to deep-water in the first instance. The point to which the railway should be made appeared to be a vexed question, and he would offer no opinion. The reason why such a railway had not been made was not because the House would not have granted it, but because the representatives of Rockhampton were dead against it, thinking that the trade of Rockhampton would shift to the new township at deep-water. They could not see further than their noses. The same thing had been done in much more important places without any damage resulting to the main

city. They might as well say that Sandridge had damaged Melbourne instead of made it, as was the case. He did not know of any instance where a large city had been damaged through being connected by rail with a shipping port. No damage would have been done to Rockhampton, and a railway might have been made at a comparatively small expense. He was rather amused at the remarks of the hon. member for Toowoomba, who stated that he believed, and always did believe, that Brisbane should have been connected with deep-water, and that the large sums of money spent in deepening the river had been wasted. Yet that hon. member was one of those who voted for the construction of the dock at South Brisbane, whilst he (Mr. Morehead) always opposed it. Did the hon. member now propose that the dock should be taken down to deep-water? The money that had been wasted upon that perfectly useless work—undertaken for political purposes, and no other—would have gone a long way towards making a railway to deep-water. Now the hon. member got up and told the House that he always believed that there should be railway connection between Brisbane and deep-water. He (Mr. Morehead) believed so also, but the question was how was it to be obtained? In the meantime, the channel in the river should be kept clear and made available for sea-going vessels. Even the hon. member himself would find it difficult to point out how easy access to deep-water could be had. He had had the honour of sitting on a wharfage commission which dealt to some extent with this question, and he remembered that very great difficulties were raised as to which was the point of deep-water nearest to Brisbane.

Mr. ARCHER: The nearest available deep water is at Gladstone.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the question was one surrounded by difficulties, and required more serious consideration than it would receive from this House. The necessary inquiry would include the opinions of experts, and probably many years would be needed to make it complete. Holding those views, he considered that for the present the existing means of communication should be kept clear. The river could be deepened, and had been with great success. The result of attempted deepening in the Fitzroy had been, according to his information, exactly the opposite—navigation being now worse than it was many years ago. Mr. Nisbet said at the outset that the construction of training walls was an experiment which had been successful in some instances, but with regard to the success of which in this case he expressed grave doubts. His (Mr. Morehead's) own opinion was that if they went a little further and spent a few more tens of thousands of pounds they would turn what was a river into dry land and be able to run a railway along the original bed. But for the shortsightedness of the inhabitants of Rockhampton they might have had a railway down to Keppel Bay—a port, he believed, second to none on the Australian coast. He had heard over and over again from the captains of coasting and other vessels that the harbour was not second even to Gladstone. At the same time, he held with the resolution, believing that lands along a survey line should not be alienated. No better proof of that could be adduced than was contained in the statements made by the hon. member for Toowoomba and by the Minister for Works when they showed the enormous sums that had been paid for the resumption of land. The resolution, at all events, could do no possible harm and might do a great deal of good. That Gladstone would become a shipping port in the future there could be no doubt, and the construction of a branch line from Gracemere or

Westwood was not at all improbable. The land to be reserved was, he took it, of no very great intrinsic value; if sold, it would only realise a very small sum now, and might have to be repurchased at very great cost hereafter. He therefore cordially supported the resolution; and believed it would commend itself to the intelligence of every hon. member of the House.

Mr. FEEZ said he should support the resolution, believing that it was a wise plan to reserve lands through which railways had been surveyed. With regard to the arguments of the hon. member for Mitchell, the hon. member must for once stand corrected on many points. The hon. member spoke about a railway from Gracemere down to Gladstone; but if he knew that Gracemere was eighty miles distant from Gladstone, and that Gracemere was distant from Rockhampton only six miles, and from there the distance to deep-water was only fifteen miles, he would admit that the distance of twenty-one miles should be preferred to the distance of eighty miles. The hon. member for the Mitchell referred to the shortsightedness of the members for Rockhampton, and, in a greater measure, of the people themselves; but he was wrong there. When the question of deepening the Fitzroy River was before the House, an engineer from England was obtained to give an opinion; and the engineer gave it as his opinion that a certain depth, satisfactory to the whole country, could be obtained by his system of groins if he were provided with a powerful dredge as his work proceeded. That provision had never been carried out. Mr. Nisbet was a scientific man, and credence should be given to his statements that as soon as such a dredge was provided he would be able to make the river navigable for vessels drawing 15 or 16 feet of water. Hon. members had no right to deny the ability of Mr. Nisbet until his condition had been complied with. At present they had got 4 feet more water near the lightship, but it was impossible to keep the channel clear without a dredge. For that reason the work up to the present time had not been so successful. There were two points where deep water could be obtained. One was at Central Island, about 8 miles from Rockhampton by road, where at very small expense water to accommodate vessels drawing from 15 to 18 feet of water could be obtained; and the other was at Broadmount, where, after cutting the only obstruction of a slate rock bottom extending over about 20 feet, they could come alongside from Keppel Bay into the Fitzroy River to an anchorage of 25 feet, which was acknowledged to be equal to Port Curtis as a harbour. They would then have the great advantage of a deep-water wharf within a very short distance of a large population. He did not know much about the question of Brisbane. Apparently a difficulty had arisen in finding a good harbour outside. He did not think the argument of the hon. member for Mitchell about the shortsightedness and folly of the Rockhampton people had been sustained. There were good reasons for believing that the river could be made navigable for large vessels.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Mr. Perkins) said the innocent and harmless resolution of the hon. member was not likely to meet with opposition. If the hon. member had made a request to the Department, no doubt action would have been taken in the direction desired by him. It was quite unnecessary to go into a comparison between Rockhampton and Gladstone, or to speculate as to the probable result of the deepening of the Fitzroy. Gladstone was acknowledged to be the best port on the coast, but the chances of a railway going there were very remote; still, he had no doubt that the time would come when a railway would

be made. He believed that money was being justly and wisely expended in deepening the river approach to Rockhampton. The enterprise of the people of Rockhampton entitled them to all they were getting, and a great deal more. His opinion was that the people of Rockhampton were more enterprising than were the people in any other part of Queensland. The Government were willing to accede to the motion. There was every desire on their part to go in for economy, with a view to the extension of railways in every direction, and unquestionably it would be wise economy to reserve from alienation lands through which there was any likelihood of railways passing.

Mr. STEVENSON said his opinion with regard to the operations being carried on in the Fitzroy River was that they would be successful so far as that part of the river was concerned, but the question which arose in his mind was whether they were not shifting a sandbank from one part and lodging it further down the river. He should not think of advocating that Gladstone should be made the shipping outlet if the Fitzroy could be made navigable for large ships, or so long as they had deep water within fifteen or twenty miles of Rockhampton. It was perfectly absurd to talk of constructing a railway to Gladstone to take the traffic from Rockhampton, when a railway could be made from Rockhampton to Broadmount, where there was deep water, at a small cost. At some future time a railway might be required from Gracemere to Gladstone, and he had not the slightest objection to land being reserved for that purpose. He thoroughly believed in the principle of reserving land where there was a prospect of railways being made.

Mr. NORTON said that, in proposing his motion, he purposely avoided making any reference to the deepening of the Fitzroy River. The motion was one of such a simple nature that he thought it just as well to allow it to pass and be done with. Hon. members ought to know his views with regard to the deepening of the Fitzroy River, because, last year, he proposed that the works then in progress should be suspended. He got no support then, but he thought he might get some now.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: I supported you.

Mr. NORTON said that the hon. member said he supported him, but the hon. member said nothing about it at the time. As the hon. member for Mitchell had said, there were great difficulties in the way of getting to the deep water. There was only twelve feet of water at the mouth of the river, and, by driving millions of tons of sand down there, there was great danger of filling up the mouth. If the sand did not fill up the mouth or shoal it, it might form a bank in the bay, which would increase the difficulties in the way of the entrance of ships. He did not believe in the works for deepening the river, although he was not going to say a word against Mr. Nisbet. He had discussed the matter with Mr. Nisbet, and that gentleman had satisfied him that his theory was correct. Whether or not it would be practically successful he could not say, as he did not profess to know anything about the subject. He was convinced that Mr. Nisbet believed thoroughly that what he was doing would be effectual. He wished to take that opportunity to thank Mr. Nisbet for the courtesy he had shown him in explaining the object of the works. He was pleased to find that there was no opposition to the motion.

Question put and passed.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ACT OF 1867.

Mr. RUTLEDGE moved for leave to introduce a Bill to amend the Legislative Assembly Act of 1867 in certain particulars.

Question put and passed.

CLOSED ROADS ON DARLING DOWNS.

Mr. MILES moved,—That there be laid on the table of the House a return, showing—

1. All applications for the permanent closing of Roads within the District of Darling Downs, together with all correspondence thereon, from the 1st January, 1878, up to present date.

2. The names of all applicants for permission to close Roads permanently, together with the area contained in such roads, and the price paid per acre by each applicant.

3. Copies of all Reports on the closing of Roads, and by whom reported.

4. Copies of all Correspondence and Petitions objecting to the closing of Roads, if any.

5. Copies of all applications for permission to purchase Water Reserves during the same period.

He would explain that he had been frequently accused, both by the Colonial Secretary and the Minister for Lands, of having been guilty of malpractices in connection with the closing of roads; and he desired the returns asked for to show exactly what he had done. He dared say that the Colonial Secretary would admit that in charging him with having sold roads to himself he was in error. He was never Minister for Lands, and therefore could not sell roads to himself. What he had done was to adopt a course which was open to any other individual in regard to useless closed roads. He had done nothing but what he was entitled by law to do. The 65th section of the Crown Lands Alienation Act of 1876 said—

"It shall be lawful for the owner or owners of any purchased lands adjoining a road which is required for access to such lands only, and is not otherwise required for public use or convenience, to make application in writing to the Minister that such road may be closed either permanently or temporarily. On the receipt of such application the Minister shall cause notice thereof to be inserted in the *Gazette* and in such local newspapers (if any) as he may think advisable, and also conspicuously posted on the road to be closed and at the nearest land office, police office, and post office, for a period of not less than two nor more than six calendar months consecutively."

The 66th section said—

"At the expiration of such period the Governor in Council may approve of such application with or without modification. If the application is for the permanent closure of the road and is approved without modification, the Governor in Council may order the closure of the road upon payment of such price as he may think reasonable."

Now, he had complied with the Act in every way; but, notwithstanding, the charge was circulated at the last Darling Downs election that he had been guilty of a most grievous crime against the public in closing the roads.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: So you have!

Mr. MILES said that if he had he had acted in accordance with law. He presumed the hon. gentleman would not dispute that? The Minister for Lands, in attacking him, also said that he had closed his paddocks to the railway contractors. He denied the accuracy of that statement at the time; but he had since written to the contractors, and had received the following reply:—

"Contractor's Office, Graving Dock,
Brisbane, August 5, 1880.

"Wm. Miles, Esq., M.L.A., Brisbane.

