

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 22 SEPTEMBER 1880

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

QUEENSLAND PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THIRD SESSION OF THE EIGHTH PARLIAMENT,

APPOINTED TO MEET

AT BRISBANE, ON THE SIXTH DAY OF JULY, IN THE FORTY-FOURTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF HER
MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA, IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD 1880.

[VOLUME 2 OF 1880.]

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 22 September, 1880.

Marriage Laws Amendment Bill.—Appropriation Bill No. 2.—Fassifern Railway.—Toowoomba to Crow's Nest Railway.—Clermont Railway.—Maryborough and Gympie Railway.—Bundaberg and Mount Perry Railway.

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

MARRIAGE LAWS AMENDMENT BILL.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Palmer) presented a Bill to amend and consolidate the laws relating to Marriage, which was read a first time, ordered to be printed, and the second reading fixed for Monday next.

APPROPRIATION BILL No. 2.

The PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith) said that before the House proceeded to deal with the railway motions standing in the name of the Minister for Works he wished to refer to the answer which he gave to the leader of the Opposition last night, to the effect that those motions would be taken as the first business. When he gave that answer he was not aware that the Acting-Governor had made arrangements to proceed to Melbourne. He believed that it was His Excellency's intention to leave Brisbane at 12 o'clock on Friday. If he had known that His Excellency was about to leave at such an early date he should have brought forward an Appropriation Bill in the usual way; but as things were, he would take the unusual course of asking the leave of the House to pass

an Appropriation Bill for £100,000 through all its stages that day. He considered it quite a formal matter, inasmuch as a certain amount of progress had been made with the Estimates, and the money was required to meet the ordinary disbursements of the Government. He would move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as will admit of resolutions of Committee of Supply and Ways and Means being reported forthwith, and of a Bill being passed through all its stages in one day.

The HON. S. W. GRIFFITH said the Opposition knew that the money was wanted, and they would offer no opposition to the passing of the Bill.

Question put and passed.

The House resolved itself into Committee of Supply.

The PREMIER moved—

That there be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1880-81, the sum of £100,000 for or towards the expenses of the various departments of the Service of the colony.

Question put and passed.

The resolution was reported to the House and adopted.

The House then resolved itself into Committee of Ways and Means.

The PREMIER moved—

That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1880-81, a sum not exceeding £100,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue of Queensland.

Question put and passed.

The resolution was reported to the House and adopted.

The PREMIER introduced a Bill to give effect to the foregoing resolution; it was read a first and second time, and the House went into Committee to consider it.

Mr. DICKSON asked whether the amount now asked for, in addition to the amount already obtained, would cover the expenditure of the first quarter of the financial year?

The PREMIER replied that he anticipated it would be quite enough.

The various clauses having been passed, the Bill was reported to the House without amendments, read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence by message in the usual form.

FASSIFERN RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Macrossan), in moving—

1. That the Plans, Sections, and Book of Reference of the Fassifern line of railway, as laid on the table of this House on the 3rd August, be approved.

2. That the said Plans, Sections, and Book of Reference be forwarded to the Legislative Council for their approval, with a message in the usual form—

said that this railway the plans of which were now under consideration, was the first of the branch lines initiated by the Government. There had been several surveys of the line made. The one first proposed to be adopted had a gradient of 1-in-50. His attention having been directed to the desirability of taking the line along the main road—partly to avoid the large claims for compensation for land sent in by the people along the line of survey—he ordered a survey to be made on the main road, and found that a good route could be got for a certain number of miles on a gradient of 1-in-50. As this was a branch line, and one not likely to carry a large amount of traffic at any one time, he considered it would be as well to try the experiment of a gradient of 1-in-30. With that gradient they could keep the road, to a great extent, in its present condition. The line had been surveyed for a distance of 17 miles and odd chains, of which 13 miles and 14 chains were along the road. It started about half-a-mile from the terminus at Ipswich, on the summit of a hill on which the Ipswich Grammar School was built, and kept to the west of Brisbane street and Little Ipswich, striking the main road on the Churchill; thence it followed the road more or less for a distance of about 13 miles from Ipswich. There were three deviations to avoid certain sharp ridges. The total cost of the line—17 miles and odd chains—was estimated by the Chief Engineer at £51,088, being at the rate of £2,867 per mile. Hon. members were aware that the estimate placed on the Loan Bill of last year was at the rate of £2,500 a-mile. That estimate would not have been exceeded had it not been for the unprecedented rise in the price of railway material, which enhanced the cost per mile by about £360. If that amount were deducted, the cost would be exactly £2,507 per mile, or only £7 above the amount placed on the Loan Bill. In reality, according to the Chief Engineer's estimate, the line could be built as strongly and could carry traffic as heavy as the main line. The Chief Engineer provided for over 1,000 cubic yards of ballast per mile, or $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches under the sleepers. He (Mr. Macrossan) intended, if possible, to reduce that; and that the line should be really a branch line, and not equal in every respect to the main lines, because if that was not done construction would continue at the same rate of cost. Besides, it was only intended to run at the rate of eight or ten miles an hour,

that being considered sufficient for the requirements of the traffic. Consequently a smaller amount of ballast under the rails would be required. Mr. Ballard, the engineer of the Northern and Central lines, was actually doing with a far less amount of ballast on the main lines than was here put down for this branch line. He was perfectly justified, he thought, in saying that he should do with a great deal less ballast than was intended to be used by the Chief Engineer. In many places, where the formation was sound, the line might be made with hardly any ballast at all. Thousands of miles of line had been made in America on that system, and he could not see why this colony should not make an experiment in that direction. If it could be done, it would be a great benefit to the colony in its branch railway system. Of course, on the black soil and on other places where the surface was unsound some ballast would be required. He believed, therefore, that the amount of ballast might be reduced to 500 or 600, or perhaps 700 yards per mile. Every 100 yards of ballast made a difference of £30 a mile. A portion of the line went through private property, but only a very small portion compared with what it would have gone through had the line not been on the road. The cost, he anticipated, would not be much enhanced by claims for compensation. With the exception of the first portion of the line—1 mile and 2 chains—the land required would not cost very much. On a line with a gradient of 1-in-30, their least powerful class of engine, class A, which weighed, including tender, $25\frac{1}{2}$ tons, would carry a gross load, exclusive of engine and tender, of $27\frac{1}{2}$ tons. But there was another class of engine—the small consolidated Baldwin's engine—which would be suitable for the line in event of a heavy pressure of traffic. That engine and tender weighed $27\frac{1}{2}$ tons, and would draw, on a line of 1-in-30, a load of 51 tons. They need scarcely be afraid, therefore, that the line would not be up to the traffic requirements of the district. If at any time during harvest there should be a heavy amount of traffic, the consolidation engine could be put on, and at ordinary times, when traffic was slack, and they had to depend chiefly upon passengers, the lighter class of engine would be used. As to the rails, they would be of the same weight as those on the main lines. He did not believe in reducing the weight of rails. The difference in cost between 30-lb. or 35-lb. rails and 41-lb. rails would not compensate for the deficiency in the stability of the line itself. He did not believe it was safe to go below a 41-lb. rail. Lighter rails had been used on the Maryborough and Gympie lines, but it was a mistake, and it would be found by-and-bye that those rails were too light, and they would ultimately have to be replaced by heavier ones. As to station accommodation, he would say at once that he was not going in for any station accommodation whatever, unless at the end of the line. The trains would be worked in such a way that those in charge of them would take up the traffic along the line whenever it was necessary. They would take up and put down passengers and goods at places where there might be a platform of a limited description—an earthen platform backed with a couple of logs. At the end of the line, at Harrisville, there would be a platform and a shed for the protection of goods brought there for transit. The total amount put down for station accommodation was only £935. The deviations hon. members would see indicated on the plans, and they, with the level crossings, were estimated to cost £1,351. The estimate would very likely be found to be more than the actual cost of the line. He could speak with confidence on that point from the knowledge he

had now of the subject. On account of the gradient there would be very few earthworks to make, the total amount per mile being something like 3,000 cubic yards. Were it not for the two bridges and culverts, and the precautions they had to take to shut off storm-water, the line could be made for at least £500 or £650 less per mile than it would actually cost. But in such a district, where the rains were sometimes unprecedentedly heavy, it was necessary to make some provision for storm-water. As there were several other similar motions to be proposed, he would not further take up the time of the House.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he was glad they had at last got the opportunity of approving of the first of the branch lines that had been for so many years talked about. He was glad also that the changes which the Minister for Works proposed to introduce in the construction of the line would certainly have the effect of diminishing its cost. He believed the line could be made with advantage along the road, that the gradient might be increased to 1 in 30 as proposed, and that the stations and other expensive works might be dispensed with. But he was rather sorry the Minister for Works had not thought fit to reduce the weight of the rails. Even in that there was a great deal more diminution in expense than at first sight appeared. Heavy rails and powerful engines would be a temptation to run the trains at greater speed, and so wear the line out faster. It was a mistake to make one part of the line much better than the other, for it involved all sorts of risks. For instance, the Minister for Works intended to use a much less quantity of ballast than was used on the main lines: therefore, the line would not be as stable, or as fit to run heavy weights on at a high rate of speed. It would be just as much unfit for going at a high speed or carrying heavy weights from the absence of ballast as it would be if there were more ballast and lighter rails. If the rails were lighter the expense would be considerably reduced, and it would involve a diminution in cost of rolling-stock and power of engine. The rolling-stock proposed to be used was certainly too expensive for a line the speed on which would only be eight miles an hour. Had the hon. gentleman considered the question of using the new kind of engines? A line along a main road ought to be so adapted as not to frighten horse traffic with the puffing and blowing of the engine. It was an essential ingredient in running lines along roads that the engines should be of the improved class now made expressly for that purpose. He was sorry the Minister for Works had not considered that point. He was reminded that these engines would run on lighter rails than those he proposed. He did not quite understand how the crossing from one side of the road to the other was to be effected if the rails were placed above the road. That was where the difference came in between lines running along main roads and lines upon rails expressly made for the purpose and let into the ground. In Sydney, for example, one might cross the line of tramway with a wheeled vehicle at right angles or any other angle without the slightest risk. That was a matter, however, upon which the House would no doubt have further information. He had no opposition, of course, to offer to this motion, but he hoped the expense would be reduced to £2,500 a-mile, which he thought was amply sufficient. He understood the Minister for Works to say that the cost would be considerably increased by the high price of material; but he was happy to inform the House that that was not likely to continue, because papers recently received from England showed that rails were quoted at £7 per ton, and in one paper at less than £6 per ton. The rails for the line under consideration were

not yet ordered; and he anticipated, therefore, that the cost would be reduced rather than increased. He would confess that he should be disappointed if the cost of the line was not considerably under £2,500 per mile.

The PREMIER said that he quite agreed with his hon. colleague in fixing the rails at 41½ lbs. The rails used at present on the Queensland railways were too small, and the whole tendency of engineering opinion in these days was to work with as strong rails as they could afford to buy. He was sure that a lighter rail than that now proposed would be soon knocked to pieces with the 27-ton engines that the Minister for Works proposed to use. The leader of the Opposition spoke in favour of the system of rails adopted in the street railways in Sydney, but the hon. gentleman must remember that they were the most expensive rail made: in fact, the rails alone would cost a great deal more than the whole works connected with our branch lines. It was an enormously heavy rail made in a peculiar manner; it required twice rolling, and was grooved in addition. The rails that were used for running in the street in England and throughout the world were necessarily enormously heavy, in order to insure the ordinary wheel traffic running without hindrance. In this colony they could not afford a rail of that kind, and must adopt the usual system of keeping the rail above the road, and making provision, as far as necessary, for vehicles crossing the line. With regard to the price of rails, they had been down somewhat; but the latest telegram received last month showed that they could not then be purchased under £9 a-ton. With regard to the ballast, he quite approved of the remarks made by his hon. colleague, although that gentleman seemed to differ very much from the Engineer-in-Chief. Ballast was an element that the English engineer did not see his way well to get rid of. He was prejudiced himself in favour of it, and of course there was no question that it made the best line; but that at the same time a perfectly good line, perfectly adapted for all the purposes of the colony, could be made without ballast was proved by the experience of America, where at least 90 out of every 100 miles of railway had no ballast whatever, though they carried a much larger amount of traffic than was likely to be carried by any of the branch railways of Queensland for many years to come. The leader of the Opposition referred to a class of engines that worked upon the common road without frightening horses. He had not seen such an engine. The engine sometimes referred to as such was one used in Sydney. In his experience, engines of that kind frightened horses as much as ordinary locomotives. He had seen locomotives running through crowded streets in New York, Jersey City, and towns where the streets were more crowded than ours could expect to be for at least half a century. They ran with ordinary locomotives, and the horses soon got used to it. The same thing might be seen at Adelaide where the ordinary engine ran right through the main street. At first, no doubt, there would be accidents, but people would have to be cautious. It really very often happened that the attempts to improve an engine from this point of view made them so ugly that the danger was increased. One thing he did not like in the speech of the Minister for Works, namely, his great fancy for American engines. His (Mr. McIlwraith's) experience did not lead him to think they were anything like the quality of English engines, and if English makers had the same chance of making engines as the Americans they would beat them on their own ground. There was one shop in Glasgow, for example, better than anything he had seen

in America, but the English did their work in a most expensive way. In England it was the bad custom for the railway companies to send drawings to the makers, and the consequence was that for every engine that had to be constructed the locomotive makers in Glasgow and other parts of the United Kingdom had to make fresh templates. He had seen whole rows of buildings filled with these disused. In America a firm would make engines of a certain class only, and the people who required engines would be certain of what they would have. The makers would not construct their engines according to the designs of anybody—at least, if they did, they declined to put their names upon them. But they made them for certain gradients and certain speeds, and were their own designers, as all locomotive makers should be. The House would see the reasonableness of such a practice. If everybody took the notion into their heads to order a watch, and to send with the order designs as to the pinions and size of the wheels, they would get probably a very elaborate watch, but it would be a very expensive article and would very likely never keep time. This might be a somewhat exaggerated illustration, but it showed the principle, and this was how Americans had gone far ahead of us in making cheap railway engines. He was satisfied that if they allowed the makers in England to send out engines adapted to their wants, and not to trouble their own locomotive superintendents with sending home drawings, it would be better. Let them send home a statement of their wants, and take the engines—the engines recommended for the particular work required—and he was satisfied that in the long run the English would beat the Americans and give the colony better engines at a cheaper rate.