"DEAR SIR,

"We beg to acknowledge receipt of your favour of the 20th ultimo, which has unavoidably been left unattended to until now, owing to the absence of our principals from Brisbane. In reply, we now have pleasure in stating that, from the commencement of our works at Dalry, we had permission from you to enter your paddocks for any purposes necessary for the carrying out of same, and throughout received every favour and consideration at your hands. The only thing which we now have to regret is that we may have taken

too great an advantage of your kindness, and consequently your property may have suffered more injury than was at first contemplated.

"We are, dear Sir,
"Yours very truly,
"J. and A. OVEREND and Co.,
"per J. W. Stack."

He took that to be sufficient answer to the charges of the Minister for Lands.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I should like to see the letter.

Mr. MILES said he had no objection. He was not in the habit of producing incorrect and falsified correspondence. The land in question was bought at auction, and he did not think it would be found that any great favour had been shown him. Whatever had been done was done legally. Moreover, the Minister for Lands had advocated the very thing he had done—namely, the closing of unnecessary roads. The land he had purchased was surveyed in small blocks, and portions of it were sometimes flooded to a depth of two feet. If the returns were furnished it would be found that he had applied for the closure of the roads in the usual way.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he did not intend to say much upon the subject of the motion. The hon. member said he had accused him, as Minister for Lands, of selling land to himself. He never did anything of the kind.

Mr. MILES: You are reported to have done so.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said *Hansard* made occasional mistakes, and the mistake between Minister for Works and Minister for Lands was in this case a very simple mistake. He knew perfectly well that the hon. member refused to be Minister for Lands because, to use his own words, he refused to do scavenger's work in the Government of which the hon. member for Maryborough was Premier. But the hon. member could get his work done through the office without being Minister for Lands; and he believed the hon. member had had it done. He would not retract one word of what he had said, which was that as Minister for Works the hon. member did obtain possession of the lands, and, he believed, in a very queer way. The circumstance of an ex-Minister of the Crown coming into the House with a certificate, not even from railway contractors, but from a clerk to railway contractors, that the hon. member conducted himself properly towards them did not say much for him. The letter read by the hon. member was not signed by Overend and Co., but by J. W. Stack. This was the first time in his experience that an ex-Minister of the Crown, in defence of his character, presented such a certificate as that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the Government would not oppose the motion. They did not object to produce the returns the hon. member desired. The hon. member now said that he had complied with the law, and cavilled at the charge that he had done certain things as Minister for Lands—whether Minister for Lands or Minister for Works did not, under the circumstances, matter very much. There was, at all events, something very suspicious about the hon. member's transaction. From the report of the Land Commissioner at Toowoomba, it appeared that the hon. member for Darling Downs, after having secured the roads and got them closed, applied to the Lands Department to have sold to him six water and camping reserves upon the Condamine River. The report was of a very ambiguous nature. The Commissioner stated that, the roads leading to the reserves having been closed, he saw no necessity for the reserves. He had not visited the locality;

but he was informed that great inconvenience had resulted from the closing of the roads, and that some timber-getters had been obliged to abandon their pursuit, on account of the long distances they were compelled to travel. He was perfectly acquainted with the circumstances under which the hon. member obtained the letter he had read to the House. It was not worth the paper upon which it was written. True, the hon. member had not obstructed the contractors directly; but he had obstructed the sub-contractors, or sleeper-carriers. The contractors, of course, did not care what the material cost the sub-contractors as long as they obtained it at a certain price. What would not be a crime on the part of another member of the House, he regarded as a crime upon the part of the hon. member for Darling Downs, because that hon. member was continually going about bleating and professing to have discovered fraud. In the west, the hon. member had interviewed people, telling them that the Douglas Ponds people had been cheated out of their water by this Ministry, and stories of that description he, on his return from his travels, published in a rag at Toowoomba, which the hon. member was said to be running for the good of the country—at whose expense he did not know. The hon. member had never had the manliness to come forward and retract these statements, some of which were intended to injure him personally. He did not blame the hon. member for doing some of the things he had done; he did not say that others would not do the same things. What he blamed the hon. member for was that, having got as much as he could for himself in the shape of roads, reserves, and water frontages, he turned round and bawled out that such proceedings were a positive crime on the part of other people. If the hon. member would only just make comparisons and look around him he would find that there was as great a desire to protect him as any member in that House or any person outside of it. Hon. members well knew what changes had been going on in the Lands Department, and how sudden those changes had been from time to time, and, therefore, it was not his (Mr. Perkins') intention to express an opinion on what the effect of those changes might have been. The hon. member himself knew that, owing to the sudden changes that had been made in the administration of the Lands Department, the most honest man in the country might be appointed to that office and be powerless to prevent frauds that had been carried on, and of which he knew nothing. He thought the less the hon. member called attention to this matter the better; however, he (Mr. Perkins) would be prepared to lay on the table the returns the hon. member seemed so anxious to get, and, if necessary, would be prepared to supplement them with a little more information.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he thought it would be nothing but fair that the papers moved for should be produced, and he considered it would have been much better on the part of the Minister for Lands to have deferred the remarks he had just made until after the papers were produced. With regard to the question of closing roads, the hon. Minister for Lands must be aware that no road could be closed until after such proposed closure had been duly advertised. He knew that during his tenure of office as Minister for Lands a large number of these cases came before him, and he made it his duty to carefully inquire into each case, and he presumed that what he did as a Minister was done by other Ministers also. He believed that closing a road was a matter in which a Minister for Lands should be particularly careful, and that he should see that a road was not closed until he had fully satisfied himself

that there was no objection to such closure. So far as this particular case was concerned, he had no recollection of having had anything to do with it, but he had had a great deal to do with other cases of a similar nature, and his experience had told him that a Minister for Lands must exercise extreme caution in dealing with such cases. With reference to the letter which had been read by the hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Miles), and which had been referred to by the hon. Colonial Secretary, the fact of its having been signed by a clerk in the employment of Messrs. Overend and Company was in itself nothing to justify the objection which had been taken to it by the hon. gentleman, as no doubt the confidential clerk to that firm had power to do that they would do themselves, and therefore a letter bearing his signature had as much weight as if signed by the firm personally. It was rather a small objection to make on the part of the hon. gentleman, especially as it might be reasonably presumed that the clerk in question was authorised by Messrs. Overend and Company to sign on their behalf. The Minister for Lands had referred to the motion of the hon. member for Darling Downs in rather an unpleasant way; and if he thought that that was the style he should adopt in making a Ministerial statement, it was a very great mistake on his part.

Mr. HORWITZ said he rose merely for the purpose of making a short explanation with regard to Mr. Stack, who had been referred to as the gentleman signing a letter read by the hon. member for Darling Downs. He wished to state that Mr. Stack was not only in the habit of signing letters on behalf of Messrs. Overend and Co., but also signed the cheques of that firm.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS thought it was a matter of very little interest to that House who Mr. Stack was—whether he was the confidential clerk of Messrs. Overend or not; but, as had been stated by the hon. Colonial Secretary, it was rather an undignified proceeding on the part of any hon. member of that House to bring forward a certificate signed by any firm as to what he had or had not done. The hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. Douglas) had referred to the duties of a Minister for Lands in regard to closing roads; but he (Mr. Macrossan) took exception to the remarks of the hon. gentleman in this respect, that he considered it was not the duty of any Minister for Lands to close a road which led either to water or to a camping reserve. If such a request was made by the humblest member of the House it should not be granted—much less to a member who had been a Minister of the Crown;—in fact, a Minister for Lands could not be too careful in closing any road, more especially one leading to a camping or water reserve.

Mr. KATES said he wished to draw attention to a reference made by the hon. Minister for Lands to what the hon. gentleman called a "rag," and he thought it would have been better for the country if the hon. gentleman had paid a little more attention to that "rag." It was not so long ago since a certain valuable piece of land on the Darling Downs was advertised for sale, but, owing to the hon. Minister for Lands wishing to gratify his spite against the proprietor of the *Toowoomba Chronicle*, no advertisement of the proposed sale appeared in that paper, but only in the *Darling Downs Gazette*. It appeared that two farmers in Toowoomba were anxiously waiting for the sale of this land; one—John Holmes by name—subscribed to the *Toowoomba Chronicle*, and the other—John McGhie—subscribed to the *Darling Downs Gazette*. McGhie, seeing the advertisement in the *Gazette*, quietly slipped down and secured the land, whilst John Holmes missed his chance

through not being a subscriber to that paper. He (Mr. Kates) met Holmes a few days afterwards, who told him that he had been prepared to give double the amount for the piece of land that had been paid for it had he known the date of the sale; and the consequence was that the country lost a hundred pounds or more by the action of the hon. Minister for Lands.

Mr. MILES said he should have taken no notice of the remarks of the Minister for Lands had the hon. gentleman not accused him of being connected with some rag of a paper—he presumed the hon. gentleman referred to the *Toowoomba Chronicle*. Now, he begged to state that he had no more to do with that paper than the hon. the Speaker had. He did not suppose that his denial or anything he said would have any effect upon the hon. Minister for Lands, who went about telling stories everywhere, and like an old fish-fag took very good care that no story, however bad, should lose anything by going through his hands. He did not believe that any Minister who had ever sat on the Treasury benches had conducted himself in the gross manner the hon. gentleman did, as all he did was to abuse and slander anyone who differed from him. All the hon. gentleman had stated that afternoon with regard to any action of himself (Mr. Miles) was utterly false, as the Minister for Lands at the time, and the Under Secretary also, took care that they had the fullest information before they consented to do anything. He thought it was unbecoming of the hon. Minister for Lands to utter gross falsehoods in that House. He did not believe it was any use taking notice of what the hon. gentleman said, because he was beyond redemption, and there was no hope of his showing any moderation in the statements he made. But he (Mr. Miles) was not alone the object of the hon. gentleman's abusive attacks; only a few nights ago the hon. member for South Brisbane (Mr. Fraser) was abused by him, because he had the effrontery to move for leave to introduce a Bill to regulate the sale of colonial wines. At the same time, there was not a member in the House who was so sensitive to any remark which he thought affected him. The hon. gentleman was constantly harping and harping on the point that he (Mr. Miles) had done this or that; but if the hon. gentleman would look at home a little bit he would not be so ready to make imputations against others, for there was not a member in that House who conducted himself in a more gross way than the hon. gentleman had done.

Mr. GROOM said it was indelicate for any member to introduce the private business of any other member to the House, and in all his public career he did not believe that he had ever done such a thing. He had endeavoured to separate a member's public position from his private business, because he did not think it right that the private business of any member should be referred to in the House. It was his mode of livelihood, and any injurious expression made regarding it would be read throughout the colony, and might do him much injury. He should only say, in reference to the remark of the Minister for Lands, that neither Mr. Miles nor anybody else had any control over the columns of the *Toowoomba Chronicle*, and that the editor was a gentleman by education, by mental culture and otherwise, and that he (Mr. Groom) had no control over him as editor. Everybody knew that a competent editor would not be subjected to control and that he would rather resign than be a kind of tool or write against his honest convictions. The gentleman to whom he referred was a student at one of the high schools of Scotland, and a graduate of Edinburgh University, and, as far as education was concerned, would

bear comparison with anyone inside the House or outside it. He conducted himself as a gentleman, and he (Mr. Groom) did not interfere with him in his editorial capacity, and would not do so as long as he did not commit the paper to any libels.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: He is doing it every day.