Mr. McLEAN said the Minister for Works was to be congratulated in making the first step towards branch lines an accomplished fact; but he considered that it was altogether too much of an experiment. He disagreed with the statement as to the expense of stations. The Minister for Works must remember that the great object was to take up traffic as much as possible. He said his intention was to have no stations at all, but only a platform on a couple of logs and a small quantity of ballast. He would find that if there was no necessity for stations to issue and deliver tickets there would at least be for goods sheds; and it would be as well if the Government had made provision at the outset for having sheds erected wherever they saw there was a possibility of their being used, such as at places where roads from agricultural districts joined and there was a good deal of traffic. Unless facilities were given for farmers to put their goods into sheds to await the arrival and departure of trains, there would be instances where farmers would cart their produce into Ipswich, instead of running the chance of injuring it by exposure to the weather, which might be fair and shining now, but which within half-an-hour would bring a storm that would destroy tons of produce. It would be as well if the hon. gentleman had therefore faced the difficulty of making sheds. He could not agree with the hon. gentleman on the question of ballast. If they reduced the ballast and laid it too thin, they would not only find it more expensive in maintenance, but that accidents would frequently happen. He always understood that a reduction of the ballast was at the expense of the sleepers. In America where there was not much ballast the sleepers were closer than they were here, so that in trying to save on one hand they would incur increased expenses on the other. It would have been well if the hon. gentleman at the outset had taken the advice of his engi-

neers on the question of ballast, lest he should be making a dear and fatal experiment. He (Mr. McLean) would do all he could to assist the Government in carrying out the branch-line system, because he was one of those who believed that it would not only be a great accommodation to the colony, but would soon be a considerable means of remuneration.

The Hon. J. DOUGLAS said he was glad to find that they were at last going to have a cheap kind of railway made, but he was still a little incredulous whether the estimate would be reached, and it would have been better if they had been provided with distinct data from the engineer reporting on it. Without that they would be likely to go astray. In all these cases it was desirable to have an estimate in black and white from the engineer as to what he intended to do in each individual case, and on previous occasions that had been done. This scheme would no doubt be carried out under favourable circumstances; he supposed that there would not have to be much land purchased, but what was purchased must be added to the estimate, so that it was not final, although probably it was a fair estimate of the construction and cost of the rails. He should have been inclined in an experiment of this kind to have first arrived at the weight of the engine it was intended to run, and in this respect the Minister for Works had not departed very far from the present estimates. If the line was calculated to run a consolidated engine weighing 27 tons, it could never be a very light or cheap line. The estimate of the cost and character of a railway must be gauged chiefly by the weight of the engine, and it seemed to him that the proposed engine that would have to run upon this line, at least on occasions, would require very considerable strength in all the material employed. He was incredulous, therefore, whether it might not have been lower, say an engine not exceeding 15 tons, that would have enabled the Minister for Works to estimate a different construction altogether. Still, he was glad they were going to have lines of that kind at such prices as were specified. With regard to the ballast, if little was used at first the matter could be remedied at any time; and, if it were found that the ballast originally estimated was too light, more could be added. Ballast depended a good deal upon the nature of the foundation, embankments, cuttings, and sub-structure in fact; so that this was very much a matter of experience. With regard to the locomotives, and what fell from the Premier with regard to American designed engines, the committee which sat upon the subject last year ascertained, from some correspondence produced, that engines could be made in England on the American pattern at a lower cost than in America. It seemed that in New Zealand they had obtained such engines equally good in every way and at a lower price. The American manufacturers, in ingenuity and adaptation to circumstances, were a long way ahead of English engineers, and the reason assigned by the Premier why engines were more expensive in England than America was, that although no doubt the English were good manufacturers they were held in the bonds of the precedents and customs of the great railway companies; and the Americans were more likely to carry out experiments than English engineers. It would be advantageous if the hon. gentleman would inform the House whether the Engineer-in-Chief had supplied the total estimates both in reference to that and the other lines. It was always desirable to get a definite statement from the engineer. His credit was then involved in working the line up to the standard. A statement such as that of the hon. gentleman to-night was scarcely characterised with the same definiteness as an estimate of the Engineer-in-

Chief would be. If that were obtained the House would have a better guarantee that the estimate would not be exceeded. The estimates of Mr. Stanley, he was inclined to think, had lately been well within the mark, and the House might fairly anticipate that they would not be led astray. The engineers of the earlier days of the colony had, unfortunately, made very loose estimates, but a better system had been gradually introduced, and the credit of the engineers was felt to be to a great extent involved in the production of estimates which could be thoroughly relied upon. He hoped, therefore, that estimates, according to data furnished by the Engineer-in-Chief, would be laid on the table before the session closed.

The HON. G. THORN said he rose to say a few words in support of the motion of the Minister for Works. It would be necessary for the hon. gentleman to bear in mind that there was no finality in railway construction, and that goods-sheds and other additions would probably be required. It had been found necessary to provide goods-sheds on the Western line, and there could be no doubt that one would be wanted on the Fassifern line. With regard to the Fassifern line, it was not likely to be a financial success unless it were carried some considerable distance further, so that it could tap the Fassifern Scrub where the most settlement was, and where the bulk of the produce of the district was raised. He believed, however, that the line might be made well within the estimate, and that a sufficient surplus would remain to enable the Minister for Works to carry out that extension. He approved of the statement of the Premier with regard to the adoption of 40-lb. rails—if the rails were any lighter, lighter rolling-stock would have to be used and fresh expenditure incurred. With a ruling gradient of 1 in 30, and engines capable of drawing 50 tons, all the requirements of that district would be served for a considerable time. He held with the Premier that English engines were greatly superior to American, but he went further, and maintained that those of colonial manufacture were superior to either. On the Western line, the American engine, after nearly every trip, had to go into the repair-shed; the English ones less frequently; but the Queensland engines rarely required repairs. It had been shown that engines superior to those imported from America or England, and more durable, could be made within the colony, and he hoped the Minister for Works would revive the practice which he (Mr. Thorn) had started, of making engines in the colony. The necessary material and the people to make them were here. He hoped this motion and those following it would pass.

Mr. KATES said if the Fassifern line were to be made a success it would be necessary that facilities should be given to the settlers to get their produce carried, and therefore the erection of goods-sheds would be absolutely necessary. He knew from experience that farmers on the Western line often preferred to take their goods direct to market rather than carry them five, six, or even eight miles, to a railway station. Unless goods-sheds were constructed, say at every six miles of the line, these branch railways would not pay.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he was quite satisfied with the near prospect of having these branch lines made, and he did not intend to raise small objections. Goods-sheds would no doubt be absolutely required as soon as the line was opened, and the Minister for Works would most probably grant them. When it was found where the traffic was likely to centre earthen platforms could be constructed, upon which goods-sheds might afterwards be erected, and

that would be all that would be required for the present. With regard to ballast, it was impossible to say with how little ballast a line might be safe; and as it was only intended that the trains on this line should run at the rate of ten miles an hour, an experiment might be made in some parts of the line of doing without ballast altogether. He had recently read some statistics with reference to the manufacture of locomotives in England and America, tending to show that the workman worked harder in America than in England, though the work done might not be so good. That, if true, might be a reason for the comparative cheapness of American engines. Experiments had been made in the colony with engines of American, English, and Queensland make, and it had been generally observed that those manufactured at Ipswich were much superior to the others, and also cheaper in the end. They cost more at first, but other engines required so much more repairing that they were found to be less expensive in the long run. It would be worth while to test their comparative merits; and if the colonial-made engines were cheaper it would be a great advantage to use them exclusively, as the employment they would afford, and the increased consumption of dutiable goods that would follow, would more than compensate for any additional cost. He was glad the Minister for Works had made a start with the branch lines, and he hoped they would be commenced with as much expedition as possible.

Mr. NORTON said it would be hardly possible to do without some goods-sheds on the line. If a farmer carted his goods four or five miles to the railway, and then found that the train being full he had to take them back again, he would hardly be likely to make the attempt a second time. He did not intend to offer any opposition to the motion, but this appeared to him an opportune time to suggest that on one of the routes where freight would be comparatively light the tramway system might be initiated. In many places on the continent of Europe, in England and in New Zealand, Sydney and South Australia, tramways were in use principally for passenger traffic, and he did not see why they should not also be used to carry goods. He understood that on the proposed lines the lightest engines used would be 27½ tons—the consolidated Baldwin, capable of drawing 51 tons; whereas on the Cassel Company's tramway, to which reference had before been made, the engines were only 7½ tons in full working order, and were capable of carrying a load of 12 tons at the rate of 10½ miles an hour. An experiment with a tramway of that description might very well be tried, and if it were successful the system might be extended. It was only by the adoption of some such system that the wants of the colony in the way of branch lines could be carried out for many years to come. He believed, however, that—from what cause he did not know—the first cost of constructing the tramway lines was rather more than that of ordinary lines. The line laid down in Sydney had involved an enormous expenditure; but that was because, the line being in the main street, the roadway on either side had to be laid down very carefully to prevent obstruction of the ordinary traffic. Notwithstanding that heavy expenditure, however, the line gave a net return, for the first three months, of 33½ per cent., according to the report of the gentleman who had charge of it. The leader of the Opposition had referred to the great danger, in running ordinary engines along the roads, of frightening horses, thereby causing accidents. This difficulty was obviated in the case of the engines made by Merryweather and Co., which were entirely concealed in a wooden casing, the top of the funnel only being visible. They were

very small, no smoke or steam was emitted, and when in motion they only made a rumbling sound which had no effect upon horses. In New Zealand, he had been informed, the tramway engines travelled very rapidly, and could pull up in their own length to take a passenger. Those on the Continent were provided with the patent shut-off brake which prevented the driver from exceeding the regulation speed. On the Cassel line the engines were very small and very strong; the steepest gradient on the line was 1 in $16\frac{1}{2}$; on some portions of the line the gradient was 1 in 18; and on a great part it was 1 in 35. One portion of the line within a comparatively short distance forms a complete letter S curve, whilst the gradient was 1 in 18, and yet there was not the slightest difficulty in running the train up it. It was quite evident, therefore, that with a light engine and light carriages and trucks it would not be necessary to cut down a line to anything like the level they were obliged to adopt under the present system, and that instead of having a gradient of 1 in 30, which was that named by the Minister for Works, they could have 1 in 20 without any reduction of speed. He did not wish to press the hon. Minister for Works too much in this matter, but he referred to it in order that the matter might receive consideration before a number of the proposed branch lines could possibly be carried out. On the particular line under consideration they might have heavier work, but on some of the other lines he did not see why the experiment should not be tried. With regard to rails, he believed the rail in Sydney, called the Larsen, need be used only on roads along which there was a great deal of traffic, and that in country roads the ordinary rail was sufficient, and would do in this colony if the roads were kept in the same state as ordinary country roads were. That, of course, would reduce the cost considerably; and, taking into account the greater gradient that could be used, he was inclined to think that all these tramways could be constructed as cheaply as ordinary tram lines. He hoped the hon. Minister for Works would consider the matter, and that one line at least would be constructed on the principle he (Mr. Norton) had mentioned.

Mr. FRASER thought that the Minister for Works was to be congratulated on having taken the initiative in inaugurating a cheap system of railways. Respecting ballast and that sort of thing, he (Mr. Fraser) was unable to express an opinion, but he presumed that it was possible for this colony to do what had been done elsewhere. It was singular to notice how very slow they were to seize on an example set to them by countries where an experiment had been successfully carried out. The hon. Minister for Works had expressed a desire to limit roadside stations to a certain extent, but he was quite sure that the hon. gentleman would find that a branch line would be of very little success unless he provided sheds at certain distances for the reception of produce. He thought the hon. gentleman had already found the necessity of them, as he had had to erect sheds at Goodna, Bundamba, Rosewood, and other places. His (Mr. Fraser's) object in rising, however, was not so much in reference to those matters as to say a few words with respect to the construction of engines. There appeared to be an infatuation on the part of some hon. members for American manufactured engines. He thought that they were specially indebted to the Americans for showing them how engines could be adapted to a new country, but at the same time he thought they were in a position to try and manufacture their own engines. He was not an advocate for having that done in the Government workshops at Ipswich, as he thought that those shops should be em-

ployed simply in attending to repairs to engines; but there were several engineering firms in the colony which should be quite competent to turn out locomotives, and he was sure that if they were left in the hands of those firms and they were supplied with plans in the way stated by the Premier that evening, they would be able to carry them out satisfactorily and quite equal both as regarded quality and price to those imported from America. The Minister for Works might, perhaps, get engines from America cheaper than he could have them manufactured here; but, although he (Mr. Fraser) was not an advocate for protection, he thought that there were circumstances under which they were justified in giving work of this kind to their own manufacturers.

Mr. DICKSON said he rose simply to express his gratification that the Government were at last alive to the necessity of constructing branch railways—a policy the wisdom of which had been forced upon them so often by the Opposition. He was glad to see that the continued expostulations of the Opposition had at last had such a satisfactory result; and on that ground he was glad to congratulate the hon. Minister for Works on having become a convert, notwithstanding that the speech which had been made that evening by the hon. gentleman was an extremely cautious and timid one. The Government had at last recognised the fact that the country generally demanded these branch railways, and had at last acceded to the demand. But if the Government had been impressed with the necessity of branch lines in this colony, and intended to carry out the policy in a manner that would enable it to be tested in its best light, they would not have contented themselves with the small measure of branch-line policy which was shadowed forth in the resolutions on the business paper. It was his intention to support the motions for making the Fassifern and also the Toowoomba and Crow's Nest lines, and he was glad to see that the Government had become converts to these matters and had asked the House to sanction these lines, which he believed would prove most satisfactory. He did not intend to enter into details of construction, but he must say that he rather agreed with the Minister for Works, that it would be desirable to have 41½-lb. rails, the same as on other lines, as it was reasonable to suppose that traffic would increase on the branch lines, and, therefore, it was best to have a line constructed with a view to future increased traffic. He wished to know, however, why no signs had been made of carrying out a most important branch line in the district represented by the hon. member for Moreton and himself. How was it that nothing was said about a branch line to the Bald Hills or Caboolture, which was one of the oldest farming districts? If the Government possessed machinery for constructing lines on an economical basis, like the proposed line to Fassifern, then the line he (Mr. Dickson) had referred to should not be neglected. He knew that the Minister for Works would say that the resumption of lands would be too expensive, and that the matter must remain in abeyance for the present; but had not the House furnished the hon. gentleman with the means of avoiding such heavy cost during the last week? That objection was therefore taken away from the hon. gentleman; and considering that a survey had been made of a line, and that a sum of £50,000 had been voted for its construction, he must say that he was not a believer in the sincerity of the Government as regarded branch lines when they omitted all mention of that particular line. He should have liked to have heard the hon. gentleman indicate in his speech that the lines mentioned on the notice paper

were not all the branch lines he intended to move for during the present session; and that those lines to which the sanction of Parliament had already been given would be carried out without delay. He hoped to hear from the hon. gentleman that his (Mr. Dickson's) surmises were mistaken, and that his constituency, and that of the hon. member for Moreton, were thought by the hon. gentleman to be as much entitled to have their necessities considered as the districts for which lines were now under consideration. If the money had not been voted last session, he (Mr. Dickson) would not have referred to these particular lines, but the money having been voted, he considered that the Government should have given some assurance of their sincerity to construct them when proceeding with the lines referred to in the resolutions.

Mr. ARCHER said the hon. member had persuaded himself that the Government had at last adopted the policy of the Opposition in proposing these branch lines: but it was not this (Mr. Archer's) intention to speak on that matter, but to refer to remarks which had been made as to the sort of carriages which should run on those lines. It had been stated by many hon. members that they were anxious that they should not be constructed in America, but in this colony; and one hon. member had gone to the length of saying that he believed that they could be made as cheaply here, if not cheaper, than they could be imported. But when the committee which sat last year took evidence on that question, there was not a manufacturer who was examined who did not state that a carriage made here would cost 50 per cent. more than it would at home. But there were other things to be considered. When they had their engines made at home, there were plans accompanying them; and without saying anything against the colonial workshops, they could not possibly have the same experience of plans, as every year fresh improvements were being made, and if they were not proved to be failures they were adopted by the English manufacturers. Thus it would be quite impossible for the colony to compete with the improvements made in England every year. The hon. member for Northern Downs (Mr. Thorn) seemed to think that they had already manufactured locomotives at the Ipswich workshops, but they had not done so; all they had done was merely to use up the duplicates of engines sent out from England and make their own boilers. All the difficult parts of the engine had been imported from England; and if they commenced the manufacture of engines they would not only still have to import many parts of them, but also to introduce many new tools. If he was not mistaken, the foreman of the shops, who was examined, stated that even after using the duplicate parts of engines imported from England, the cost of making a locomotive here was 50 per cent. in favour of the imported engine. As to the question which had been raised with regard to American and English engines, the Premier had informed them that if they wanted engines from America to suit their lines they should send home plans, but that had never been done; but engines had been sent out from a stock consisting, perhaps, of several hundreds of the same pattern, whilst, with regard to English engines, they were made according to plans and specifications sent home. If plans were sent to England, and the manufacturers there were asked to send what experience had proved to be the best engines, and those engines were on arrival found to suit us, the manufacturer would be able to make all his tools to suit that particular description of engine. They should not allow America to bind the colony to any particular engine, but send to England for engines specially ordered.

He was satisfied from what he had seen and heard that the English engine required less repairs than the American. For those reasons they should not pay 50 and probably 75 per cent. more than they could get engines from England for. Fifty per cent., at any rate, was mentioned by Mr. Walker, of Maryborough, who had probably as fine a foundry and engineers' shop as anyone in the colony. Before they thought of making their own engines, let them get from England the best type that could be supplied without sending an order for any special type—only ordering the best, and giving the size and the power wanted. If they did that, and trusted to first-rate manufacturers, they would get engines cheaper and better, and engines that would last longer than any others they could get.

Question put and passed.

TOOWOOMBA TO CROW'S NEST RAILWAY.

Mr. MACROSSAN said that with regard to the next motion referring to the plans, sections, and books of reference of the line from Toowoomba to Crow's Nest, he was sorry he could not say as much for this line as for that just passed. Hon. members would recollect the line had been surveyed on a resolution passed by the House in August, 1878, on the motion of the present Minister for Lands that a line should be surveyed from Toowoomba to Crow's Nest *via* Meringandan. It was an unfortunate thing that the resolution was carried in the way it was, because it had hampered the survey of the line by saying that any line between Toowoomba and Crow's Nest should go by Meringandan. The consequence had been that they were obliged to descend so as to ascend. Hon. members were aware that Toowoomba was some considerable distance lower than the summit of the Range at Harlaxton. Then from Toowoomba to the point of deviation from the main line there was another descent; the total descent from the summit of the Range at Harlaxton being 250 feet. When in reality they should be ascending all the time to reach Crow's Nest, they had to go over an elevated point 140 feet above the summit of the Range at Harlaxton, and instead of keeping on the height when there they had to go 250 feet below, which necessitated a rise of 400 feet from the point of departure to the highest point of the line at Crow's Nest. This would cause the line to be more costly than the estimate, which, as hon. members might see by referring to the motion of last year, was £2,500 a-mile. He believed it would hardly be possible to keep to £2,500 a-mile, even on the most favourable route they could find. It would be impossible to keep to £4,500 by the route as surveyed. If they took the line from Harlaxton and tried to get to the main road as soon as possible, it would be possible to make a line for £3,500 a-mile. That, however, would be determined by survey. Such was his opinion, and he had been over the country, although it was about twelve months ago. Speaking from recollection, the rise was only 143 feet from Harlaxton, and they could very likely get a line for that price by using the main road as much as possible. The result of the cramping survey which made it compulsory to go by Meringandan had been that the average amount of earthworks per mile was nearly three times as much as the average on the line just passed, or 9,000 cubic yards per mile; and the estimated cost per mile for the short distance of about 10 miles was £4,429, or a total cost of £43,193. The House authorised the construction of 30 miles; but the plan laid on the table was for a distance of a little under 10 miles. Besides the disadvantages

he had stated of being obliged to descend so far to reach Crow's Nest, and then being compelled to ascend afterwards to a height of 400 feet in a distance of 25 miles, there was a further disadvantage, as shown in a petition presented by the Minister for Lands from settlers living along the line of survey, not as proposed by the plan on the table, but by a route contemplated by the people themselves. The petition, referring to the plans on the table, said—

"That for a distance of twelve miles there are only six or seven settlers, neither of whom is engaged in agricultural pursuits.

"That for the above distance of twelve miles there is no likelihood of an agricultural population being settled on the land, it being only suitable for pastoral purposes.

"That, at a large public meeting held at Geham on the 22nd day of November, 1879, at which more than three hundred *bona fide* settlers attended, resolutions were passed nearly unanimously in favour of a new survey.

"That at the above meeting the following resolution was carried without opposition, viz. :—

"That this meeting would suggest that the line should be surveyed and constructed so that after passing Meringandan it would reach the main Highfields road at or near the Court-house, Five-mile Camp, parish of Geham, and follow as near as practicable the summit of the range at Crow's Nest."

Hon. members who had visited that part of the country would know that the main road ran along the summit of the range. The petition went on to say—

"That your petitioners firmly believe that by taking this route the whole traffic of the district would not only be tapped, but that there would be a great saving in the cost of construction, owing, in the first place, to the almost level nature of the land, and, in the second place, it would pass through an unlimited quantity of timber suitable for its construction.

"That your petitioners learn that a feature survey for a probable alternative route *via* Geham Creek and main road has been made; but in their opinion, though a slight improvement on the first, it is not at all a suitable survey."

The petition was numerous signed, and asked for a survey to be made with the view of constructing the railway in accordance with the resolution. In the face of the very much increased cost of the line over the estimated cost as proposed by the Government last year, and in the face of that petition, he could not possibly recommend to the House the adoption of this route. His intention was to withdraw the resolution, and to have a survey made if the House would permit him—for of course he would take the approval of the House to what he was about to propose as his authority for having a survey made from Harlaxton to Crow's Nest. By so doing they would have only 143 feet to rise to reach the highest summit of the Main Range. He therefore thought he was justified in supposing that he could construct a line which would meet the requirements of the people of the district, and be very little above the estimated cost of last year. He would therefore withdraw this motion, promising to make an immediate survey of the route from Harlaxton to Crow's Nest, keeping as much as possible along the main road and on the summit of the range.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that the hon. gentleman had no right to get up and make a long speech without concluding with a motion. He (Mr. Griffith) should have liked, himself, to have had an opportunity of saying something upon this matter.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It was in explanation.

The SPEAKER: The hon. Minister for Works is entitled to make an explanation and then withdraw his motion. If the hon. member wishes to speak he can move the adjournment of the House.

Mr. GROOM said he would move the adjournment of the House so as to have the opportunity of asking the Minister for Works to seriously consider what it was he contemplated. He knew the district thoroughly, and had known it for the last eighteen years; and, knowing it familiarly, he would tell the hon. gentleman that the idea of taking the railway from Harlaxton along the Main Range to Crow's Nest was the greatest absurdity he ever heard of. The thing could not possibly be done. It was true that Harlaxton was the highest point of the Range, but from there they would have to make a gradual ascent still further. Then they would come to a place marked on the old map of Toowoomba, and on the survey of New South Wales, and which was at present called Stony Pinch. Here there was a steep ascent, up which it would be impossible to carry a railway, and when they reached the top of that there was still another ascent. Altogether, the project was an utterly impracticable one. In a private conversation he had with Mr. Thorneloe Smith, the engineer, that gentleman said it would be impossible to take a railway in that direction unless they repeated the difficulties encountered in ascending the Main Range. If the line was carried out as proposed, they would have to start from Harlaxton and cut in and out among the ridges in order to reach a certain bit of country. When the member for Aubigny, now the Minister for Lands, moved the cancellation of the resolution which proposed a branch line from Highfields to the top of the Range—

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Highfields Railway Station.

Mr. GROOM said he ought to have said from Highfields Railway Station to the top of the Range. The difficulty of reaching this place from Toowoomba was pointed out at the time to which he referred, and, according to the engineers, the scheme was pronounced impracticable, except at an expense which the House would scarcely support—something between seven or eight thousand pounds a mile. The motion of the hon. member was that the line should pass from Toowoomba to Crow's Nest, but that was a misleading idea. The line would not start from Toowoomba, for it was a great distance beyond what was called Cranley's Crossing, where they struck off amongst a class of settlers really deserving of railway communication, owing to the peculiar nature of the country and the roads along which they had to bring their produce to market. The Minister for Works, at the present time, was certainly doing himself an injustice if he altogether withdrew the motion. His advice would be to let the motion pass to the extent marked on the plans, which was 9 miles 63 chains distance. If the hon. gentleman proposed this resolution and promised the House to carry the works on to that point, something might be done. Such a line would be quite enough for a time, and the works would give employment to a great number of men. He was morally certain from his own knowledge of the district that if he proposed to take the line along the natural surface of the road he would find it perfectly impracticable, for the first five or six miles at least. The natural features of the country would not admit of it, however anxious he might be to construct railways cheaply. He was quite prepared to support the hon. gentleman's proposition in the abstract, and had made the remarks he had from his intimate knowledge of the district, and not from any antagonistic motive. The hon. gentleman no doubt had considered that the expense pointed out in the petition was one which it would not be right to ask the House to sanction, and at the same time he no doubt felt that the claim of the 300 settlers who signed the petition was one

that should be considered. The hon. gentleman would really do himself no harm, but, on the contrary, would do justice to everybody concerned if he would take his line to the creek indicated on the plans, and leave the after-part to be decided at some future time.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Mr. Perkins) said he could assure the House that the interests and wishes of the people of Highfields, Meringandan, and Crow's Nest had been carefully considered before the course now before the House had been planned. It was quite unnecessary for an hon. member to get up and discuss the subject from a narrow, local standpoint, because the experience of others went considerably beyond places like Stony Finch, and extended all over the district. There was a great desire to have this railway, if there were to be any branch lines made at all. He, in common with his colleagues, believed that if there were any branch lines at all that would pay this was one of them, and if he was not sure of that he would not have taken the action he did two or three sessions ago. As a preface to any remarks he might make, he would express a hope that when branch surveys were undertaken again they would be undertaken in a different manner than had been the case for some time. The fact was that the survey of this line had extended over such a lengthened period of time that, with all his efforts to ascertain an approximate idea of the cost, it was only lately that he could do so. There were neither plans nor other information to be had until within a few months, or even weeks, ago. Who was to blame he did not pretend to say, but he could only remark that if railway surveys generally were spread over the same length of time, with the same staff and the same difficulties and delays that had overtaken the survey of this line, there would be very little railway construction indeed anywhere. There must be blame somewhere, and he trusted the blame would fall upon those who deserved it. He had been naturally, from his acquaintance with the district, very anxious about the matter. He had his own opinion about the staff, and was glad that at any rate the long-desired information was forthcoming. When the resolution authorising the survey passed the House, it was at the request of large meetings held at Highfields, Meringandan, and other places, and it was in pursuance of those resolutions, and at the express wish of the promoters of the meetings, that the motion was tabled in the way it passed the House—namely, that a survey be authorised from Toowoomba to Crow's Nest *via* Meringandan. In fact, there was no alternative but to carry out that survey, and if it had been done in an expeditious manner others might have been made in other directions before now; but he regretted to say this had not been done. Following upon this, when the discovery was made that this railway instead of passing by Geham would pass some miles away from it, action was taken by the inhabitants of the district, and the consequence was that the petition read by the Minister for Works was drawn up. The House would gather from this that there was a considerable conflict of opinion in the district as to the course the railway should take. There was no doubt that the railway should be made to Crow's Nest: about that there was no conflict of opinion, but as to the course of the line there was, and there had been from the moment the idea was initiated. However, he felt it to be his duty to call the attention of the Minister for Works to this petition which he had been asked to present, and in doing so he believed the petitioners had considerable doubt as to whether he would present it. Nevertheless he determined to do it, and would do so, so long as it was respectfully worded, even if it had been a petition for his own expulsion from the House.