MR. GROOM said he was not. Plain, candid speaking was not libel. He should be very sorry indeed if the editor of the *Chronicle* uttered such libels as the hon. gentleman did, but the hon. gentleman took care that they were uttered where a court of law could not reach him; otherwise he (Mr. Groom) would have had the opportunity, last session, of proceeding against him in a court of law, and of vindicating his character there.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: You had the opportunity in the House. Why did you not use it?

MR. GROOM said that if the hon. gentleman would not continually harbour suspicions against certain hon. members—if he would only bring himself to believe that they had something else to think about than him—it would be better. After all was said and done, they were only mortal, and life was not so long that they could cherish animosities against each other. He wished that a change took place, and that members on both sides were more sociable. He did not know whether, as the Colonial Secretary interjected, the millennium would come, but, at any rate, there would be more courtesy. There was no necessity for continuing the bad feelings which existed; he had no desire to continue them, and he believed there was no need for them. Life was not so long that they could be carping at each other, and trying to stab each other behind the back. He desired to repeat that the columns of the *Toowoomba Chronicle* were not controlled by Mr. Miles or anybody else. He was not ashamed of the way in which it was conducted—it was conducted on commercial and strict literary principles. He would not have spoken if the hon. gentleman had not indicated that the member for Darling Downs was connected in some way with the *Chronicle*; that connection was a purely business one. What would be said if he told the secrets contained in the Trade Protection Lists, in connection with hon. members opposite? What would the public say if he got up and charged members opposite with being the mortgagors of a certain bank, or a certain money-lending institution? He would deserve to be howled down by members on either side. All commercial undertakings were obliged to get pecuniary assistance, but because that was the case was it to be brought up as a charge that a man was not independent, and that the paper which he owned was not independent? It was not fair, not candid, and not right to interfere with an hon. member's private business. He did not wish—and he was sure his colleague would bear out the statement—to continue any personal animosity in any shape or form with the Minister for Lands, because he believed it was injurious to the district which they jointly represented. Hon. members who sat on opposite sides might agree to differ in opinion, but there was no necessity for any antagonistic feeling to exist. The remarks of the hon. gentleman were calculated to injure what was the means of livelihood for himself and his family. Being spoken by a member of the Ministry his words were more likely to have weight outside, and to do injury to him and his family; and therefore he had risen to take notice of them.

MR. DICKSON said the bad feeling which existed was largely caused by Ministers them-

selves. He had been reading the language used on the 22nd July by the Colonial Secretary, with reference to the member for Darling Downs, and he found that the hon. gentleman then said—

“The allusion to land rings came with an exceedingly bad grace from the hon. member, for if ever there was a man in the colony who used his position as Minister of Lands to help himself to land it was that hon. member, who, while he was in that position, helped himself to the people's land, and shut up the roads that ran through it.”

Coming from a Minister of the Crown, these were very grave charges to make against his hon. friend, Mr. Miles. He must say that he deprecated such expressions being made by either side unless there was some basis for them. The language used in the House this session had been commented on by the Press as not being creditable to the members who had used it. The House had a right to expect moderation in language from Ministers, and that grave charges would not be rashly made by them, especially when they affected members who had filled responsible positions. He thought his hon. friend, Mr. Miles, was bound in justice to himself to make certain remarks in connection with these returns, because unjust suspicions would undoubtedly hang over him if the statement was uncontradicted that he, while in the position of a Minister of the Crown, helped himself to the people's land and shut up public roads. He was glad that his hon. friend had so completely refuted the Colonial Secretary's statement.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

MR. DICKSON said, to his mind and to those who would read the debate, the remarks of his hon. friend, taken in conjunction with the remarks of the Minister for Lands, showed that the Colonial Secretary's statement was entirely unfounded.

Question put and passed.

PETITION OF EDWARD MALONE.

MR. MILES moved—

1. That the Petition of Edward Malone, of Swan Creek, near Warwick, presented to the House on the 11th August, be referred for the consideration and report of a Select Committee.

2. That such Committee have power to send for persons and papers, and to sit during any adjournment of the House, and consist of the Minister for Works, Mr. O'Sullivan, Mr. Douglas, Mr. Bailey, and the Mover.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was most astonishing that the hon. member had not said something to induce the House to grant the inquiry. If he understood the circumstances of the case at all he should say something in support of the motion. As the hon. member had not done so he need not go through the whole case, but he could tell the House that the Works Department held a receipt from Malone, which was signed in full of all demands made by him upon the Works Department. Yet the hon. member brought forward the motion without saying a word in favour of it.

MR. GROOM said it was quite true that the Government held a receipt from Malone in full of all demands, but there was a counter statement which had to be considered. Speaking from information derived some time ago when he was requested by Malone to table a similar motion, he could state that Malone said that at the time he signed the paper he did not know what he was signing. Let that statement be taken for what it was worth. The man was not an educated man, and he said—and his word was worthy of credence—that he did not know what he was signing. The gentleman in charge of the Works Department at that time was the present hon. member for the Northern Downs, the Hon. G. Thorn.

The statement that Malone made to him (Mr. Groom) personally was, that he did not know at the time he signed the receipt what he was signing for. He had made inquiries in the Works Department, and received the same reply as that given by the Minister for Works, viz., that there was a receipt in the Works Office for all demands in full; but the man said he did not know what he was signing; and if a colonist was prepared to make a statement of that kind, what harm would there be in inquiring into the case? If the statement had no substantial grounds, and it could be proved that he knew what he was about, the committee could bring up a report accordingly; but if the statement was true—and very often people were induced to sign documents about which they knew nothing—then the person in question should have an opportunity of explaining the circumstances under which he signed the receipt. He knew all the circumstances connected with the breaking down of the fence, the rushing in of the cattle, and the destruction of the wheat crops. The whole question turned upon the receipt: did the man know what he was signing when he signed the receipt in full? His own statement was that he did not, but that he was misled in signing it. The man was a respectable colonist whose word could be taken, and there could be no harm in inquiring into the circumstances as far as the individual was concerned. He (Mr. Groom) would have had no objection to tabling a motion for an inquiry himself, if circumstances had not prevented his doing so; but the man was not in his electorate, and he thought it better for the hon. gentleman who represented him to take the case in hand.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes; nicely he has done it.

Mr. GROOM said that was not for him to say. He should not like to see Malone suffer an injustice just because the hon. member (Mr. Miles) had not stated all the facts of the case. He (Mr. Groom) knew the facts, and also knew that Malone was a man whose word could be taken. If the man's statement was true he had a just claim to be considered. If the committee reported that he had no claim at all, he was sure the House would endorse the report. There was no harm in granting a committee to see what the statement was worth. On those grounds he would support the motion; at the same time, the hon. gentleman in charge of it might have stated the facts of the case to the House. Perhaps the hon. gentleman had a reason for not doing so; but he (Mr. Groom) was acquainted with the facts, and thought it fair to state them as far as his knowledge went.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he was very much obliged to the hon. member for calling attention to the matter, and he should be glad to give his assistance in inquiring into the case if the circumstances were otherwise than they were; but in the face of the receipt in full being held by the Works Department, it was idle to set afloat an inquiry after two years had expired. A *prima facie* case ought to have been made out before the time of the House was taken up by those inquiries.

Mr. MILES said the facts of the case were just as stated by the hon. member for Toowoomba. Malone had suffered very severely through the action taken by the Government in opening a road through his cultivation. He was induced to sign some paper, and was afterwards told that such paper was a receipt in full for all the damage done. He stated that if he had the opportunity he would bring forward evidence to prove that what he had stated was a fact. The Government opened a road through the man's

cultivation, and he lost his whole crop through the neglect of the Government officers. It was a very hard case, and the man assured him that if he had the opportunity he would bring forward evidence which would show that he was entitled to compensation. He hoped there would be no opposition to the motion. With reference to what the Minister for Works said about consulting him about what belonged to his Department—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did not intimate in any way that the hon. gentleman should consult me: I never imagined it.

Mr. MILES said he was very glad to hear it. He did not want to go to Government offices at all, because people going there were apt to be insulted. What he had to say he would say in the House.

The PREMIER: Were you not in the Lands Office yesterday morning?

Mr. MILES said he was, but very much against his will. He was quite sure he had not been in the Works Office for the last six months: he had never been in the Treasury, and was not likely to go there; and he would swear he would never go to the Colonial Secretary's office. When his constituents asked him to move for papers he would do so; but when people went to interview Ministers on public matters they were very likely to be insulted.

Mr. KATES said he knew the man Malone, and had been informed that he signed the document thinking it was a receipt for a partial claim. There would be no harm in appointing a committee, and matters might be brought to light which would induce the committee to recommend that the claim be satisfied.

The HON. S. W. GRIFFITH said he should like to hear some better reason why there should be no inquiry. It was a very common thing for an ignorant man to sign a paper without knowing its contents. Any court of justice would laugh at the idea that such a document was not capable of explanation. There were plenty of receipts which a court of justice would consider as so much waste paper. A receipt given to a trustee, for instance, a court of justice would treat as nothing; and even a release under seal given to a trustee would be treated as nothing, unless it were proved to have been properly obtained. Surely a receipt given by an illiterate man was not so binding as to be beyond inquiry? He hoped the inquiry would not be refused, for it was not the practice of the House to refuse inquiry into grievances.

Question put.

The House divided:—

AYES, 16.

Messrs. Douglas, Dickson, McLean, Griffith, Fraser, Garrick, Persse, Kates, Miles, Thompson, Macfarlane, Davenport, Horwitz, Groom, Grimes, and Kingsford.

NOES, 21.

Messrs. Weld-Blundell, A. H. Palmer, McIlwraith, Macrossan, Perkins, Beor, Low, Scott, Archer, Peetz, Hamilton, Cooper, Swanwick, H. Palmer, Morehead, Lalor, Baynes, Stevenson, Amhurst, Stevens, and Norton.

Question, therefore, resolved in the negative.

MANUFACTURE OF COLONIAL WINE.

Mr. FRASER presented a Bill to encourage the manufacture of wine in Queensland, and to regulate the sale thereof; and moved that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for the 23rd instant.

HANSARD.

Mr. SCOTT—in moving

That the report of the Conference *re* daily *Hansard* be adopted by the House—

said it would be in the recollection of hon. members that about the beginning of the session some alteration was made in the issue of the daily *Hansard*. That alteration did not seem to give satisfaction to the members of the Assembly, and on the 13th July he (Mr. Scott) moved—

“That the publication of *Hansard* during the remainder of this Session be carried ‘out,’ so far as the debates of this House are concerned, as was done during last Session.”