The nature of the petition the House would gather from the extracts that had been read by his hon. colleague, and the pith of it was that the petitioners complained—they being best acquainted with the matter—that the railway would pass through a considerable amount of country where no farming existed. He (Mr. Perkins) must say he was surprised to hear that statement, because he knew to the contrary. He knew from his own knowledge that farming did exist in Meringandan, though whether it existed in the immediate neighbourhood of the line of railway, as surveyed, he would not say. He had not been over the survey himself, but his own belief was that there was not a place in the colony where farming was more likely to be successfully prosecuted than along that line. Railway plans were very deceptive to most people except professional men. There were many natural difficulties to be encountered, and there were differences of opinion amongst the people who would be benefited by the railway. It unfortunately happened that when a line of railway was projected the people who were unanimous as to the desirability of constructing the line quarrelled amongst themselves as to the route. Each man wanted the railway to pass his door, or else he agitated for a station in his neighbourhood. The same thing happened in the other colonies. He thought it would be well to mention a few facts which the Minister for Works had perhaps not made sufficiently clear. The summit of the range which the line would have to cross was 2,003 feet high. The line commenced at a height of 1,746 feet, then descended to 1,628 feet—the crossing at Geham Creek. The summit of the line 3 miles from Crow's Nest was 2,143½ feet high, or 515½ feet above the lowest point. He desired that fact to be particularly impressed on hon. members. The substantial reason he had for agreeing to the course which had been taken by his colleagues was, that he thought that the wear and tear on a line having such steep ascents and descents would be very great, and that but very small loads could be carried over it. In addition to that the people objected to the line, and they were bound to respect the opinions of the people expressed by petitions to the House. It had been decided that a railway should go to Crow's Nest, but the route which it should take was another matter. Although he did not profess to be an engineer, he denied that there would be any difficulty in getting round the pinch which had been indicated. He believed that if the line were kept on the high ground the difficulties mentioned would be overcome. The Minister for Works had promised that an immediate survey of the line would be undertaken, and on that understanding he consented to the course which it was proposed to take. He was desirous that the railway should be made to Crow's Nest, and if any hon. member had any doubt as to the advisability of it he should advise him to go and see the traffic over the road, and, by contrasting it with the traffic in other parts of the colony, he was certain the doubt would soon be removed. He regretted that circumstances had rendered it necessary that such a course should be adopted. It had been decided that branch railways should be constructed at a cost of £2,500 per mile, and if the cost would amount to £4,300 per mile the natural consequence would be that they would have no railways at all. It had been promised that action and energy should be thrown into the new surveys, and he was quite sure that the result of that would be that the end desired would be obtained much sooner than it would be otherwise.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he must confess that he was puzzled. It seemed as though they were having a drama, in which the Minister for

Works and the Minister for Lands were posing in the chief parts. There seemed to be two factions in the electorate of Aubigny, and both had to be propitiated. What had been the performance which they had witnessed? On the 4th of August the Minister for Works, representing the Government, laid upon the table plans, sections, and book of reference of a line of railway from Toowoomba to Crow's Nest. One would imagine when the Minister for Works did that that the Government had determined that it was a proper thing to make the railway, and that, with all the information which they had at their disposal, they were satisfied that the particular route stated was the best that could be adopted. On the 13th of September the Minister for Works gave notice that he would move that the House approve of those plans. To-day the Minister got up, and, beginning in a mild, apologetic manner, said that the line was not as good as the last one; as he went on he appeared to doubt whether the line ought to be made, and he wound up by showing conclusively that it ought not to be made under any circumstances, and naturally he withdrew the motion. It was said that the route proposed was surveyed some time ago, and what puzzled him was, that after finding the route was unsatisfactory the Government actually laid the plans on the table and gave notice of motion for their approval. The Minister for Works did not seem to know anything about the line. He said that it would be 9 miles long, and yet that for 12 miles of it there was no settlement. On referring to the plans he (Mr. Griffith) found the line was 24 miles long, and not 9, as the Minister had stated. He was bewildered; there was evidently some hidden information.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that the Minister for Works was referring to the surveyed portion of the line when he talked about 9 miles.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he should like to know whether the 9 miles were at the beginning, the end, or the middle of the line. He could not comprehend the matter at all. It clearly showed, at any rate, that the Government had not quite made up their mind about the line, or else they were playing a part which was supposed to be of use to someone, but which he must confess he could not see. As to the relative merits of the different routes, he must acknowledge that he could not express an opinion. Another extraordinary thing in connection with the matter was that money was not available for a line of 25 miles in length—to cost £4,500 a mile. A sum of £30,000 had been voted for a line 12 miles in length—that was from Toowoomba to Highfields, about half-way. He thought the country ought to be told why valuable time should be wasted in this remarkable manner. A great deal of time had been wasted this session, but certainly not by the Opposition. He did not think that such a proceeding as that which had occurred ought to be passed without comment.

The PREMIER said the only fault he could find with the Minister for Works was that he had given a great deal too much information. Had he contented himself with simply giving the very sound reason he did give for withdrawing the motion, there would have been a great deal less talk from the other side. The whole matter was perfectly plain. The House last year, on the Loan Estimates, consented to the expenditure of a certain sum of money for the purpose of making a railway from Toowoomba to Highfields; but that was to a certain extent hampered by a motion carried the previous year that a certain sum should be spent on a survey from Toowoomba to Crow's Nest. That was actually carried out, although

it had been done so slowly that it had only recently come before the Minister for Works, and he could not ask the sanction of the House to it because it would cost double the amount that it would cost if taken by another route. The line granted last year was not hampered by the condition that it should go by Crow's Nest and Meringandan. As it was extremely probable that they could get a much better line by another route, the Minister for Works had adopted a reasonable course in withdrawing the motion until another survey was made. As soon as that was done, plans would be laid on the table and the sanction of the House asked for. The success of branch railways depended on keeping them within the limits marked out by Parliament. That that was the intention of the Ministry was clearly proved by what they had done to-night.

Mr. DOUGLAS said the complaint they had made was that the Minister for Works had not satisfied himself on the matter before he placed his motion on the paper at all. Surely, on the expenditure of so large a sum of money the hon. gentleman ought to have a clear idea of his estimates; and, as he had remarked with regard to the Fassfern line, they ought to have defined estimates from the Engineer-in-Chief, in the first instance, in the form of a report to the Minister for Works, and through him to Parliament. The Minister was bound to secure the best advice he could, and no doubt did so; but why did he put the motion on the table when the whole matter was in such an immature condition? The resolution of two years ago, which had been referred to, under which a branch line from Highfields up to the Range was done away with, simply bound the Government of the time being to secure a survey from Toowoomba to Crow's Nest. That had been done and the information made available to the Department of Works. The subsequent authority of Parliament for a line from Toowoomba to Highfields waived that original demand, to a great extent. His idea was that the hon. gentleman had in some inscrutable manner to propitiate his colleague, the Minister for Lands. But it was no use trifling with the time of the House. A Minister should hold himself above the influence of petitioners—of small cliques of persons who had their own ends to serve. The question was, how the thing was to be done best and cheapest. He trusted the details of the other railways which were to come on for discussion would be more accurate than those given in the present case.

Mr. THORN said he would take advantage of the motion for adjournment to say a few words. He believed locomotives could be manufactured in the colony at something like only 15 per cent. over the English price.

Mr. DOUGLAS : 25 per cent.

Mr. THORN said with all due deference to the hon. member, they could be manufactured here for 15 per cent. As to the Highfields line, he highly approved of it, and wondered at the Government withdrawing it. It ought not to be withdrawn, for withdrawal meant an indefinite postponement of the question. Outside the House it was said that the Government did not intend to go on with the southern branch lines, but that the Clermont branch, sixty or seventy miles in length, would receive all their attention. The amount voted for that line—only £50,000—would go a very small way indeed towards its construction. Where were the Government going to get the rest of the money from? Why did not they bring down the plans for the South Brisbane line? That line and the Clermont line would be two of the best-paying lines in the colony, and they ought both to be constructed together. Another complaint made by people out of doors was that

the Government, while pushing on the Northern and Central lines, did not intend to extend the Southern trunk lines. The House ought to know whether it was intended to go on with the Southern line. He did not care whether it went to Mitchell or Cunnamulla, or anywhere else, so long as it tapped the splendid country west and south-west of Roma. Surely, the Government were not going to stop all the public works in the South with the exception of a little branch line which would employ little or no labour! Let them make the Sandgate line, or the Warwick and Killarney line, and other branch lines for the South which the House had already sanctioned, and which were far better than the Ipswich and Fassifern line. He could scarcely believe the Government were sincere in their railway policy for the southern part of the colony, but he trusted to be undeceived by hearing the Government ask for sanction for the Sandgate line before many days were over.

Mr. KATES said he thought the Minister for Works had acted very wisely in withdrawing the motion, if it were true that there were 300 settlers who said the survey, as laid on the table, would only benefit half-a-dozen other settlers for a distance of twelve miles, while if the line was made on the other side, the 300 settlers would be benefited. Branch lines should only be taken through thickly populated districts; and in this instance, seeing that it would be necessary to make a fresh survey, the Minister for Works had acted very wisely in withdrawing the motion.

Mr. GROOM said there were one or two points he would like to clear up, as there seemed to be a misapprehension in some hon. members' minds on this question. He had received a letter from the petitioners asking him to assist the hon. member for Aubigny, and they also informed him that they had no objection to the survey as it was at present as far as the 9 mile 63 chain peg. As to there being only a dozen settlers along the first 9 miles, it was absurd to think so. It was beyond the 9-mile point towards Crow's Nest that there were only a dozen settlers; but if a deviation were made to the right to the Five-mile Camp it would reach a thickly-settled population. If the motion were withdrawn a great injustice would be done to the district, and one from which it would take a long time to recover. It would be said, and said with justice, that a railway would never be formed to Crow's Nest. He was quite sure that everyone who knew the district would agree with him that from the natural formation of the country no railway could be formed under £4,000 or £5,000 a-mile. If the railway was not to be constructed unless it cost not more than £2,500 a-mile, he was as confident as he stood there that it would never be made. If they would look at the plans as they were on the table, they would see that the first 9 miles of the railway passed through a country that was populated by one of the most industrious classes of people in the colony. A few years ago, when the Germans and Britishers went into that district, it was an almost impenetrable scrub, and now it was a beehive of industry, with farm-houses and wheatfields on every side, proving that they were a thriving and an industrious people. And now, when the plans and sections of the proposed railway had actually been laid upon the table of the House, and it was looked forward to with some degree of hope that the line would be undertaken, all hopes were blasted by the sudden withdrawal of the plans. He thought the Minister for Works was doing himself an injustice, and the country an injustice, by withdrawing the motion. All that the petitioners asked was that the line should not be taken from the 9 mile 63 chain peg, as surveyed, to

Crow's Nest, but that from that point there should be a deviation to Geham and the Five-mile Camp. The largest population in the Highfields district were centred in that locality, and their petition to the House was entitled to every consideration. The railway, under any circumstances, would be a very expensive one. He had been informed by competent engineers that it could not be constructed for less than from £4,000 to £5,000 per mile. The object he had in view having been obtained, he begged to withdraw the motion for adjournment.

Mr. KELLETT said that he was in a position to assure the House that what the hon. member for Toowoomba had said was correct, and that was that the petitioners did not object to the first portion of the line, but said that the latter, as shown in the plans and surveys, was not likely to be made with any chance of success. What they asked was that the line should run through a more thickly populated district than was proposed. He knew the country well from the time that there were few, if any, people in it, and the district through which the line was proposed to go was one that was not at any time likely to be thickly settled; but, if the line deviated in the way suggested, it would go through a thickly populated portion of the district. The petition to which reference had been made was signed by 300 persons; he knew a good many of the people, and the man who wrote it had lived to his knowledge for over fifteen years on the Range, and knew every inch of the ground. That man would certainly not write a word that was not perfectly reliable. The wish of the petitioners was that there should be another survey through places that were more available, and that better deserved railway accommodation. He was glad that the motion was withdrawn, and hoped that another survey would be made as soon as possible in another direction.

Mr. McLEAN said that it would be better if the resolution were amended, and the sanction of the House asked for the first 9 miles 63 chains. The testimony they had received from two Ministers, and from the 300 persons who had signed the petition, seemed to be quite united on the point that the line was within the estimate for that distance, and that there was no grave engineering difficulty so far. A survey could be made to find out the best way from that point to Crow's Nest;—that was the question now before the House. It would be a pity to postpone the whole business to another session, because some action might be taken and plans provided for the first 9 miles. The work could be actually gone on with, and by next session plans and surveys could be laid on the table of the House for the remainder. It would be a pity for it to be shelved altogether even for one session.

Mr. GARRICK could not understand that there was any necessity for delay. Authority was given in 1878 to survey a line from Toowoomba to Meringandan, but that was not necessarily binding. He did not consider himself bound by any previous authority, but felt that, not approving of the survey, he was entitled to look about him to see if he could find a better line. The survey brought down to the House was based upon a former survey: that was exactly where he found fault. Why was not a better plan developed in respect to Highfields and Toowoomba as it was in respect to Ipswich and Fassifern? They had had plenty of time since 1878: why had they not been able to find a better line? This was a policy he could not understand. Without any suggestions being made by them as an Opposition, there was quite enough to alarm, or at any

rate, to warn them. The Minister for Works, instead of withdrawing his resolution, and saying he was going to substitute another, ought to have been in a position to place complete surveys before the House. That Minister had shown what he was working for when they compared his action as regarded one line with his action as regarded the others. Passing by the Highfields and Toowoomba line, he would like to ask the Minister for Works a question about a line in his (Mr. Garrick's) own electorate. He wanted to know if he could have any information about that line—whether it was intended to do anything with regard to it. He knew there was an estimate to construct the line at £4,000 a-mile. Did the hon. Minister for Works intend to lay on the table of the House this session the plans and sections of any part of the line from Brisbane to Sandgate?—or, if he was not going to do that, was he prepared to state upon what new financial basis it was intended to carry it out? It was quite apparent that they were not likely to get the amount of money which the other electorates were, but he would remind the Minister for Works that Toowoomba, Fassifern, and West Moreton were not the only agricultural districts in the colony. The hon. gentleman should remember that there was an agricultural district in the south of the colony equally fertile and equally well settled upon as any on the Darling Downs or in West Moreton. He would remind the Minister for Works that he had not urged the construction of the line beyond a certain point. As an investment it would pay, and he asked the hon. gentleman in all fairness to state whether plans and sections for any part of it would be laid on the table. There were agricultural interests to be served in that district.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL : Whereabouts ?