That motion was carried. Subsequently, on the 15th July, the Legislative Council came to the following resolutions:—

“1. That the Presiding Chairman, Mr. Mein, and Mr. Buzacott be appointed to confer with the Honourable the Speaker and the members of the Printing Committee of the Legislative Assembly in reference to the issue of *Hansard*.

“2. That this resolution be forwarded to the Legislative Assembly by message in the usual form, requesting them to fix a time and place for such Conference.”

When those resolutions were brought down to the Assembly, it was resolved, on the motion of the Colonial Secretary—

“1. That this House approves of the proposal made by the Legislative Council, in their message of date the 15th July last, that certain Members of that House should confer with the Printing Committee of the Legislative Assembly in reference to the issue of *Hansard*; but leaves the time and place of meeting for mutual arrangement among the Members concerned.

“2. That the foregoing resolution be embodied in a message and transmitted to the Legislative Council.”

A meeting of the Printing Committee and of the members of the Legislative Council above-named took place, and a report was agreed to which had for some time been in the hands of hon. members. Mr. Senior, the Principal Short-hand Writer, was called before the Conference, and stated that it would be no additional trouble to issue *Hansard* in the form proposed; that, in fact, it would be better both for the reporters and for the printers. The Conference agreed

“That the *Hansard* be issued as a joint publication, the report of the Debates of the Legislative Assembly appearing first upon the sheet; with the understanding that the Debates in both Houses be reported as fully as they now are upon separate sheets.”

That was the principal part of the resolution, the adoption of which he now moved.

Mr. DOUGLAS said that no doubt the Conference thought the form proposed was the best that could be suggested under the circumstances. With regard to the clause of the report read by the hon. member, his own feeling was that on the principle of *seniores priores*, the Legislative Council's reports ought to stand first. It might be considered merely a matter of form, but he (Mr. Douglas) attached considerable value to forms; and as there were important occasions when the Legislative Council did rank first in the eyes of the public, it ought to take precedence in the pages of *Hansard*. It might seem a simple matter, but it would have been better if the Legislative Council had stood upon their rights—and forms were probably of more value there than here. If he had been in the Legislative Council at the time he should have been rather inclined to stick up for his rights even in a mere matter of form. On the other hand, he had been told that there would have been some difficulty in the publication of *Hansard* if it had not been so arranged—difficulties in the Printing department—which might have led to some delay in the issue of *Hansard* in the morning. The Conference doubtless thought that a sufficient reason for coming to the conclusion they did, and he could only accept the report as the recom-

mendation of men who had carefully considered the matter. He presumed, therefore, that they were justified in adopting it. He took this opportunity, however, of expressing his regret that even in a matter of form they should have departed from precedent in that way.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he regretted that the hon. member (Mr. Scott) did not give some information with regard to the other clauses of the report. With respect to the 1st clause he concurred in the observations of the hon. member for Maryborough. Considering that the report of the Legislative Council's proceedings would, in nine cases out of ten, be concluded before that of the proceedings in this Chamber, he saw no reason why it should not appear first on the sheet. With respect to the third recommendation, he thought the sale of *Hansard* should be encouraged as much as possible, and he could not see why the committee should propose to discourage occasional purchasers of *Hansard* by charging them double the price charged to ordinary subscribers. He regretted that the hon. member had not given the reasons which actuated the committee in coming to that conclusion, for they were not obvious to his mind. Every facility should, in his opinion, be given to the public who desired to purchase it. He was very glad, however, that the joint committee had been able to come to a conclusion by which *Hansard* might be published containing reports of the proceedings of both Houses, without any of the conflict which at one time seemed likely to arise.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the course which had been adopted was calculated, in his opinion, to increase the circulation of *Hansard*, because it would induce those who might otherwise buy one number containing the report of some specially interesting or exciting debate to become regular subscribers. When called upon to pay the extra price, they might consider it worth their while to take in the report regularly.

Mr. GROOM said he should have liked to hear the opinion of the Attorney-General as to the liability of newspaper proprietors who sold *Hansard*.

Mr. MOREHEAD: You will have to pay for that if you want it.

Mr. GROOM said he did not think he ought to be called upon to pay for that. Since one of the journals of the city had declined to issue a certain number of *Hansard* on account of something presumed to be libellous contained in it, he had taken the trouble to read some of the proceedings of the Imperial Parliament, and the judgments of the courts at home in reference to the subject; and he should be very glad to take this opportunity of stating, for the information of the Press generally, that newspaper proprietors had no need to be under the slightest apprehension of being indicted or prosecuted for any libel contained in the Parliamentary proceedings reported in *Hansard*. In the *Times* of July 15th or 16th, there appeared the report of a case tried before the Chief Justice of England, in which the *Times* was prosecuted for having given a report of certain judicial proceedings in a court of justice. The *Times* report, in this case, had stated that a witness refused to attend when summoned, and that the court had issued a warrant for his arrest. This was construed to be a libel, by which the character of the defendant had been injured. The Chief Justice, in his judgment, stated clearly that a fair report was not a libel—not only in respect to the proceedings in courts of justice, but also to debates in Parliament. So long as a journal gave the true facts of the case the report was privileged, and the proprietors of the journal had no need to be under any apprehension. The

number of *Hansard* containing the speech of the Minister for Works, which was said to be libellous, had been published by him, and he had not had any intimation that he was to be prosecuted in consequence; and in future, whatever might take place in Parliament, he should not have the slightest hesitation in publishing *Hansard* on account of possible ulterior consequences. These facts required to be made public to show newspaper proprietors that they had no reason to be so very sensitive about publishing reports of what took place in Parliament or in courts of justice. It had been said that the imprint "J. C. Beal" relieved the Government Printer from responsibility but did not protect the newspaper proprietor; and that persons had bought *Hansards* over the counter in newspaper offices with a view to having the proprietors of the newspapers prosecuted. He thought those persons would be literally throwing away their money by taking proceedings against such newspaper proprietors.

Mr. GRIFFITH: Hear, hear.

Mr. GROOM said, notwithstanding that, the Attorney-General might have given some intimation that such was the state of the law. However much hon. members might disparage the action of the journal referred to, its opinion was of considerable weight, and its refusal to issue a certain number of *Hansard* might induce the proprietors of other newspapers to refuse to issue it hereafter. In consequence of that he had fortified himself with the best opinions which the courts of England could furnish, and he again repeated that no newspaper proprietor publishing *Hansard* need be under any apprehension. Hon. members might sometimes get angry and say ill-natured things, but no newspaper proprietor could be punished for furnishing a fair report. With regard to what had been said by the hon. member for Maryborough about the reports of the proceedings in the Legislative Council, he had no wish to say anything that might be considered disrespectful towards the co-ordinate branch of the Legislature; but he must say that some of the public outside had asked him not to send them the reports of the Legislative Council debates. They said they only wanted the proceedings of the House in which were the members who were responsible to them.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was rather amused at the remarks of the hon. member (Mr. Groom), because he thought that the proprietor and editor of a leading journal would have known the whole secret of the *Courier* business. Was the hon. member not aware that the *Courier* was in the pay of the Government? From beginning to end the *Courier* had worked in the interest of the Government, and, through them, in the interest of the country. Did he not know how, in the first instance, the *Courier* evoked an interest in *Hansard*, which would not otherwise have been felt, by refusing to issue it at all? The first means of attracting public attention to *Hansard* was a notification on the part of the *Courier* that they would not serve out this rubbish to their customers. Did not hon. members afterwards find out that the *Courier* did serve out this rubbish? Did they not find out afterwards—these were all links in the chain—that when a matter of exceptional public interest occurred the *Courier* said they would not issue that number?—and did not the *Courier* largely increase the publication of that number by their action? The hon. member did not grasp the position which the *Courier* had taken up on this matter. They had been advocating *Hansard* *ab initio*; they were the best friend it ever had; and he could not understand how the hon. member—a pressman—could have missed seeing that at once. He (Mr. Morehead) and other hon. members

had seen all along that the *Courier* only intended to increase the circulation of *Hansard*. Even when they pretended to hesitate about publishing it they took their whole quota, and he had no doubt they sold the whole 1,625 copies at a considerable profit. He had every reason to believe—though he did not state it as a fact—that certain hon. members here and elsewhere made certain speeches so that they might be able to suppress *Hansard*, in order to give a fictitious value to the issue of that date. It was very unkind of the hon. member, a fellow-journalist, to say that the gentleman who conducted that journal had been led to suppress *Hansard* through fear of having a libel action brought against the paper. The hon. member must have seen that was too thin—too obvious. That gentleman wanted to make a very good speculation—to help *Hansard* along, and in doing so to help himself. Hon. members also knew how the public interest was intensified by the notification that according to high legal opinion the issuing of a certain number of *Hansard* would be libellous. The *Courier* was wise enough not to state what that legal opinion was; but they took care to egg the people on, thereby doing a good service to the State, and no doubt securing for themselves the sale of their *Hansards* at more than double the price now proposed to be charged. He regretted that the hon. member (Mr. Groom) should have made the remarks he did about the Legislative Council report—that some of the subscribers to his paper had objected to receiving the report of what took place in another place. He should have imagined that people who read the eloquent speeches made in this Chamber—when their brains were exhausted in trying to follow the arguments of the hon. members opposite—especially the hon. members for North Brisbane and Maryborough—would have turned for relaxation to the remarks made by an hon. member who was for many years an honoured member of this House and who was now a member of another place. He (Mr. Morehead) always picked up the Legislative Council's report first to see what they had been saying there. He took some interest in the debates in that House, and he was sorry that the hon. member should have taken the opportunity to attempt to stab in the back what the hon. member called the co-ordinate branch of the Legislature. He was surprised that the Speaker or the hon. member for Blackall did not interrupt the hon. member when he applied such epithets to another place. He (Mr. Morehead) could hardly suppress his indignation, and he hoped the hon. member, in future, would be more guarded in what he said. Were *Hansard* issued without the report of the Legislative Council's proceedings it would prove an utter failure financially and in every other way. He maintained that there was more keen humour, more exciting debate, more wit bandied from side to side in that Chamber than in this one; and he left it for every reader of *Hansard* and everyone privileged to hear those debates to decide whether that was not absolutely correct. The most caustic, sarcastic, and amusing speeches were made in that House, and the fact of the subscribers to the hon. member's paper not desiring the report showed a degeneracy on the part of the inhabitants of the Darling Downs that he had not expected. He had always heard that an agricultural people were dull-witted, but such wit and wisdom as were contained in those speeches should penetrate the dullest agricultural scalp. He really was astonished that the hon. member should have made such remarks, and he trusted that the hon. member would take the earliest opportunity of withdrawing them, and also to use that valuable medium—his newspaper—to educate the readers up to a point to enable them to understand the jokes of which he had spoken.