Mr. GARRICK said he knew the hon. member for Gregory did not care a jot for agricultural people there or elsewhere. The hon. member would like to pre-empt all round and keep them away from his run, but he (Mr. Garrick) hoped the day would come when that would be impossible.

Mr. AMHURST said he claimed to be an authority on agricultural land, and he could say that with the exception of German Station he had never seen worse land than that on the Sandgate line ; to ask people to take it up was a cruelty. That was how the colony got a bad name for agriculture : people came out, but they could get no information at the Lands Office about any land but that which was not worth settling upon, and the result was that they petitioned the House to be relieved from the burdens they had undertaken. There was fine agricultural land to be had in other parts of the colony, and he was sure the Minister for Lands would take steps to make the facts known and rectify the defects he complained of.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he must take exception to the remark of the hon. member for Moreton, that he did not care a jot about the agricultural interest. He simply sneered at the clap-trap of the hon. member who was talking to his constituents about the beautiful land between here and Sandgate.

Mr. GARRICK : I did not say anything of the sort.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the hon. member led the House to believe that ; but he (Mr. Hill) knew what the land was, and did not wish misguided people to attempt the cultivation of it. He considered agriculturists were a most worthy class of people, and was anxious to see them doing well. He was delighted to see *bond* *ride* selectors in the colony, and the Minister for Lands could say that he had used his influence

to get resumptions proclaimed in the western districts already. It was a matter of indifference to him whether the resumptions were on his run or anybody else's—when required for settlement he was ready to give his up. He did not want to hem in his run with pre-emptives—he had never owned an acre in the colony, and did not care whether he ever did or not. No imputations of dummying or pre-empting had ever been made against him before, and they came with an ill grace from an hon. member of that sort who lived by battenning upon his fellow-colonists, who had done nothing to promote settlement or industry in the colony, who lived like a carrion crow by raising up strife between those who should be friends, and encouraged party feeling and party hatred. He considered it almost beneath him to reply to the hon. member. At any rate, his constituents held him blameless, and that was all he cared about.

Mr. GARRICK, as a personal explanation, said he referred to good agricultural land, not between here and Sandgate, but beyond Sandgate on the Pine River.

Mr. AMHURST said there was some on the German Station.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he rose to correct a statement of the hon. member for Logan. The hon. member was under the impression that the first 9 miles of this line could be made for less than the estimate. Such was not the case, as the first 9 miles would cost £43,000, or £13,000 more than the estimate. He had only to say, in conclusion, that, had he received information about the Highfields line similar to that which he received in reference to the Fassifern line, he should have acted upon it in the same way and had a price survey made.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

CLERMONT RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said, of the two alternative routes, the one adopted on the recommendation of the Engineer-in-Chief, and after a careful consideration of all surrounding circumstances, was that from Emerald Township to Clermont, 63 miles in length. It passed through land suitable for selection, and was described by the Engineer-in-Chief as a magnificent line with regard to both gradients and curves. It was a little longer than a line which had been advocated and surveyed between Clermont and Anakie Downs, a point 180 miles from Rockhampton. By the adoption of the Anakie Downs line, however, the distance from Clermont to port would have been increased by 10 miles, involving extra cost of carriage—a disadvantage which more than counterbalanced the cost of constructing the longer line. Besides which the Anakie line went through country unfit for selection—another strong reason for adopting the route to Emerald Township. The cost of the line, according to the Engineer's estimate, would be on the same scale as the Western line—namely, £3,000 per mile ; but the engineer, if allowed to make a lighter line and introduce certain modifications, hoped to be able to make it for £30,000 less—or £160,000. The line started from Emerald Township, passed within three-quarters of a mile of Emerald Downs head station, crossed Retreat Creek at 7 miles, and Theresa Creek at 8½ miles. For 8 or 10 miles the line went through scrub, and the rest of the route was over fine open downs. He believed the country was as good for selection as any that could be found anywhere in the Rockhampton district. A little economy might be effected in the matter of fencing. £10,000 was put down on the Estimates for that purpose, but as the district was at present purely pastoral the

fencing might be dispensed with for the present, which would reduce the cost by about £200 to £300 per mile. He believed that this was decidedly the best line of the two, and would therefore move—without taking up the time of the House further—

"That the Plans, Sections, and Book of Reference of the Clermont line of Railway, as laid upon the Table of this House on the 13th July, be approved.

"That the said Plans, Sections, and Book of Reference be transmitted to the Legislative Council, for their approval, with a Message in the usual form."

Mr. GRIFFITH said he had been looking for the plans and books of reference all the afternoon, but had not been able to find them. A trial section which was made in October last was on the table, and he noticed it was stated in the records of the House that the plans, sections, and book of reference had been laid on the table on the 13th July. He had not yet seen the plans and book of reference, however, and until he did he could not address himself to the motion. He found on further examination that there was a plan, but it was of a different form to that generally laid on the table. The House was asked to approve of the plans, sections, and book of reference of a line; and on inquiry for the book of reference he found it was a blank sheet of paper; so that there was no wonder that he did not recognise it.

The PREMIER: It is not the first time it has been so.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that the section was a trial section made in October of last year, and was certainly not the ordinary parliamentary section; and he thought there should be some explanation of that, and that the House should be told why there was only a trial section. But, after all, those were matters of secondary importance. They were asked to approve of a line 63 miles in length—a line which he thought was a good one; but it was the first time the House had been asked to approve of a line for the construction of which no provision had been made. The only money which had been voted for it was £50,000, whilst it would cost at the least £200,000. He did not know what the Government meant. What was the use of asking the House to sanction a line that would cost £200,000, when there was only £50,000 voted for it, unless the Government intended to make it without Parliament sanctioning the expenditure; it was like making "a promise to the ear and breaking it to the hope." The money that was voted would not make more than 15 miles of the railway; and when was Parliament to be asked to sanction an additional loan, or how was the other portion of the line to be made? That was a matter requiring explanation, surely. The Minister for Works told them that it would be a useful line, and would go through good country fit for selection; but the hon. gentleman did not state how it would pay, and he gave none of the usual information as to the probable traffic. He (Mr. Griffith) remembered that it was a great question some time ago as to which was the best route to go to Clermont, and which was the best point at which to join the Central line, and he had heard that the best route for the purpose of going through land fit for settlement would be from a point some distance to the east of Emerald; on that point the House was entitled to some information. Again, was this line to be treated as a branch line, or as a fork of the main line? Was it a line like that to Fassifern, without any stations, or was it to be an ordinary line? But, above all things, it was necessary to know where the money was to come from. It might be assumed that a new loan was imminent, as it might be taken for granted that the Government would not propose to make a line when there was no money for the

purpose. He should wait for an answer, and if it was not given he thought the debate on this particular line should be adjourned.

The PREMIER thought the hon. gentleman should not have found the fault he had with the plans, seeing that he himself had first established the precedent that was followed in the present case. Four years ago he (the Premier) brought forward a motion with respect to the character of railway plans to be laid on the table, on account of the new Ministry asking the House to accept what were only trial surveys; but his motion was not adopted. There was an excuse, however, in the present case, which there was not in the other, for putting what was a trial survey on the table, because that trial section had been verified and approved by the Chief Engineer after a personal examination of it.

Mr. GRIFFITH: Why was not that information given at first?

The PREMIER said he was giving it now. He did not think the Minister for Works held such a strong opinion on the subject as he (the Premier) had, that there should be finished plans laid on the table. For all practical purposes these plans were sufficient for the House in guiding them to approve of the line, as, although there might be a few curves altered, there were limits allowed for deviation which would be quite sufficient for any curves. The hon. gentleman asked why the Government asked for a line for which sufficient provision had not been made, and to that the answer was simple enough. He (the Premier) did not see why the approval of Parliament of the plans and sections of a line should be delayed until the necessary sum was authorised for its construction. This railway had been authorised by Parliament after a full discussion; for, although the hon. gentleman said he had never heard it discussed, it was discussed when Parliament authorised £50,000 to be spent on it. The Government could not exceed that amount until they got a fresh loan sanctioned by Parliament; but seeing that the plans were now ready they thought it was of no use asking the House to do by two motions what could be done in one, and the reason they asked for this assent was that the plans were ready. How far £50,000 would go he could not say; but the Government would certainly not spend more. It was stated that the Minister for Works had given no information as to the probable traffic and how the line would pay, but that had all been decided when they decided that a central line to Clermont should be made. All they had to decide now was which was the best route.

Mr. DICKSON said that on reference to the Loan Estimates of 1879-80 it would be clearly seen that there was an inadequate provision made for the construction of this line, and therefore the matter had now assumed this serious aspect—that the House was asked to approve of a line of railway which would cost at least £200,000 whilst provision was made only for £50,000. The public creditor at home had been told that the colony would not ask for another loan for three years, and there was now only £50,000 to work upon before they could ask the public creditor for more. It was another proof that when the sums were put down on the Loan Estimates the Government had no serious thoughts of making these branch lines. He thought it would have been better if the Premier had stated whether he intended to introduce another Loan Bill within the period understood—

The PREMIER: I will ask the hon. gentleman in what way I informed the public creditor that the Government would not ask for another loan for three years?

Mr. DICKSON thought he could, if not at the present moment, refer to a statement made by the hon. gentleman when the last loan was floated—that it was intended to cover a period of three years. He thought he could point out to an extensive correspondence in one of the Glasgow papers, where the hon. gentleman pointed out the difference between the policy of his Government and that of his predecessors, whereby he was asking for a loan that would carry him over a period of three years without appealing again to the public creditor. That being so, he (Mr. Dickson) contended that they would be brought face to face with this dilemma—that either the Premier would have only £50,000 to construct this railway, or would have to go to the public creditor within three years, although it had been understood, if not actually promised, that no further appeal for money would be made within that time. He thought the hon. gentleman should have stated his financial intentions, or whether he intended to prolong the construction of the line over a period of four years. He would point out that a similar objection had been made by the Minister for Works to proceeding with another branch line, to which reference had been made that evening—namely, one between Brisbane and Sandgate. It was said that the amount voted on account would be inadequate to the full construction of the line; but it would be found that with the additional powers conferred on the Government by the Railway Bill recently passed, the cost might be kept closely within the amount of £4,000 a-mile. On that ground alone there could be no objection to the construction of this line, which had equal claims to consideration with any of the other branch railways. It had been stated that there was no necessity for the line on account of there being no agricultural land along the route or within access of it, but he gave that statement a most emphatic denial. On the Bald Hills and at Pine River was some of the richest alluvial land to be found in the colony, and since the foundation of the colony people had been settled in the district who had to contend against all the difficulties of imperfect transit, while more recently settled districts had been provided with railway communication. He was glad to see branch railways, but should like to see something like justice done to all parts of the colony. While it was a matter of satisfaction that the Government had been at last convinced of the requirements of the people, it was a matter of regret that they did not make sufficient provision so as to be relieved from the embarrassment of contemplating another loan.

Mr. WALSH said he was under the impression when the loan was passed last session that it was to do service for three years, and that no further application would be made to the London market during that time. But they might rest easy on that point, for they had already perhaps more than they could pay the interest on, and it was questionable whether, if an application were made, it would meet with the success of the last loan. If they did not take care it would be as apparent in London as it was in the colony that they were somewhat overrunning the constable. With regard to the railways mentioned, the most unwarrantable line he knew of was that from Brisbane to Sandgate. There was nothing to go to there, and no produce to be carried. While he had a seat in the House he would always support branch railways to enable settlers to bring their produce to market, because they benefited the colony generally; but a railway for the pleasure and comfort of people who chose to visit Sandgate was what he considered a most unwarrantable waste of the public money, and at the time the loan was under discussion he declined to vote for that particular item.

With reference to the branch railway to Clermont, it was absurd to vote money for part of a line starting from somewhere and going to nowhere in particular. This £50,000 would be expended on a few miles, and then they must stop. Sufficient money should be voted to complete the line or none at all.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he agreed with the last few words of the hon. member for Cook—either they should vote a sufficient amount to complete this line or none at all. His objection to the form in which this railway policy had come before the House was that it was so fragmentary. They had already authorised a portion of the line from Ipswich to Fassifern—that portion between Ipswich and Harrisville. Now they were asked to authorise a line of railway more than 60 miles in length, for which £50,000 had been voted. That was not either fair or honest. If they authorised this line, the Government might construe that into an authority to make the line the whole of the way.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: So we will.

Mr. DOUGLAS said that would be dishonest. He had no objection even to limiting this authority to the amount available under Act of Parliament. He believed the surveys that had been made were sufficient for the purpose of Parliament, and that the engineer had satisfied himself that the line proposed to be authorised was the best. He did not dispute it was desirable some day or other, as soon as possible, to have the line completed from Emerald to Clermont, but under the cover of this authority he should be sorry if the Government should take to themselves the authority of making the line the whole of the way without securing the additional vote required. He had not sufficient faith in the Government to believe that they would not appropriate money voted for one purpose to this purpose. There had been instances this session of the Government appropriating money voted for one purpose to another; he regretted to say that the Government were not above appropriating money voted for a specific purpose for another purpose not authorised by Parliament. Looking at the railway estimate passed last year, he saw the sum of £54,000 for the Burrum Railway; but the Government had made up their minds to forego the right to expend that sum, and were willing to accept the proposal of a private company which they preferred, for reasons best known to themselves. In that case Parliament had granted an amount amply sufficient, in his opinion, to make the railway. They had voted £3,000 per mile for 18 miles, and the Minister of Works told the House to-night he was able to make railways below £3,000 a-mile, and that this very line from Clermont to Emerald would in all probability be made for less. Phases were opening out which seemed to point to the arbitrary exercise of power by the Government in matters which might lead to very dangerous results. It would be possible, for instance, for the Government to appropriate this £54,000 to another object altogether, so that possibly the amount voted for the Burrum Railway might be appropriated to the Clermont line. He would require to have very good reasons before giving his consent to that course. Had they sufficient guarantee that the amount of money already voted for the extension of the line beyond Roma might not be taken and appropriated to the line under construction? If so, and if the Government were prepared to come down with a new policy founded on the re-adjustment of votes of last year, well and good; but let the House know it, and not lead them step by step to make alterations without being informed how the projects were to be carried out.

He did not object to the mere authorising of the loan if that was simply meant to be a signification of their approval of the actual line adopted; but if it was to give authority to the Government not only to expend the £50,000, but to appropriate three times that amount to this work, and that additional £150,000 might be taken from votes authorised for other works, he was justified in drawing the conclusion he had drawn. Until the Government had direct authority for the expenditure of the money it would not be wise to authorise this line, except under the distinct qualification that no more than was voted should be expended on it. If the Minister for Works would consent to an amendment, limiting the amount to be expended on this line to the amount authorised, he (Mr. Douglas) would be satisfied: but under the existing circumstances, and with the absolute knowledge that the Government would not shrink from taking money from one vote and applying it to another purpose not authorised by Parliament, he was justified in taking his stand, and requiring further information in connection with the subject. They would probably now be called upon to reconsider the decisions of last session. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government had told the House he was going to bring in a Bill in connection with which he would probably call attention to the formation of the transcontinental line on the system of land grants.

The PREMIER: The Bill is on the table of the House.

Mr. DOUGLAS was glad to hear it. It now appeared that there was new light to be thrown on the whole question. He presumed when the hon. member moved the Bill he would also give some idea of his general railway policy, founded on the re-adjustment of the votes already authorised. The continental line would supersede the trunk lines of last session; and, if so, the amount of money voted for trunk lines would be devoted to some other purpose. He could come to no other conclusion.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: How does it affect the Central Railway?

Mr. DOUGLAS said it might affect it most beneficially. He was not opposing the proposal, but would like to know what the intentions of the Government were. Until they knew more about the transcontinental line and the projects connected with it, it was quite possible that an amount of money would be liberated quite sufficient not only to carry out the line under consideration, but to complete other lines for which he understood the Minister of Works believed sufficient money had not been voted. There was the Sandgate line, for instance, to which the hon. member for Cook took so much exception. One of the arguments against that line was that it would cost far more than the money which had been voted. In the same way it was well known that £50,000 was far from sufficient to pay for the construction of the Clermont line. He believed four times the amount would be required. He had no objection to the line or to the expenditure of the money, as long as they were not asked to make the appropriation blindfold. What was the use of committing themselves to £50,000 when they knew that the line could not be constructed for less than £200,000? If the money were not to be taken from the money voted for lines last year, he assumed that it would be obtained by means of a new loan, and if he thought they were about to authorise a new loan he would strongly oppose any proposal of this kind. But he saw his way clear to a re-adjustment of the votes of last session if the object which the Government had in view were to be carried out. He should very reluctantly be a party to authorising these plans

1830—3 c

unless the Government volunteered further information with regard to their railway policy. The fact that they were on the eve of receiving a very important Ministerial statement with reference to railway policy made it the more desirable that they should postpone the consideration of the motion. The fact that the Transcontinental Railway Bill lay on the table was of considerable importance; and the Government would confer a great benefit upon the House if they would not that evening press the affirmation of the proposal then under consideration.

The PREMIER said he hoped the hon. member would take an early opportunity to explain in what way the Government had misappropriated funds—spending them, for instance, upon one object when they were voted for another. He gave the accusation a most emphatic denial.

Mr. WELD-BLUNDELL said the hon. member for Maryborough, in his former speeches, had led the House to believe that he was an advocate of branch railways. But it now appeared that he was anxious to throw out the branch lines, as long as the responsibility for so doing was not cast upon his own shoulders. The hon. member had admitted upon former occasions that the branch line to Clermont would most probably lead to more beneficial results to the community generally, and conduce to more settlement, than any other of the proposed branch lines. The House, however, was not asked to immediately vote the necessary supplies; it was asked to sanction the surveys upon the table. He presumed, however, that the money already voted for the line would carry it a distance of 20 or 25 miles—well on to the rich open country of the Downs.

Mr. DOUGLAS: It will take it about 16 miles.

Mr. WELD-BLUNDELL said he differed from the hon. member, and preferred the opinion of the Minister for Works, that the money would carry the line at least 20 miles. He was informed by gentlemen who had conversed privately with the surveyors engaged upon the line, that they had never before surveyed a line which could be constructed so cheaply. If other portions of our railways could be constructed at a rate of even less than £2,500 per mile, they might feel assured that they would be able to construct a line in the direction of Clermont at a rate of something like £2,000 per mile. With the exception of two large creeks, the line passed through level country until it reached the Downs, and even then there were no obstacles. If certain moneys voted last session were found to be unnecessary, in consequence of some action which Parliament might hereafter take, surely there could be no objection to the expenditure of portions of those moneys upon what the House considered the most desirable lines of railway. They were merely taking time by the forelock in approving of these surveys, enabling the Government to expend £50,000 already sanctioned under loan. It was no excuse for withholding the approval of the surveys that the money voted would not take the line further than a spot at which they would find the rich black soil so desirable for the facilitation of settlement. In reference to the country through which the line ran, he maintained that the Peak Downs, Clermont, and Copperfield country was capable of carrying a large population. It had already shown itself capable of growing an increasingly large quantity of maize. In the year 1878 there were 500 acres under cultivation, producing among other things 7,000 bushels of maize. The year before a much lesser quantity was grown. In 1879

there were 616 acres under cultivation, and the production of maize among other things amounted to 13,900 bushels—nearly double the quantity produced in the year previous. There was no reason to suppose that production would not continue to increase. It had also been found that wheat could be successfully grown in the Peak Downs country. It required greater cultivation and more expensive working; but on the lower lands sand and loam were, to a certain extent, mixed with the black soil, and in the neighbourhood of Sandy Creek the whole country was fit for wheat cultivation. A dozen small selectors had tried to grow it by the half and quarter acre, and so far these experiments had been very successful. He did not mean to say that the wheat was as good as the Adelaide grain, but it was quite as good as the wheat grown in any other part of Queensland. In 1878, 90 bushels were produced; and in 1879, there being only a few more acres under cultivation, 300 bushels were produced. The only thing which had hitherto prevented selectors from going extensively into the growth of wheat was the fact that a mill had not been started. He had little doubt that within the next twelve or eighteen months a mill would be established, and then wheat would be grown extensively. Unlike the southern districts, there was not an extreme drought in the district during the winter season, and this circumstance was favourable to the growth of wheat. He had a return showing the rainfall during the season when wheat grew—that was from April to October—and according to that return the amount of rain which fell in 1876 was 12½ inches. That quantity of rain was considered amply sufficient for the purposes of wheat—in the Adelaide wheat country a rainfall of 10 inches was considered sufficient. In 1877 the season was a very dry one, as everyone would recollect. In 1878 17·28 inches fell; and in 1879 10 inches fell before July. Already during this year there had been a fall of from 7 to 8 inches, although there had been very little rain in the southern districts. Before the season was over he had no doubt that from 10 to 12 inches of rain would have fallen, which would suffice to bring the wheat crops between Clermont and Emerald to maturity. He had every confidence that ultimately the district would produce enough cereals to supply the wants of the whole inland interior. As to the prospects of the line paying, it must be borne in mind that a line connecting with the Central Railway at such a distance out was not in the same position as the line which had been just agreed to. The latter line would depend solely on its own returns, whilst the former would act as a feeder to the main line. The bulk of the freight which would be carried by the Clermont Railway, would be carried over the main line, and, in consequence, the returns from the latter line would be materially added to. That would not be the case were the produce of the Peak Downs district to pass down to Emerald by other means, but it did not do so, in consequence of the carriage being high and of the difficulties attending it. This trade, amongst which there was a large quantity of wool, would be secured by the railway, and there would be up-freight of various kinds—goods which would principally come within the more expensive classification of the Railway Department. A great deal of the trade now passed backwards and forwards by Broad-sound; but it was certain that it would be directed to the railway when it was made. It was almost unnecessary to refer to the position of the Copperfield mines, and he should not have done so had the hon. member for North Brisbane not pretended to be entirely ignorant on the subject. He had no doubt that the hon. member knew the capabilities of the district as well as he

did. The copper mines had been discontinued for some time in consequence of the high charge for carriage, and the low prices ruling in England; but the state of affairs had been very much altered since the line of railway was continued to Emerald, and because of the improved price of copper. At present there were 200 or 300 men employed in connection with the copper mines; but there could be no doubt that the number would be largely increased were the line constructed even half way. If the line were taken to Clermont and Copperfield a great impetus would be given to the mining industry, as the reduced price of carriage would leave a higher margin of profit, and there would be some inducement to mine-owners to go in for production on a large scale. He should like to say something in reply to the remarks of the hon. member (Mr. Douglas) as to the uselessness of approving of the line in consequence of only £50,000 being voted.

Mr. DOUGLAS: I did not say that.

Mr. WELD-BLUNDELL understood the hon. member to say so. He understood the hon. member to say that they might defer the consideration of the question until money had been voted for the construction of the whole line.

Mr. DOUGLAS said what he said was that he did not object to the line, but he was afraid some difficulty might arise through the expenditure of a greater sum than was voted.

Mr. WELD-BLUNDELL said he would call on the hon. member to prove the assertion which he had made. Surely the hon. member did not imagine that when £50,000 was voted the Government would, without the leave or permission of the House, draw £30,000 or £40,000 from some other vote.

Mr. DOUGLAS: I am not at all sure about that.

Mr. WELD-BLUNDELL understood that, further than that, the hon. member based his idea on the fact that the same thing had already been done by the Ministry. He understood the hon. member to state distinctly that the Ministry had withdrawn moneys from votes and had applied them to other purposes without the sanction of Parliament. That was an unfair and exceedingly unjust accusation to make unless it could be absolutely proved, and the hon. member who made an accusation of the kind ought to prove it before anything further was done. The accusation simply amounted to this: that the Ministry totally disregarded Parliament, and depended on their supporters to vote the money afterwards. That was an insinuation which no hon. member had a right to make without proceeding to bring forward proofs, and he distinctly called on the hon. member to prove the assertion.

Mr. KATES said that the hon. member for Clermont had told the House that the district was particularly adapted for the growth of cereals, because there was a heavier rainfall there than there was in the southern districts. From his experience he was in a position to state that too much rain destroyed wheat crops. They could never produce a good wheat crop with 17 inches of rain. Last year they had heavy rains and poor wheat crops, but this year there had not been much rain and they were likely to have excellent crops.

Mr. MILES said he rose for the purpose of endeavouring to satisfy hon. members with reference to the plans and sections laid on the table of the House. He remembered that he had brought down plans and sections which were exactly the same as those which were now on the table. The Commissioner for Railways assured him that the plans had been prepared in

the usual way; but the hon. member who was now Premier took exception to them and they were withdrawn. He was rather surprised to hear the hon. member for Clermont endeavouring to make out that the hon. member for Maryborough was objecting to the line. He understood the hon. member's objection to be that it was not right to approve of a railway sixty miles in length for which £50,000 only was voted. He thought matters would be simplified if an amendment were moved to the effect that sixteen miles of the line should be constructed. The money which had been voted would be sufficient to carry out that work, and the Government could come down at some future time and ask for a vote for the completion of the line. He was delighted to hear the statement of the hon. member for Clermont that maize had been grown there, but he hoped the hon. member did not intend to depend upon the freight of maize to make the railway pay.

Mr. WELLD-BLUNDELL said he never mentioned maize in connection with railway freights. He did not suppose there was any idea of sending maize to Rockhampton or Sydney.

Mr. MILES said he was glad to hear the explanation.

The PREMIER: Why should not they?

Mr. MILES said because maize could be produced far cheaper at Rockhampton than at Clermont. To make matters plain he would move, as an amendment, that all the words after "reference" be left out with the view of inserting the words "of the first sixteen miles." That would suffice for a start, and would swallow the £50,000 voted; and the Government could come down at a future time for an additional sum to complete the line.

Mr. DOUGLAS said the Premier had challenged him to substantiate what he had said with regard to payments originally appropriated to one purpose being applied by the Executive to other purposes. The hon. member for Clermont also required him to prove his statement. During the early part of the session he called attention to a paragraph in the Auditor-General's report which had reference to that very subject. In paragraph 12 of his report for last year the Auditor-General said—

"When the amount to the credit of the Consolidated Revenue in the Bank is exhausted, payments are practically made from loan or other special or trust funds which may happen to be in credit; for, although no actual transfer from one account to another takes place, the Government bankers view all public moneys as forming one fund, liable for the half-yearly interest as well as for all cheques, which may be drawn by the Treasurer or any of the public accountants within the limit of their authority. The above overdraft has, in accordance with this practice, been met from moneys that have come into possession of the Government for purposes of quite a different nature. This system of supplementing a deficient revenue by advances from loan or trust moneys, although very convenient to the Treasury, is hardly in accordance with the spirit or indeed the letter of either the Audit, Loan, or the several other Acts of Parliament, under the authority of which trust moneys are collected."

There was proof positive that the thing was done. Not only that, but moneys were now being appropriated by the Government, for necessary works it might be, and for which there was Executive authority, and which would afterwards have to be voted by the Legislature. Appendix B of the Auditor-General's report consisted of an abstract of Orders in Council authorising expenditure in anticipation of legislative sanction. The total amount was £21,431 17s. 3d. Many of the items were connected with railway expenditure. For instance, there was the Southern and Western Railway—deviation, Main Range, £7,156; water supply for Warwick, £500; deviation at Fountain's Bridge,

£4,575; completion of Maryborough waterworks, £5,000; further funds for the Warwick waterworks, £2,000—and so on. Those were amounts which must have been taken from loan and appropriated to other purposes. That was the position, and the Auditor-General had pointed out the facilities it afforded, in order that the tendency might be checked. With regard to this railway the Government might not be satisfied with 16 or 20 miles; they might make it 30 or 50 miles, and pay for it out of money available for other purposes pending the authority of Parliament. In the meantime, the money being spent, Parliament had no choice but to sanction it.