Mr. ARCHER said he was puzzled at the speech of the hon. member (Mr. Douglas). If *Hansard* was to be published he did not see why it should not be done as recommended in the report. The hon. member found fault with the report because it recommended that the debates in the Assembly should take precedence of those in the Council. The hon. member said that was a violation of the forms of Parliament; but if the hon. member was such a lover of forms, and so conservative with regard to them, how was it that he rode rough-shod through the Standing Orders of the House, recently? The hon. member was the greatest puzzle he had ever encountered; he was shocked at a trifling matter, but he was not shocked at a breach of the discipline provided for in the rules of the House. The hon. member became a greater puzzle every time he spoke.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that the recommendation of the committee, that occasional subscribers to *Hansard* should be charged double the price that regular subscribers were, was easily explained. With regular subscribers the Government Printer knew exactly how many copies would have to be printed, but when an important debate took place there was a great rush, and the Printing Office was put to great inconvenience. If anything would tend to the circulation of *Hansard* regularly he thought the adoption of the plan recommended by the committee would. It was exceedingly unfair that men who were not subscribers should get the article at the same price as regular subscribers. Hon. members must remember that the price of *Hansard* returned very little over the cost of the paper and printing, and that there was no profit on it, but, on the contrary, a loss. It was quite out of the question to expect that the Printing Office could meet unexpected demands such as were now made when any important debate took place in the House. He believed the report was a very good one, and the plan proposed presented a good way of settling the matter. Without wishing to speak of the members of the Upper House with the slightest disrespect, he would say that they were very fortunate in having their debates printed in connection with the debates of the Assembly at all, for no doubt that was the only possible way in which their speeches would get into circulation. He agreed with the hon. member for Toowoomba that the great mass of the people did not care to hear anything about speeches from men who had no responsibility. The hon. member for North Brisbane cheered the hon. member for Toowoomba when he said that no newspaper publishing the debates as printed in *Hansard* would be liable to an action for damages. He might tell the hon. gentleman that it was currently reported and believed that he himself was the counsel learned in the law who gave the *Courier* that opinion.

Mr. GRIFFITH: No.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY was very glad to hear the hon. gentleman say so. With his knowledge of the hon. gentleman's legal ability, he never thought that he could stultify himself by giving such an opinion. The *Courier* proprietors could please themselves as to the publication of *Hansard*, but he would say that, as the result of their not publishing it, there had been a greater number of readers of it in the city than had been heard of before. On these particular occasions *Hansard* could not be purchased at any price in town, and a very large number of copies were sold over the counter of the Government Printing Office during the day.

Mr. SCOTT said that no discourtesy was shown to the Upper House, inasmuch as the pro-

position that the debates of the Assembly should have precedence came from the Postmaster-General. He also understood that the report of the committee had been agreed to by the Upper House.

Question put and passed.

THE "SCOTTISH HERO."

Mr. DOUGLAS moved—

That there be laid on the table of the House, copies of all Correspondence, letters, and telegrams, which have passed between the Surgeon-Superintendent of the "Scottish Hero" and the Government, or any member of the Government, respecting the failure of the captain of that ship to provide side-lights, together with a copy of the certificate of the number of passengers under which the contractors are paid.

He said that he placed the motion on the paper assuming that it would have been passed as a formal one. The grounds for his submitting the motion were that he had been credibly informed that the Surgeon-Superintendent of this ship, which arrived lately at Townsville, had reported against the captain for not having side-lights—a serious failure of duty through which the passengers' lives might have been lost. He was further informed that the Surgeon-Superintendent, after having reported the negligence of the captain, declined to sign the usual certificate of the number of passengers, without which the charterers, as a matter of ordinary procedure, would not be paid their second moiety. He was also informed that application was made to the Surgeon-Superintendent by the Treasurer asking him to sign the certificate.

The PREMIER: By the Treasurer?

Mr. DOUGLAS said he was so informed. He did not wish to make comments on the case without first seeing the papers, and he thought he had shown good grounds for asking for their production. He put some questions on the subject to the Colonial Secretary, but unfortunately they were hardly fairly met. It seemed to him that the Colonial Secretary did not state the facts of the case explicitly, and he was confirmed in that impression by the subsequent admission of the Colonial Secretary that there was a report from the Surgeon-Superintendent which the hon. gentleman did not consider as correspondence. If that report was the only document in existence, he should be quite content to have it. He presumed, though, that on the receipt of a report charging a captain with negligence, inquiries would have been made, and that some correspondence would have resulted. He could not see why there should be any objection to the production of the papers.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY thought the hon. member would have dealt more fairly with the question if he had stated the whole of the circumstances. The hon. member forgot to mention that on the 12th August last he put the following questions with respect to the matter:—

"1. If the Surgeon-Superintendent of the 'Scottish Hero' refused to sign the certificate under the charter-party?"

"2. If he was requested to do so?"

"3. If he declined to do so?"

To these questions he (Mr. Palmer) replied—

"1. The only document which the Surgeon-Superintendent is required to sign under the charter-party is merely a certificate of the number of passengers landed alive; but attached to the list of ship's stores, I find a certificate signed by the Surgeon, that he has examined them and found them of good quality.

"2. The Government is not aware that the Surgeon has been requested to sign any certificate in connection with the 'Scottish Hero.' They have certainly never asked him to do so."

One would have thought that that would have been quite sufficient for the hon. member. It was

exactly the truth, and should have been sufficient for any hon. member of that House. But the hon. gentleman immediately afterwards put a notice of motion upon the paper calling for correspondence, notwithstanding that he had been distinctly told that there were no documents. The hon. member's notice of motion was tantamount to an inuendo that the reply to his question was false; it was, in fact, a direct imputation of falsehood. Not only this, but, after the hon. member had been told that there were no documents, he complained of discourtesy on the part of the Government by their refusal to allow the motion to be taken as formal. He now repeated, that no certificate was wanted from the Surgeon-Superintendent of the "Scottish Hero." The certificate upon which the second moiety of the passage-money was paid was as follows:—

"COPY OF AGENT-GENERAL'S CERTIFICATE FOR PAYMENT OF THE 2ND MOIETY OF THE PASSAGE MONEY OF THE 'SCOTTISH HERO.'"

"No. 24. Queensland Government Offices,
"32, Charing Cross, London,
"17 March, 1880.

"To the Honourable the Colonial Secretary, Queensland.

"This certifies that Messrs. McIlwraith, McEacharn, and Co., or their authorised agents in the colony, are entitled to receive from the Queensland Government the sum of £2,354 10s. on account of passengers embarked in the ship 'Scottish Hero' for Townsville, under my direction, at Plymouth, on the 11th day of March, 1880, such passengers being landed alive in the colony at the port directed, being at the rate of £17 per statute adult, the said amount being the second moiety of payment for 277 assisted, free, and remittance passengers proceeding in the said ship, and subject to the conditions relating to the payment of the second moiety in clause 24 of charter-party.

"THOS. HAMILTON,
"Secretary.

Half the number of these classes of passengers.	{ For 133½ assisted free and remittance passengers }	at £17 per head (adult).
	£2,354 10s. 0d.	

"Entered, 17th March, 1880.

"S. L. WOOLNER,
"Accountant.

"Copy of endorsements on certificate—

"Pay £2,350 5s. on 276½ (adults) landed."

"ST. G. RALPH GORE,
"Immigration Agent.
"16-8-80.

"ROBT. GRAY,
"16th July, 1880.

"Pay to the order of the Queensland National Bank (Limited)

"McILWRAITH, McEACHARN, and Co.

"For the Queensland National Bank (Limited).

"JOHN H. RYLAND,
"Assistant Manager."

That was the only certificate. At the time he replied to the hon. member's question there was no correspondence whatever; but since then the Premier had received a private letter from the Surgeon-Superintendent, in which he said that the report with reference to the side-lights was not intended to injure the captain, and that he had since learnt that ships in latitudes to which the report applied never used side-lights because they were all coming in the same direction, and that when ships were in sight the captain did use them. This letter was received within the past week, and he had since received from one of the charterers of the ship a memorandum stating that the ship only sailed on two moon-light nights without side-lights. That was the whole of the correspondence. No telegram had been sent to the Surgeon-Superintendent of the "Scottish Hero" by any member of the Government. Had the hon. member asked for what he now appeared to desire—namely, the report of the Surgeon-Superintendent, he could have

had it at a moment's notice. The hon. gentleman was perfectly welcome to it now.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that, as the report which the hon. member for Maryborough desired appeared to be in existence, it would be well to have it laid upon the table. As the Government appeared willing to produce the report, he would move—

That the motion be amended by the omission of the words "all correspondence, letters, or telegrams which have passed between," with the view to the insertion in lieu thereof of the words "reports from," and by the omission of the words "and the Government or any members of the Government."

The PREMIER said the hon. member for Maryborough alleged, as a reason for bringing forward the motion, that it had come to his knowledge that the Colonial Treasurer had sent a telegram to the Surgeon-Superintendent of the "Scottish Hero," requesting him to sign a certificate by which the contractors would be entitled to be paid the second moiety of the passage-money. He could only say that he had never received from, or sent to, that gentleman any letter or telegram, until the past day, when he had received a letter marked "private" from him. He had never seen the gentleman, nor did he know anything about him. If the hon. member desired to place a right view of the case before the House, he would request the Surgeon-Superintendent to withdraw the words "private and confidential" from his letter. He would very much like to lay it before the House, but he could not do so while it was marked "private."

Mr. DOUGLAS: It now appears that there is a report.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: There has always been a report, and the hon. gentleman, as an ex-Colonial Secretary, ought to know it.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he could only say that the hon. gentleman, in reply to a question, had formerly told him that there was no report.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No such thing: I said there was no correspondence.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he had drawn his own inference from the hon. gentleman's reply, and it was possible that he might have been mistaken; but he certainly understood the hon. gentleman to say that there was no report. For his own part he took the report to be correspondence, for it could not be denied that it was a letter addressed to some official under the Colonial Secretary. He was bound—and he was glad—to accept the disclaimer of the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government. He might say that he also knew nothing of the Surgeon-Superintendent of the "Scottish Hero"—he did not even know his name. He was only anxious to obtain as full information as possible. He understood that the motion as amended would be accepted by the hon. Colonial Secretary.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that they had now a sample of the manner in which members of the Government, and more especially the Premier, had been slandered during the present session. The hon. member got up and said that he had been informed that the Premier sent a telegram to the Surgeon-Superintendent of the ship "Scottish Hero," requesting him to withdraw a statement he had made, and sign a certificate in order that the firm of McIlwraith, McEacharn, and Co. might get the moiety of the passage-money due to them; and now the hon. gentleman, after that statement had been denied by the Premier, said he had been "informed." That was an example of the manner in which slanders had been circulated against the Government during the present session; the only differ-

ence in the present instance being that the hon. member for Maryborough had the manliness to say that he had been told so-and-so. But how many hon. members opposite, and people outside the House, had slandered the Government by asserting that certain things had actually taken place, without first taking the trouble to make inquiries. How was it that the hon. gentleman, having gone so far, could not tell the House who his informant was? He was bound to do so; he was bound to say on whose information he had moved for correspondence, letters, and telegrams which it was now proved had no existence. He hoped the hon. gentleman would give the name of his informant—he might add, of his base informant.

Mr. AMHURST said that in his opinion either the information was given to the hon. gentleman, in which case he was bound to give the name of the informant, or else it must have been an invention of the hon. gentleman's own fertile brain, which was more likely. The charge made against the Premier was the most disgraceful thing he had ever known: but anybody could make a base insinuation.

The PREMIER said there was not the slightest doubt that the hon. member for Maryborough had been the medium through which a lot of slander had been propagated against himself. He could only say this, that he would give the hon. gentleman an order upon the Telegraph Office, and an opportunity of seeing every telegram he had sent or received within the last three months, and he would then have a chance of seeing what foundation there was for the information which had caused all these slanders. He would afford the hon. gentleman every opportunity, by giving him an order to the Telegraph Department to let him see every telegram he (the Premier) had sent during the last three months, and then if the hon. gentleman had the slightest feelings of a gentleman he would give the name of his informant.

Mr. MOREHEAD thought the hon. member for Mackay was right in saying that either the information was given to the hon. member for Maryborough by some person, or that otherwise the House must arrive at the conclusion that the hon. gentlemen invented it himself.

Mr. DOUGLAS said that, after what had fallen from the Premier, he most emphatically accepted the hon. gentleman's statement, and he should not require, and he certainly would not think of exercising, any such espionage as that offered by the hon. gentleman. With regard to the statement made by the hon. member for the Mitchell, he need not notice it. He was quite content to brave the imputations which that hon. member had made. If the hon. member thought he had invented the information he was quite welcome to do so.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he could remember that about three years ago, or soon after he entered the House, the hon. member for Maryborough (Mr. Douglas) reproached a very old member of the House for frequently making charges on information without giving the names of his informants, and said that instead of the hon. member doing that he should first make inquiries for himself or give the name of his informant. He would challenge the hon. member for Maryborough to do now the very thing he had challenged the hon. member to do then.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that the zeal shown by the hon. and learned Attorney-General, and by one or two hon. members opposite, in asking the hon. member for Maryborough to give the name of his informant was really refreshing. It was only a few days ago that the Colonial Secretary said he had been told certain things of him (Mr.

Griffith), and when asked to give the name of the informant the hon. gentleman refused to do so. He thought it was the duty of any hon. member who had information given him privately on a matter of public importance, or relating to the public service, to take the necessary steps in the House to investigate the matter, and he himself should not hesitate in moving for an inquiry on any information so given. As to hon. members opposite thinking that by abuse and the use of bad language they could compel members of the Opposition to do as they liked, they were very much mistaken. If a charge was made which was untrue it should be proved to be untrue; but there was no worse way, so far as his experience went, of meeting an accusation or charge than by abusing the accuser. It was the old story of the litigant who, having no case, instructed his counsel to this effect, "I have no case, abuse the plaintiff."

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the GOVERNMENT BENCHES: Hear, hear.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he was glad the illustration struck home. What had been the answer to accusations made against the Government both this session and last? Why, abuse of the Opposition, and of himself in particular. He contended that such tactics, instead of resulting in the exculpation of the person accused, only resulted in his inculpation—at least, in the eyes of all thinking men. Surely, if a charge was unfounded it should be disproved, as then the accuser would be covered with confusion; but, instead of doing that, hon. members opposite evidently thought there must be something in it, or they would not fall back upon abuse of the person making the charge. He hoped that whatever duty hon. members on his side of the House might have to perform, they would perform it independent of any action of hon. members opposite. He should not be deterred from doing so, notwithstanding all the abuse heaped upon him by hon. members opposite—in fact, he was so used to that abuse now that he only laughed at it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY thought they had had very good instances of the instructions to abuse the hon. gentleman referred to, as he had commenced the session in that way, and he (Mr. Palmer) had no doubt that such were the instructions given to him. He certainly had carried them out with a will, as, although he had no real charges whatever against the Premier, he had continued to make charges ever since without any foundation being shown for them. The hon. member for Maryborough, in his desire to back up the leader of the Opposition, backed him up by putting base charges in the form of resolutions on the paper. Some weeks back that hon. member asked certain questions about the "Scottish Hero" which were then answered, and yet he had the impudence, the other night, to complain of what he called the discourtesy of the Government because they refused to produce documents which never existed except in the hon. member's own imagination. He agreed with the hon. member for Mackay, as he did not think the hon. member ever got any information. Any person on reading the resolution would think the hon. gentleman had received information, and that from the Surgeon-Superintendent of the ship; but the hon. gentleman refused to say from whom he got it. There was no comparison between the present case and the one referred to by the hon. member, the leader of the Opposition—namely, the assertion he (Mr. Palmer) made that he had heard that the hon. gentleman told a friend that he was concocting a scheme to blow McIlwraith and Palmer out of office and ruin their political reputations,

because that had been borne out by the conduct of the hon. gentleman since, and he did not think that when the people of the colony came to their senses—and they were fast doing so every day—they would think any better of the hon. gentleman for what he had done. He concluded that a man who was constantly making false charges was worse than a paid assassin, and the hon. gentleman in this sense was more of a paid assassin of private character than he was a statesman. The hon. member for Maryborough must have known that the Government had no such information as that he asked for, and having been a Colonial Secretary he must have known that every surgeon-superintendent of an immigrant ship was bound to furnish a report on his arrival, and that if he had wanted to see such a report he could have done so by merely asking for it.

Question put and passed.

ALLORA POST AND TELEGRAPH OFFICE.

Mr. KATES said that hon. members who had seats in the last Parliament would recollect that the then member for Warwick—the late respected Mr. Morgan—succeeded in carrying a resolution that £600 should be placed on the Loan Estimates for the erection of a post and telegraph office at Allora. None of the money had, however, been expended as yet. The Government had paid rental for the last two years for a building which was more like a box than an office, and in it their officer had to perform the duties of telegraph-master, postmaster, savings bank and money-order officer. He was, moreover, in a position to state that the office was not safe. Not long since, whilst the operator was attending church, it was broken into by burglars, who abstracted 200 sovereigns, of which no trace had yet been found. The building was not a bit safer now than it was then. He was also able to show that Allora was entitled to fair consideration. Ever since it had been proclaimed a township a large sum of money had been sent to the Treasury for the sale of land. He believed that not less than £40,000 had been returned to the Treasury for land sold within a radius of five or six miles of Allora, and at present a large income was being derived annually by the Government from the selectors in the vicinity. Out of 21,000 acres which had been exchanged, only 3,000 had been thrown open; 2,400 acres had been selected, and £10,000 had been paid for the land. This gave an annual return of £1,000 for ten years. If the remaining 18,000 acres were sold at the same price per acre, there would be an annual income of £5,000 or £6,000 for ten years. The Treasury had already obtained £40,000 from sales of land in the neighbourhood of Allora, and, as he had shown, was likely to receive £50,000 more. What return had Allora received? Fifteen years ago a courthouse was erected, which was now in a dilapidated state; there was also a slab lockup. The population was undoubtedly increasing, and agricultural settlement was extending rapidly—in fact, quite a metamorphosis was perceptible. Recently a colonial bank evidenced their faith in the stability of the place by erecting a branch establishment at an expenditure of £2,000. The salary paid to the present Government officer for discharging the four different duties which he had named was only about £105 per annum, which was a very small sum. He should not have asked for the £600 had it not been voted two years ago for the erection of a post and telegraph office. He trusted the good sense and the feeling of justice of hon. members on both sides would enable the motion to be carried. The

junior member for Toowoomba could testify to the great progress made by Allora in spite of the bad seasons. There was not an agricultural district in the colony which had such grand prospects and such a future before it. He begged to move—

That in the opinion of the House the £600 placed by the vote of Parliament on the Loan Estimates for 1878-1879, for the erection of Post and Telegraph Office at Allora, should be expended on the works for which it was voted.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he did not intend to say much upon the motion, as it was discussed one day in the early part of the session on a motion for adjournment moved by the hon. member. If Allora was the important place that had been represented, and was progressing so rapidly, how was it that only an average of two messages per day were sent from the telegraph office? A place of the importance that it was described to be should certainly represent five or six telegrams per day. The hon. member had also told the House that a great quantity of land had been sold there. Well, he presumed the people who had bought the land got value for their money. That was not an argument at all. Land had been sold in the colony in places where there was not a telegraph office within forty miles. The report of the Superintendent of Telegraphs for last year showed that the cash receipts at Allora for the year came to £44 19s., and the expenditure of the office to £177 4s. 9d. And the information that he obtained from the Postmaster-General, at the time the hon. member moved the adjournment of the House, was that the present year showed a worse return, which fact did not correspond with the hon. member's statement that Allora was progressing. He was glad to hear that it was progressing, but he could only take facts as he found them and as they were presented to him by his honourable colleague. Having resisted the motion before, and having stronger grounds now for doing so, he could not consent to it.

Mr. DOUGLAS thought the hon. gentleman had come to a remarkable decision. He was refusing to expend money voted by Parliament for a certain object. The money was in the hands of the Government, and was apparently an unexpended balance. If this principle was to be recognised, it involved the revision of the whole loan votes and the reappropriation of the unexpended balance. He hoped that the hon. gentleman would see fit to revise his opinion, and not come hastily to a conclusion of that kind; but, apart altogether from that, what were the facts? The telegraph business done at Allora was small, he knew, but, as a matter of fact, many people preferred to send their messages from Hendon. It was distant two or three miles from Allora, and its messages were known to take priority; therefore, many people preferred to send their messages from Hendon. But this did not alter the fact that it was necessary to have a post office at Allora. There was a considerable amount of postal business done, and there was also a money-order and savings bank. There was a building which was rented by Government who were actually paying annually as much or more even than the interest upon the capital amount voted by Parliament for the erection of proper offices. The post office, savings bank, and money-order office could not be done away with. There was good justification for having these institutions at a country township like Allora, and, whatever amount of business might be done at the telegraph office, a considerable amount of business was done in connection with the other branches of the office; therefore, he hoped the Minister for Works would reconsider his decision. He gathered that the hon.

gentleman was bound to expend the money, unless the Treasurer was prepared to come to the House and propose a reappropriation of the unexpended balances. The money was by law available for the purpose of erecting a post and telegraph office at Allora, and he did not think the Government would be justified in laying it out upon any other object, unless they obtained the authority of Parliament. He doubted whether Parliament would willingly revise the legislation of the past. He hoped the hon. gentleman would reconsider his decision. Anything would be better than a distinct statement to the effect that amounts that had been voted should not be expended in the way they were intended to be expended when appropriated. The hon. member might decide when he would have the building constructed; and, in his (Mr. Douglas') opinion, the sooner the better, for the Government would save money by so doing—instead of the ramshackle place for which they were paying a high rent in proportion to the accommodation afforded, they would get a good building where the property of the Government could be properly secured, and where business could be properly transacted. Business was of some importance in a place like Allora. It was in such places that they looked for deposits in the savings bank, and they might, in that respect, look upon the post office as a place where a certain amount of business would be done. He hoped, therefore, that the hon. gentleman would reconsider his decision.