The PREMIER said he would just say one or two words to show to what small dimensions the gross charge brought against the Government had dwindled. The hon. gentleman accused the Government of having used money for one purpose which had been voted by Parliament for another, and without the sanction of Parliament. On being challenged to give a single instance where that had been done, the hon. gentleman read a paragraph from the Auditor-General's report, in which he said that in certain things the Government had gone beyond the appropriation of Parliament. Any Auditor-General since Separation might have said exactly the same thing. Often the money voted by Parliament was not enough, and when any Government asked for the approval of Parliament for what they had spent without legislative sanction they also got it. This Government had never spent one penny of money without the approval of Parliament. The hon. gentleman had quite misunderstood the paragraph in the Auditor-General's report, as was natural to men of his calibre. The hon. gentleman could not see what the Auditor-General was driving at. What the Auditor-General said was, that practically while there was a deficit in the Consolidated Revenue the Government of the colony had to be paid out of loan. But that was well known long ago. Could any man of common-sense suggest any other way in which it could be done than that employed by the Government? The Government had several accounts at the bank. One was the Consolidated Revenue Account, which on the 30th of June showed a debit balance of £231,000. But Government were not such fools as to pay interest on that amount at the rate of 6 per cent., while they were in credit on other accounts, such as the Loan Account, and receive interest at the rate of 3 per cent. on this credit account. That might agree with the strict notions of honesty of the hon. member for Maryborough, but it was not the way in which he was going to manage the business of the country. All the accounts were balanced, and the Government either took or paid the difference. He (the Premier) knew what the Auditor-General meant, and he was right. He meant that they ought to have a fund of Treasury notes, not for issue, but to be kept as security for any overdraft there might be on the Consolidated Revenue account or any other account. No one had ever suggested how the thing could be managed better, as the late Colonial Treasurer must know perfectly well. He had never known a case where a Treasurer paid a bank an overdraft on one account while he was in credit on another; and he would be a great fool who did it.

Mr. DICKSON said the Premier's speech had not tended to make the matter much clearer. It had never been suggested that he should pay interest on the Consolidated Revenue debit balance, while he had two or three times the amount in credit on the loan account. What was said was that the Government had applied funds to purposes other than

those to which they were appropriated by Parliament; and the point of the observation was that £21,000 had already been spent on necessary works which had not yet been voted by the House, so that if the Clermont line were finished in the same way there would be at least £126,000 to add to the amount of £21,000 already accumulated about £150,000 more, and for which no debentures could be issued until another Loan Bill was passed.

Mr. DAVENPORT said he did not altogether like the motion. The amount voted for the line last year was £50,000, which, according to the plans, would be only one-fourth the amount required. Why should not the Government postpone the matter until their general scheme for the construction of railways on the land-grant principle had come before the House and received its support? The Government were hardly consistent in these matters. They were treating as a nonentity the vote of £190,000 passed last year for the extension of the railway beyond Roma; they said, "Let it hang in abeyance until our policy of making railways on the land-grant system is authorised." Why, then, should not the Clermont line be dealt with in the same way?

Mr. GRIMES said he had not had the good fortune to see the country over which it was intended to run the line under discussion; but if the description given of it by the hon. member for Clermont had come earlier, he might have considered it worth while to have travelled that way in search of good land for wheat growing. The hon. member's description of the soil was very enticing to agriculturists; and yet he had proved too much. His account of the rainfall would certainly deter any agriculturist from going there with the intention of growing wheat. Even the smallest rainfall mentioned by the hon. member—twelve inches—during the course of time required to take off a crop of wheat would thoroughly destroy the crop. He had no hesitation in saying that the return from a crop grown under such circumstances would be *nil*. But when seventeen inches fell in the course of six months, he did not know how even stock survived. The statement of the hon. member was enough to satisfy the House that a railway should not be run to Clermont for the sake of the good agricultural land, or even for pastoral purposes.

Mr. AMHURST was understood to say that the hon. member ought to know that the dry months of our climate were sufficiently long to enable wheat to be grown if it was put in after the heavy rains.

Mr. GARRICK said he had not yet received an answer from the Minister for Works with regard to his question whether plans and sections of the Sandgate line would be laid on the table during this session? Possibly the hon. gentleman did not intend to give an answer. With reference to the remarks made by the member for Cook, he would point out that the line from Sandgate was also under the consideration of the House last year, and received its approval, £54,000 being voted for its construction. The hon. member seemed to think that Sandgate was the only place under consideration in the construction of the line, but he would remind him that on both Pine Rivers, parts of Caboolture, and the Bald Hills, there was as fine agricultural land as in any part of the colony. The line was not simply for Sandgate, but was intended to tap the rivers he had mentioned *vis à vis* Sandgate. And it was taken that way because it would be a much more paying line than to go direct *vis à vis* Bald Hills and the Pine Rivers. He believed that while the Ipswich line was the most costly of all the railways, it was at the same

time a better paying one than any other, reckoning local traffic simply.

The PREMIER rose to a point of order. The hon. member was not talking to the question before the House.

The SPEAKER said the hon. member must confine himself to the question before the House.

Mr. GARRICK said he should like to have an answer to his question from the Minister for Works?

Mr. SCOTT said, with respect to the member for Oxley's theory that wheat would not grow in the Clermont district because of the amount of the rainfall, he would mention that he had received a letter from a Springsure constituent advocating that the land should be thrown open around Springsure on the plea that wheat could be produced there, he on a recent visit to Clermont having seen it grow there. The hon. member's theory might be good, but the practical illustration he (Mr. Scott) was able to give of the capabilities of the soil in the district was better.

Mr. WELD-BLUNDELL said he happened to know that in South Australia it had been found that wheat grew where there were 10 inches of rainfall during the six months of its growth, and that it was maintained that with a rainfall of less than 10 inches wheat would not grow.

Mr. PRICE was understood to say that he wished to make an explanation, and was proceeding to address the House, when—

The SPEAKER said: I call upon the hon. member to sit down. If the hon. member does not do so, I shall be compelled to report his conduct to the House.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he hoped that the Government would at least preserve order in the House, it being their business to do so. The amendment of the hon. member for Darling Downs deserved at least an answer. The Government had given no reason whatever why they should ask the House to sanction the construction of a line of 63 miles when money was available for the construction of 16 miles only. This was not a frivolous objection to be met in the discourteous manner that the Government were displaying by their silence. The House had a regular practice in these matters. They had approved of numerous lines of railway, but they had never yet been asked to sanction the construction of a railway for which no money was available, and such a thing had never been done in the other colonies. There could be only one possible object on the part of the Government. He did not want to suggest that the Government were merely doing it to delude the people of Clermont, but there could be no other object except they intended to make the line. If they did not intend to complete the line there was no earthly reason why the amendment should not be accepted. If it were a fact that they were not going to borrow any more money for three years, what was the use of asking the House this session to sanction the construction of a line which would not be constructed for more than three years?—the vote would be idle all the time, and the vote might be rescinded before the expiration of the three years. If the Government did intend to spend the money on the work before it was voted, then they were guilty of misappropriating the public money, as the member for Maryborough had said. He considered that the hon. member had entirely substantiated his charge by the extract he had read from the Auditor-General's report. The Premier did not appear to understand the difference between trust money and other money. He seemed to say, "We have got the money—why not

spend it?" — and he appeared to have spent £20,000. Where was it got from? It was not proposed to be taken from the Consolidated Revenue—it was not there to be taken—neither had the sanction of Parliament been asked. It was to come out of some future loan. If the principle was once admitted that money might be expended by the Executive on their own authority, there was no reason why the Government should not construct the whole line without getting the money voted by Parliament—there was no reason why they should not construct the line on an Executive minute that the money was to be repaid from the next loan, which would perhaps be in 1885. The House was now asked to approve a line part of which would be constructed out of the next loan, and the Government in the meantime might, by the power which they were accustomed to use, take money from the last loan and spend it for the purpose. He was anxious to see the line constructed, and had advocated it long ago; and when he asked for information about the probable traffic on it he did so because he considered that a Minister for Works proposing a railway should furnish such information. He did not, however, believe in a Ministry having power to pledge the credit of the colony without the sanction of Parliament. If the amendment of the hon. member for Darling Downs were carried, it would give effect to what the Government said they meant, and therefore he could not see why it should be negatived without discussion. If, on the other hand, the Government did not mean to limit the construction of the railway by the money available for it, they ought to say so. They must have some serious meaning, and it was their duty to say which of the two things they meant. He considered it was the duty of every hon. member who had regard for the safeguards of the constitution—which were no doubt intended to serve a wise purpose—to vote for the amendment. He knew there were some hon. members who did not care a straw for the constitution or anything else so long as the Government were there and spent the money. At times the limits of the power of a Government might be exceeded, but at the present time there was no necessity to ask the sanction of Parliament for 50 miles of railway for which no money was available.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. gentleman was following the *rôle* he had played throughout the session—finding the Ministry guilty without having tried them. The hon. gentleman said that if the Government spent this money without the authority of Parliament they would be acting unconstitutionally. Of course the Government knew that, and they had no intention of doing so. They simply asked the approval of Parliament for 63 miles of a branch line. The hon. gentleman's views were very different now from what they were in 1877, when his Government passed the plans and sections of 60 miles of the Maryborough, the first section of the Bundaberg, and other lines, before they had the money for them. Now the hon. gentleman got up in a state of breathless indignation because another Ministry wished to exercise the same powers as was then exercised by his Ministry.

Mr. GRIFFITH: The Estimates were on the table.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that £100,000 of the money was not voted until 1878—a year after. The Government had now £50,000 voted for the construction of a portion of the Clermont line. The hon. member for Darling Downs wished to restrict the Government to the construction of 16 miles, under the pretence that the line would cost £3,000 a-mile or more.

Mr. MILES: You told us so?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he told the hon. member that the line would cost not more than £3,000, and probably a great deal less. The main line through similar country was now being made for very little over £2,400 per mile, and there was no reason to suppose that this branch line would cost over £3,000 per mile. The £50,000 would make at least 20 miles, and probably 25 miles. He had no intention of agreeing to the amendment. The Government was not asking authority to spend more money; they were simply asking the House to approve of the line in a purely formal manner.

Mr. GRIFFITH: Will you say that you don't intend to spend more than £50,000?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have said so; but I intend to make the £50,000 go as far as it will.

The amendment was then negatived, and the original question put and passed.

MARYBOROUGH AND GYMPIE RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that the next motion required very little explanation from him. In 1877 Parliament approved of the plans of the Maryborough line to Commissioner's Hill, Gympie. At the instance of a very large majority of the people of Gympie, and from his own observation in company with the Engineer-in-Chief, he came to the conclusion that it was to the interest of the town of Gympie that the line should deviate before reaching Commissioner's Hill, and proceed, instead, to Caledonia Hill. He believed the leader of the Opposition had also inspected the locality. The proposed alteration would give more facility to the largest part of the population of Gympie, Caledonia Hill being the centre of the town, whilst Commissioner's Hill was at the end of it. This deviation would cost £5,278, and the cost of the original line from the point of deviation to Commissioner's Hill had been estimated at £6,584, being £1,300 and odd more. Two approaches would have to be made to the new terminus—one from the Gympie side of Caledonia Hill and one from the One-mile side, the cost of which would be £2,078; so that the deviation would cost altogether £780 more than the original line. He believed the alteration would meet with the approval of the House, and would be of advantage to the people of Gympie. With regard to the latter part of the motion, he had come to the conclusion some time ago that the Maryborough line would be incomplete until it was continued to deep water. He was of opinion that it would have been far better if the line had been commenced from deep water in the first instance, so that the cost of carriage of railway material from the wharf might have been lessened. Hon. members would agree with him that it was as important to the people of Maryborough that their line should be connected with deep water as it was to the people of Brisbane that the Southern and Western Railway should run to deep water. The wharf branch now proposed started from the terminus at Maryborough, traversed a portion of the 90-acre reserve, crossed Lennox street near the hospital, and went through the botanical gardens to the river bank. It passed through public land nearly all the way, so that a very small portion of land would have to be resumed; and an area of 2½ acres at the gardens had been reserved for wharfage purposes. The line was continued along the river bank, so that it could at any time be connected with any of the wharves if necessary. The length of the branch to the river would be 66½ chains, and the estimated cost was £4,478. In addition to that he intended to add

£5,000 for the purpose of erecting wharves, cranes, and goods-sheds, which would make a total cost of £9,478. He begged to move—

1. That the Plans, Sections, and Book of Reference of proposed deviation from 59 ms. 70 chs. to Caledonian Hill, Maryborough and Gympie Railway, as laid on the table of the House on the 10th August, be approved.

2. That Plan, Section, and Book of Reference of the proposed Wharf Branch, Maryborough, Maryborough and Gympie Railway, as laid on the table of the House on the 10th August, be approved.

3. That the said Plans, Sections, and Book of Reference be transmitted to the Legislative Council, for their approval, with a Message in the usual form.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he believed that both the propositions of the hon. gentleman were very desirable. He understood that the deviation to the Caledonian Hill would meet the desires of the people at Gympie, and he believed that the extension of the line to the wharf at Maryborough was equally advisable. He regretted that that extension was not made part of the scheme as originally approved by the House, but it was owing to some gentlemen who were then sitting on the Opposition benches that that was not done, although it was contained in the original design. He rose particularly to express a hope that the Minister for Works in carrying out the work would be a little more considerate. The railway would traverse the public gardens in which the Maryborough people had a sort of affectionate interest; but he thought that the railway might be so constructed as not to destroy the beauty of the gardens. He had known cases in England where railways had been taken through parks which the people had been greatly afraid would be thus destroyed, whereas they had been made more attractive than before. He hoped in this case that the hon. gentleman in carrying out the work, whether there was an embankment or a cutting, would take care to make it as pleasing to the people of Maryborough as possible.