Mr. SCOTT said the motion was ill-judged, because if it were lost the vote would be lost altogether. If the hon. member had inserted the word "now" or "within six months" he would have saved himself; but, as the motion was now worded, if it were negatived the money would be lost altogether for that particular purpose.

Mr. GRIFFITH: It is authorised by Act of Parliament.

Mr. SCOTT said it was precisely so; but it was by a vote of the House that the money was voted for that building; and if the House negatived the motion the effect would be most decidedly that the money would not be expended. If the hon. member had said "within six months," and the motion was lost, he would have been at the end of that time in his present position; but if the motion were lost he would not get the money at all.

Mr. DAVENPORT said he should have much pleasure in voting for the motion. He had lived in the neighbourhood of Allora for many years, and for some time he looked upon the town as a sort of Sleepy Hollow. But he was happy to say that since the late Government had effected the Allora land exchanges the place had decidedly woke up. He looked upon those exchanges as one of the best acts of the late Government. Anyone now going to the village of Allora and looking round would be struck with the appreciable progress in settlement. Another reason he had for voting for the motion was that some of the Government were still large holders of the best agricultural lands on the Downs in the neighbourhood of Allora; and no doubt the Minister for Lands was only waiting a favourable opportunity for throwing open portions of them so that an increased farming population might settle there. Not only was there an improvement in the township itself, where there was a commodious bank erected lately, but they could see houses all over the surrounding country. Besides, the money had been voted and ought to be applied to that special building, and that knowledge gave a double confirmation to his argument when they knew that the Government were now tenants of a very

incommodious and unsuitable building. He should have much pleasure in voting for the motion.

Mr. DICKSON said if the Minister for Works did not intend to expend the money on the building for which it was voted, he should be interested to know how it would be expended. He agreed with the hon. member for Maryborough that money voted ought to be expended as early as possible. In a matter of this sort it was in the interests of the country that the work should be proceeded with, because the Government at the present time were paying more than the interest of the sum required to erect a suitable building, the rent being £25 or £30 per annum. It was not absolutely necessary that the whole of the money should be spent if a suitable building was erected; but it was not straightforward, when a sum of money had been voted for a district, to say that it should not be expended as early as possible. Unless Allora was going to be swept off the face of the earth he anticipated there would always be some necessity for a post and telegraph office, a savings bank, and other offices; and the expenditure being very moderate, and the interest representing only what the Government at present paid for very insufficient accommodation, it would be wise, in the matter of public economy alone, to proceed with the work. If the Government did not intend to proceed with the construction of the building, he should like to learn to what purpose they intended to devote the money. He supposed it would be another example of money unexpended from the loan balances. Notwithstanding the efforts of certain hon. members to obtain votes necessary for their districts, the Government now intended to adopt the practice of allowing such moneys—even when voted—to be unexpended. He trusted the Minister for Works would reconsider the matter and proceed with the construction of a building adequate to the requirements of the district. He did not take it that the hon. member (Mr. Kates) insisted on the expenditure of the full amount if a smaller sum would give sufficient accommodation. At any rate, a building for which money had been voted in the Estimates for 1878-9 should be expended as early as possible.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said the hon. member for Enoggera had made use of a remark to the effect that money should be expended as early as possible. It would be well for the hon. member and the Government of which he was so distinguished a member if they had not expended so much money. They saw monuments of their folly wherever they turned; they need not search for them. As a matter of fact, a very great deal of what had been said about the post and telegraph office at Allora only went to show the necessity there was for abolishing it altogether. He was in rather an invidious position, and should like to support the motion. Did the hon. member believe he would be one inch nearer the object he had in view, supposing he got a majority of the House to vote with him to-night? What progress would he have made? The money appeared to have been borrowed, and voted by the Assembly to build a post office at Allora. Now, the hon. member informed the House that the post and telegraph offices had been worked in what he called a hole or box. Whose fault was that? He had no desire to remind the House and the hon. member of the past; but an industrious, hard-working woman who worked the post office was deprived of that means of subsistence through the contrivance of the hon. member. What were the facts? The more the matter was inquired into the worse it appeared. It appeared that Allora was within

three miles of a railway station called Hendon. The receipts at the Allora telegraph office were £44 19s. for the year, and at the railway station £31 13s. 2d., making a total of £76 12s. 2d. The expenditure for those two places was £321 10s. 4d., leaving a deficiency of £244 18s. 2d. on the working of those two offices. Was that system to go on? The hon. gentleman invited the House to believe that settlement was going on rapidly at Allora. He (Mr. Perkins) was glad to hear it. He was quite aware of what was going on; and he believed that but for the contrivance of some persons in the neighbourhood settlement would have gone on much faster, and all the exchanged lands in the district would have been taken up. They would have been settled at the present time but for the intervention of gentlemen whom he would not name. However, the Allora people, he had no doubt, would find it out to their cost, if indeed they had not already awakened up to the fact. As to the 200 sovereigns stolen, he thought it was a stigma the hon. member should not have cast on the people of Allora. So far as he knew, there was no necessity for a lookout there; but there must be rogues in the place, though he never knew it before. The hon. gentleman stated that to be a fact, or it would have remained a secret. There must evidently be some bad characters knocking about Allora. He would advise the hon. member to bear in mind that, if the work was to go on, he was not to teach the Government the necessities of Allora or of any other place—it was too near home. Members of the Government were just as alive and keen to do what was necessary to promote the prosperity and welfare of the people of Allora as was the hon. member. They were acquainted with the necessities of the place from week to week; they knew what was going on; and when the proper time arrived, which might not be far off, it would not be necessary to have the promptings of the hon. member, or the coercion which he sought to bring to bear, to repass a vote already voted. That would not bring the hon. member nearer to the end he was aiming at. If he would leave the matter as it was he could only promise as a member of the Government—and he believed he was speaking the sentiments of his colleagues—that Allora would receive fairplay. But the more attention the hon. member called to the matter—the more it was investigated—the more would be made patent the necessity for doing away with this office; because, if the money for the reasons given to-night were expended, he knew twenty-seven odd places in the colony that had as good a right to the expenditure of £500 or £600 as Allora. Every man could not have a railway or a telegraph office at his door; and the people of Allora might be very well content. It was not because 3,000 or 4,000 acres of land had been taken up that everything was to be taken for granted. The hon. gentleman was in error when he said the land brought in £10,000. As a matter of fact, it had only brought in £1,200; and he might have been accurate in quoting his figures instead of misleading the House. The hon. member might rest assured that the more the matter was investigated the further he would be from the end he aimed at. Both he and his colleagues were aware of the progress going on at Allora, and they had as much desire as the hon. member himself to help the struggling people there and everywhere else in the colony.

Mr. MILES said he was glad to hear that the Government had the interests of the people of Allora at heart and were inclined to do them justice;—they were certainly going a very peculiar way about it. This question had no reference whatever to the sale of land and the progress of settlement. The Gov-

ernment were paying more rent for a hovel than would cover the interest on the £600 voted on the loan estimates. They were paying £25 or £26 for the rent of a building which was wretchedly adapted for a post and telegraph office. Why should that £600 be lying idle, while the Government had to pay 5 per cent. of it away in the shape of rent every year? The question was, was it necessary to have a post and telegraph office at Allora? He presumed it was, because the Government were paying rent for a building for those purposes. He did not intend to argue from the point of how much land had been sold, or what was under cultivation;—his point was that the Government were paying £26 a-year for a hovel, while £600 voted for a new building was allowed to lie idle in, he presumed, the Queensland National Bank. Was it done with the idea of “nabbing” a few hundreds to meet the next deficit that took place in the finances? They had already “nabbed” all the money realised under the Railway Reserves Act, and now it seemed they were going to make a nest-egg of the £600 which had been voted for a public office at Allora. The question was very simple—either the office was required or it was not. That it was required was shown by the fact that the Government were paying rent for a hovel. As to the present charge levelled against his colleague, he believed the hon. member did his best to get compensation for the widow when she was deprived of her living. With regard to the question in dispute, it was the duty of the Government to call for tenders, and appropriate the money to the purpose for which it was borrowed.

Mr. GROOM said he admitted at once the force of the remark of the Minister for Lands, that the receipts at the telegraphic office at Allora amounted to £45, while the expenditure was £177. But on lately looking over the receipts of the telegraph offices throughout the colony, and comparing them with the expenditure, he found there were very few offices which could be declared self-supporting;—indeed, he much questioned whether there was one. He was particularly struck with the large amount of expenditure compared with the small amount of receipts. It became a question—was a telegraph office at Allora a necessity? In his opinion it was. There was not only the people themselves to be considered, but the large stations in the neighbourhood, and the agricultural population at King's Creek and Spring Creek, to which that office was the only one that was of any use. It was possible there might be only one or two messages a day, but it was invaluable as being the means of obtaining a medical man in the neighbourhood. A case in point occurred the other day, when a little child was bitten by a death-adder and it was a matter of life or death to telegraph for the doctor. The convenience of the public had a right to be considered. On that ground alone, a telegraph office at Allora was an absolute necessity. Another fact was, that at present there was a considerable number of skilled mechanics on the Downs wanting employment; and if Government were to call for tenders for erecting the building now, competition would be so keen, and the building materials were so cheap, that he believed they could get a substantial structure erected for about £400. If those skilled workmen did not get employment very shortly they and their families would leave the colony, and the building could not, perhaps, be erected for less than £700. On the score of economy, then, it was advantageous to call for tenders at once. The present post and telegraph office at Allora, for which the Government were paying £20 a-year rent, was a wretched hovel, and utterly unfit for the purposes for which it was used. If the Government wished

to economise he would suggest that the old courthouse, which belonged to a former age, and utterly unfit for the administration of justice, might be pulled down and incorporated with the post and telegraph offices and savings bank in one building for the money set apart for it. But there was also a principle involved in the question—namely, whether a sum of money which had been voted by one Parliament and placed on a Loan Bill was not bound to be expended, whatever Government was in power. If that principle could be set aside in one case it might in others, and would form a most dangerous precedent. He had no wish to copy the example set by Mr. Berry, but preferred appealing to the old-established precedents of England, and in England, when sums were appropriated by Act of Parliament, they were expended even if the Government did not approve of it. The principle involved was an important one; it might not only affect that vote but future votes, and even the Government themselves, for it might happen that they placed sums on a loan vote and their successors refused to carry it out.

The PREMIER said there was no occasion for the hon. member (Mr. Groom) to talk about precedent. The precedent was set in 1875 when, with the assistance of that hon. member's vote, about £40,000 of unexpended loan votes on the Estimates were diverted to a purpose altogether different from that to which they had been allotted by Parliament. The Act authorising the borrowing of that money detailed in its schedule the whole of the works, and yet, on the motion of the present Speaker, and with the sanction of the hon. member for Toowoomba, that money was appropriated to quite a different purpose. On that occasion, he believed, Parliament was in the wrong; but the precedent was set then. The present case was very simple. In the loan vote £600 was put down for a post and telegraph office at Allora. Subsequent investigation had shown that it would be injudicious and inexpedient to expend the money for that purpose. That being so, Government had made up their minds not to spend the money. Parliament had said it should be spent, but the Government took upon themselves the responsibility of saying that such expenditure was at present unjustifiable. The Department which had investigated the matter ought to be better informed on the subject than the hon. members who had spoken in support of the motion. The hon. member for Toowoomba would vote for any expenditure on the Darling Downs, no matter what it was—whether a gaol, a lunatic asylum, or anything else, so long as it did not hurt Toowoomba. The Department were fully satisfied that the building was not wanted. The hon. member (Mr. Miles) was talking nonsense when he said that £25 a-year represented 5 per cent. on the £500 which the building was estimated to cost. The building would be out of existence in twenty-five years, and 5 per cent. was certainly not the proper interest to be put on an outlay of that kind. The hon. member might be quite right in trying to get as much money as he could for his district, but anyone connected with the department must see that it would be perfect nonsense to provide a building for a place already well provided for, and where the whole amount of business done was £44 a-year, carried on at an expenditure of £180. It was quite absurd for the hon. member (Mr. Miles) to say the money had been voted and therefore it must be spent. That was also the doctrine of the hon. member for Maryborough; but when he (Mr. Douglas) was Premier, and the hon. member for Darling Downs was Minister for Works, whenever a vote was carried against the Government the Minister for Works howled across the room, "I'll see you, So-and-so, before the money is spent," and it never was spent. Possibly, there might be a little retaliation.

Although the hon. member in a thin House did happen to get a majority he was not any nearer to his post office.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he had heard no satisfactory reason given why this £600 should not be expended. There was certainly a little force in the objections raised by the Minister for Works, that inasmuch as the business done was very limited it was inexpedient to go in for an increased expenditure; but he could not accept the doctrine laid down by the Minister for Lands, that the more the member for a district busied himself to secure some object upon which his constituents had set their heart, the less likely he was to obtain that object.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I never said any such thing.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman meant to imply that the proper way to economise was not to build a new post office, but to do away with the post office altogether.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said in matters of this kind it was hardly fair to proceed on a strictly commercial basis—stopping expenditure where there was no prospect of immediate return. If that policy had been adopted from the first there would never have been any public works at all in the colony. Enough injustice had been done to Allora already. Through the machinations of someone the railway which should have touched Allora on its way to Warwick had given Allora a wide berth; and any consideration that could be shown to Allora, which had been so heavily handicapped in many ways, should be shown—especially where, as in the present case, the amount involved was trifling. This sudden economy comported very ill with the facility with which an hon. member who supported the Government had recently been able to obtain a sum of £200 for the establishment of a volunteer corps at one of the northern towns. It was very well known that they could not be of any practical use, and the Colonial Secretary himself had stated that he saw no necessity for volunteers, the badness of the harbour being the greatest safeguard of that port. Yet no demur was made in that case, and it was very ungracious to raise an objection to the expenditure of £600 for a work which was to a certain extent necessary—apparently because the hon. member who moved for it was a consistent opponent of the Government. A large amount of land had been sold around Allora for homesteads, and the Government would be only providing for the future by erecting a proper post and telegraph office. It was hardly right for the Minister for Works to say that, whatever decision Parliament had come to, the money should not be expended for the purpose for which it was voted.

Mr. HORWITZ said he could state from his own experience that the post office at Allora was at present in a very unsuitable place, and that it was necessary that the money voted two years ago should be expended. A suitable building could now be obtained for about £300, and he wished the Minister for Works would see his way clear to expend that sum. If the hon. gentleman would not do that, he should advise the hon. member for Darling Downs to withdraw his motion for a time in order to give the hon. gentleman time to consider the matter. If the hon. member (Mr. Kates) pressed his motion he should feel bound to support him.

Mr. KATES said the Minister for Works had stated that the expense of keeping up that telegraph office was £177 last year, and that the receipts from it were £44 9s.; but if the hon. gentleman referred to the Postmaster-General's report he would find that the expense this year was only £105, and to the £44 9s. for telegrams sent from that office another £44 9s. should be

added for telegrams received there, which would not have been sent if the office were not established. But that was not the principal business conducted there. A farming community did not receive or send so many telegraphic messages as a commercial community, and it was as a post office, savings bank, and money-order office that he advocated its claims. The Minister for Lands stated that the late postmistress had been removed through his (Mr. Kates') action; but he denied that. About six months ago the Postmaster-General said it would be necessary to shut up the telegraph office at Allora, and he (Mr. Kates), to save the inhabitants from inconvenience, suggested that the post office and telegraph work should be amalgamated. That was done, and, as the postmistress could not do the telegraph work, a postmaster was appointed to do all the work of the office. It had been stated that the late telegraph master had been guilty of divulging to him (Mr. Kates) the contents of telegrams; but that was false. He defied the Minister for Lands to find a single spot on his character, and the more he tried to injure him the more he should rise in the estimation of his constituents. He spoke more in the interest of the telegraph master who had been slandered. That gentleman was a most efficient officer, and had been in the service for fourteen or fifteen years. Such a statement was most uncalled for. It was the duty of the Minister for Lands, if he thought any offence had been committed, to communicate with the Postmaster-General, and have an inquiry instituted at once. He had since been informed that the officer in question had applied for an inquiry, and he hoped he would get one. With regard to Allora he might say that the population was not a migratory one. People who went there settled, the population was daily increasing, and the school-house had to be enlarged every year. He hoped the Minister for Works would reconsider his decision. At the present price of building material a suitable place could be built for £500, and then the rent of the present office—£25—could be saved.

Mr. GROOM said that the incident in 1875, referred to by the Premier, was a very different case from the present one. On that occasion the Speaker said that votes provided by Act of Parliament to be spent in a certain way could not be spent otherwise without setting aside an Act of Parliament; and it was then pointed out that the votes in question were not included in an Act of Parliament, but were simply votes passed on the Estimates in the usual form. In consequence of the population having shifted, the money which had been voted for certain districts was spent in a different direction; but the Speaker then considered that the Government should not fly in the face of an Act of Parliament.

Question put, and the House divided :—

AYES, 13.

Messrs Dickson, Douglas, Griffith, Rutledge, Kates, Garrick, Miles, Groom, Macfarlane, Grimes, Davenport, Fraser, and Horwitz.

NOES, 21.

Messrs. Hamilton, McIlwraith, H. Palmer, Lalor, Palmer, Perkins, Macrossan, Beor, Morehead, Pez, Hendren, Archer, Scott, Perse, Swanwick, Amhurst, Stevenson, Low, Blundell, Stevens, and Norton.

Question, therefore, resolved in the negative.

THE PREMIER'S VISIT TO ENGLAND.

Mr. DOUGLAS moved—

That an Address be presented to the Administrator of the Government, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be laid upon the table of the House, a copy of Instructions or Executive Minutes in virtue of which the Treasurer was authorised to act in England on behalf of the Executive.

He said that some light had been thrown on the motion by the fact that the Premier had stated, in reply to a question, that there was an Executive minute referring to the matter, and that if good reasons were advanced for its production there would be no objection to that being done. The reason which he had to advance in favour of the production of the minute was, that it was a matter of considerable importance and of great public interest that they should know the form in which the Premier was instructed to perform his duties whilst absent on authority. The fact that he left the colony for a specific purpose was an important one, and by some persons it was considered that the causes which led to it were justified. The reason why he put the question, yesterday, was that he was not certain that his motion would come on. The motion had been made not formal, although he anticipated that it would have been passed as a formal one. In putting the question he thought that the paper might have been produced without any further delay.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he did not think that the hon. gentleman had thrown much light on the subject, or given any good reasons why he wanted a copy of the Executive minute. The assurance of the Premier that he acted under Executive authority ought to be sufficient for the hon. member. He did not know that there was any Executive minute in existence authorising the Premier "to act on behalf of the Executive." He had never heard of such a document. He supposed the hon. member referred to authority to "act on behalf of the Government." It was a pity that the hon. gentleman could not state in English what he wanted. What did the hon. member want with the minute? Was he going to move a motion of want of confidence, or to censure the Treasurer for going home, or for coming back? What was the object of it? The Government would be very happy to furnish a copy of any Executive minute authorising the Treasurer to act for the Government. It was a great pity that the hon. member did not state clearly what he meant, and a still greater pity that when he put a motion on the paper he should anticipate it by questions. What was the object in asking the question, the other night? It was another insinuation of a piece with what had been happening all through the session. He did not believe that the hon. member should have been allowed to put the question at all. He would assure the hon. member that for the rest of the session he would watch his proceedings closely, and when he put a motion on the paper would not allow him to anticipate it by questions.

Mr. DOUGLAS said that his object in putting the question was to elicit information in consequence of the motion having been made not formal. It was just a matter of chance that the motion had come on that night. He had no desire to make reprisals, but, if motions were made not formal unnecessarily, then reprisals must be expected. He did not say that he should make them. He did not object to substitute the word "Government" for the word "Executive," if the Colonial Secretary thought it desirable; but he did not think it mattered which word was used.

Question put and passed.

PROGRESS OF BUSINESS.

The PREMIER, in moving the adjournment of the House, said the House would sit to-morrow, and Government proposed to sit upon Monday and Tuesday only in the next week. On Wednesday a special train would convey members of Parliament and others to the Agricultural Show at Toowoomba, and on Thursday a special train,

particulars as to which would be given later, would leave Toowoomba for Roma, to convey spectators to the opening of the railway there. The train would leave Roma for Brisbane on Friday night. The next sitting-day, therefore, would be Monday. To-morrow morning the Government proposed to proceed with the Estimates.

Mr. GRIFFITH thought the announcement that the Government intended to proceed with the Estimates upon the following morning would take many hon. members by surprise. There were items of considerable importance in the Colonial Secretary's Department, which would naturally excite discussion. When he heard that afternoon that the Government intended to take the Estimates next day, he confessed that he was very much surprised; and he had no doubt that many hon. members who were absent that evening would entertain the same feeling, and would feel that they had a grievance. It would be a great convenience if the Government could see their way not to take the Estimates to-morrow.

The PREMIER said there was no subject dealt with in the Estimates which hon. members could not bring forward in another way at some period of the session. There could not be much surprise at the course the Government proposed taking, because it was generally the custom to take the Estimates on Friday mornings. There was particular reason, too, why progress should be made with the Estimates at the present time, because supply was wanted. Opportunity would be given to discuss every matter upon the Estimates.

Mr. DICKSON admitted that it was customary to take the Estimates on Friday mornings; but it would not be contended that it was usual to commence the Estimates upon that day, which, in the present case, would be the first extraordinary sitting of the session. There was generally a preliminary debate upon the magnitude and form of the Estimates.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he might also remark that it was not usual for the Opposition to obstruct for nine weeks of the session. The hon. member for Enoggera had surely forgotten that trifling circumstance on the present occasion.

The PREMIER said he thought he was consulting the convenience of hon. members opposite, as well as upon the Government side of the House, when he proposed to take the Estimates to-morrow. He had no notion that that arrangement would not meet the convenience of hon. members on the other side, nor did he now see that that would be the case.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-seven minutes to 10 o'clock.