Mr. MILES said he thoroughly approved of the deviation proposed at Gympie, as he could never understand how the engineer who planned the line could have thought of taking it to Commissioner's Hill. He believed that the extension at Maryborough would also be an improvement.

Mr. BEATTIE thoroughly agreed with the propositions made by the Minister for Works, but would like to know whether the latter portion of the resolution was in conjunction with the proposed Burrum Railway—whether that company would be allowed to use the wharf and cranes which the hon. gentleman proposed to erect.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he did not intend to throw any obstacles in the way of the Burrum Railway Company being permitted to use that portion of the line when constructed.

Question put and passed.

BUNDABERG AND MOUNT PERRY RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said, in moving the motion in reference to this line, that without the second section being made the line would be useless. The present terminus of the first section ended, he might say, absolutely nowhere. During the recess he had visited the place and saw it for himself; and he thought, to carry out the intention of Parliament, the line should be extended as far as Mount Perry. There was no doubt it was rather rough country, but if the mineral resources of it were to be developed that could only be by extending the line to Mount Perry. The section proposed to be adopted was in length 21 miles 51 chains. For the first 6½ miles the line, to avoid a range called

Popgun Range, went along Sandy Creek, and from New Moonta to Mount Perry was one mass of copper lodes. The line then ran through level rough country until it got to 51½ miles, where it was proposed to have a tunnel 10½ chains in length, through Boolboonda Range, and from there to Mount Perry the land was of uniform character and useful for selection under the clauses of the Mineral Lands Act. It was proposed to place the terminus between the road and the Mount Perry mine. The earthworks on the line would be pretty heavy—about 13,000 cubic yards per mile, which was the largest amount of earthwork that it was considered advisable to have on such a line as that proposed. Some years ago Mr. Stanley, the engineer, went along the line to arrive at the probable cost of it from Bundaberg to Mount Perry, and he put it down at something like £8,000 a-mile; but the cost for the first section had been £3,400 per mile, and the estimated cost of the section under consideration was £5,800, making an average cost of the whole line of £4,300 per mile. £159,000 was the probable cost of the first section, and the estimated cost of the second section was £126,000, or a total of £285,000. The amounts voted by Parliament for this line were as follows:—In 1877, £100,000; in 1878, £100,000, and last year, £108,000; or altogether, £308,000 available for the construction of the two sections which were estimated to cost £285,000; so that there would be over £20,000 left for rolling-stock. He believed the total amount available would be expended. He begged to move—

1. That the Plans, Sections, and Book of Reference of the second section of the Bundaberg and Mount Perry Railway, from 44 miles 36 chains to Mount Perry, 66 miles 7 chains, as laid on table of the House on 25th August, be approved.

2. That the said Plans, Sections, and Book of Reference be transmitted to the Legislative Council, for their approval, with a Message in the usual form.

Mr. BAYNES said he felt he should not be doing his duty to the colony, and to his constituents in particular, if he allowed the motion to go unchallenged. Anyone who was present when the hon. gentleman was speaking must have felt that his heart was in his throat, and he (Mr. Baynes) sincerely hoped the hon. gentleman was not in earnest. He should have liked the hon. gentleman to have seen his way clear to have withdrawn his motion altogether. When the hon. member for Maryborough and the late Administration proposed the line, he (Mr. Baynes) pronounced it to be a job. When he denounced the line in public he had no idea, as he had now, that it would cost over a-quarter of a million of money. He knew the country the line traversed, and he said, when the railway was proposed, never expecting it would be constructed, that it would never pay for the grease of the wheels—and such was the fact. The present Administration would have done the country great service when they took office had they been bold enough to wipe the line off, even if the act had been termed by some an act of repudiation. Even the people of Bundaberg would have seen the justice of withdrawing the amount from being expended in the district, because it would be of no benefit to Bundaberg ultimately. According to a report which came before them not many weeks ago, he found that an enormous sum had been paid for a site for the terminus at North Bundaberg. The Government had offered a large sum, which was disputed, and when the matter went to the arbitrator he would not allow even the sum offered. They were now called upon to sanction £125,000 for a railway to run up to some mines. He had seen those mines, and knew that some of them would not pay if they contained gold instead of

copper. If the copper was carried down free of expense the mines would not pay. The House would not be justified in perpetuating this folly of the Douglas Administration. It was not for want of enterprise on the part of the people that the mines were a failure. There were lots of men like himself who were ready to develop the mining interest, which was the second interest of the colony—indeed, he should at all times be glad to develop any interest of benefit to the country. The Minister for Works had honestly told the House that the line went through very rough country which would have to be tunnelled in some places, and that it could not be got through for less than £6,000 a-mile; but he (Mr. Baynes) knew from his own knowledge that the work could not be done for that sum; and he should feel inclined to vote against the Government on the present occasion. It would be better for the country if members were to answer constituencies, as he unfortunately had to answer his during the recess, when asked whether he would support a railway from Gayndah to Nanango. He told them plainly that such an idea was premature. They replied that the Government had expended a large amount on the Bundaberg and Mount Perry line; and then he had to explain that two blacks never made a white. If the Government were as plain to the country as he was on the occasion referred to the country would be benefited, and the position of the Government would be strengthened at the same time. The hon. junior member for Toowoomba made a very sensible remark in his speech on the Clermont and Emerald Railway, when he said it should be part of the comprehensive scheme promised by the Government on the land-block system. He quite endorsed every word uttered in that speech, and trusted that no more money would be voted to support what he considered one of the greatest jobs in connection with the Douglas Administration. The Government would not only have won the estimation of the constituencies, but of the whole colony, had they withdrawn their support from such follies.

Mr. NORTON said he would vote against the approval of the plans of this line of railway. He voted for the amount required for the construction of the railway in the Loan Bill of last session, but he only pursued that course in consequence of the Opposition tactics, and had no intention to vote for the plans when they were brought forward. This railway proposal was originated by gentlemen now on the Opposition side of the House, but he presumed the Government felt it incumbent upon them to proceed with the plans which had been sanctioned. The Minister for Works said the first section of this line would end nowhere; but he was under the impression that even if the line were carried to Mount Perry it would still end nowhere—indeed, he wished it had commenced nowhere. The line commenced at a river without an entrance, and ended in ranges through which there was no exit. Bundaberg was unquestionably a rising township, with a lot of rich lands, which in time would be more cultivated than they were at present, but there was no place in the country of which he was aware, in the direction of Mount Perry, to which the produce of Bundaberg could be profitably taken. He did not wish to speak in disparagement of Bundaberg as a port; perhaps it answered its purpose very well; but it could only be entered by small vessels, and in rough weather the bar was so dangerous that no vessels at all could enter. If the money proposed to be expended upon this line had been expended upon the line from Gladstone to Gracemere, which he proposed last session, there would have been a balance in hand

and the interior would have been connected with a first-class port; at the same time, they would have saved a great deal of expenditure upon the Fitzroy River, and the line in itself would have been payable. They had heard a great deal about the rich mines in which the Mount Perry district abounded. The present contract would take the railway within 22 miles of the Mount, and if the mines were as profitable as they were represented to be they could surely afford a carriage of 22 miles. He had not been to Mount Perry, but he had passed through the district within a short distance of the township. Between Port Curtis and Maryborough there was a bold range on the right, and within it lay Mount Perry. He had reason to believe that there were no means of taking a railway through that range to the good country beyond: there was, moreover, a very small population at Mount Perry. He learnt from the directory that there were three publicans, one blacksmith, one shoemaker, and several other tradesmen of that kind. The place itself was small, and beyond it there was nothing to which a railway could be taken. There would be no means of getting through the ranges, or of branching the line on one side or the other. He did not see how he could possibly vote for the proposition of the Government.

Mr. KELLETT said he felt compelled to vote against the motion, and he did so because of the arguments which the Minister for Works had advanced in favour of it. The hon. member told them first that it would be a very expensive line, and in trying to defend it he really said, or could say, nothing in favour of it. The money spent on the line in existence was practically wasted, and the further expenditure of £125,000 which was proposed would be a waste of money. He had travelled the country before it was known as Mount Perry, and he must say that it was as miserable a country as anyone would want to see. The line would go nowhere, and as far as he could see it would never be of any earthly use. They all knew how the railway was started. It was done when there was a lot of log-rolling with regard to railways, and when, he believed, five railways were started at the same time. He did not think it a reason, because a certain amount of money had been wasted already, that they should clap on another £125,000—to be wasted. There were a number of useful works required throughout the colony, on which the money would be better spent. He could hardly believe that the Minister for Works had travelled over the district, as if he had he never would have brought forward the motion.

The PREMIER said he did not know whether the Minister for Works had ever travelled over the country, but he (Mr. McIlwraith) had been there, and he could conscientiously say that the proposed line would pass through a better district than would any other line which had been discussed that night. From the way in which the hon. member for Stanley spoke he should imagine that he had never been over the country. This debate ought to have taken place last year when there appeared on the Loan Estimates an item of £108,000 for the construction of the line. The merits of the line ought then to have been discussed. What the Government now proposed was simply the completion of a project which had received the sanction of the House. The money had actually been secured, and now hon. members came forward and said that the thing was altogether wrong. They should never have given their adhesion to the matter if they intended that the line should go no further than the present terminus. They would be breaking faith with the public creditors if they did not carry out the work—at any rate, they ought not

to decide on such a course without advancing strong reasons for its adoption. He could understand the hon. member for Port Curtis, who was privileged to represent one of the finest harbours in the colony, disparaging the Burnett River. He thought if the hon. member lived a few years longer he would come to the conclusion that although that river would not bear competition with the port at Gladstone it would bear competition with any other river in the colony. He believed that at a small expense the river could be made fit for navigation—at infinitely less expense than would be required for the Brisbane or the Mary Rivers. The character of the country on the river would justify the expenditure. The position of the matter was this: This railway project was brought before the House by the late Government, and none of the lines which were then proposed received the same general sanction of the House. Many of the members of the Opposition side of the House supported it, and he believed that, had it been put separately, it would have received a larger amount of support than any other line did. The railway had been constructed for about two-thirds of the distance which it was required to go. Having constructed it so far they would be stultifying themselves if they did not complete it. They were bound to complete it; otherwise it would be one of the most unsightly objects in the colony. He did not think that hon. members who had spoken had done justice to the proposed terminus. The fact that the line would terminate at Mount Perry gave as great a guarantee of traffic as they had with respect to any of the projected branch lines. The hon. member for Port Curtis said that there was no possible exit from the range. Did the hon. member forget that the late Surveyor-General actually proposed that the line should be the means of exit to the western country, instead of a railway from Maryborough to Gayndah? He should be sorry to see the line thrown out, especially for the reasons given, which ought to have been stated last year when the money was asked for. No objection had been taken to the plans and sections. He hoped the House would not commit themselves to the rejection of the motion, as by so doing they would be giving a severe blow to the efforts which the Government were making to have branch railways constructed in the colony.

Mr. DOUGLAS said he entirely agreed with the Premier. He believed the hon. gentleman's anticipations as to the ultimate paying capacities of the line were well founded. It would be altogether out of the question not to authorise what throughout had been recognised as a part of a particular scheme. It was an act of folly to make the line to the present terminus if it was not intended to carry it on to Mount Perry; it would have been better if it had not been taken in hand at all. His opinion was that ultimately the line would be a useful paying one, as it would be calculated to materially develop the mineral wealth of the district which had hardly been estimated.

Mr. BEATTIE said he thoroughly agreed with the Premier when he said that a number of members on the Opposition side of the House were in favour of the line when it was first proposed. Some hon. members had twitted the present Opposition with having brought forward the line, but those hon. members ought to have had the courtesy and the justice to say that a large number of the then Opposition were in favour of it. He was one of a very large deputation which came down from Mount Perry to urge the construction of the line. He believed there was valuable land in the district, and he hoped those hon. members who said the line

would not pay would find themselves disappointed. He should certainly feel justified in supporting the Government.

Mr. WALSH said that he was bound to oppose the vote, because long before he had the notion of becoming a member of the House he denounced it in the strongest terms which he could possibly find. He denounced it as a disgraceful political job—one which was likely to commit the country to an immoderate expenditure—and he said that the line would not pay in their time or in their children's time. He ventured to assert that when the line was made one train in a month only would be required. What was to be done with the officers in the meantime?—were they to remain idle at Mount Perry or were the Government going to find some other employment for them? Copper was now being carried by road at £3 10s. per ton, and if it would not pay at that rate it was worse than folly to suppose that it would pay any better with a railway. He believed there was a good deal of rich valuable land in the neighbourhood of Bundaberg which the line would traverse, but when it got to Mount Perry it would be amongst a lot of gorges, out of which it could not be taken. Apart from the loss which the line would entail on the country, it had done a great deal of mischief in other directions. Every constituency in the colony wanted a railway because it was proposed. His constituents worried the life out of him, and they, believing that he would accept the position of a delegate and do just as they pleased, demanded of him, as well as of his colleague, that when there was a close majority in the House last year he should vote against the Ministry unless they would consent to the construction of a line from Palmer to Cooktown. He hoped that his political creed or his honest convictions would not be sold over to the constituents of Cook or to anybody else. He should do, as he always had done, what he considered was best in the interests of the colony. Whether at the time he supported a Ministry composed of the best men was a matter entirely beside the question. The hon. member for Port Curtis said there were only Chinese where it was proposed to take the line; but if he (Mr. Walsh) thought that the Chinese required goods which would create railway traffic he should not oppose the line. There were neither Chinese nor Europeans. They were in this dilemma: the railway had been built a certain distance already, and although he had condemned the project all through he must say that it was not advisable that the line should stop where it was—that was nowhere. The position was a very serious one. It was a political error—if he might call it so—to ever have commenced the line, and it had created a great deal of mischief. He had said in public often, and he would repeat in the House, that he believed it would have been far better and more profitable to the country to have given life annuities of £5,000 each to those members who were parties to the project than that it should have been commenced—it would have been better to have done that than to have inflicted such a railway on the country.

Mr. AMHURST said he was most strongly opposed to this railway when it was brought in, along with a bunch of others, by the hon. member for Northern Downs (Mr. Thorn), in 1877. It was evidently made for political purposes. Nevertheless, now that they had got so far with it, it would be folly to waste the whole of the money spent so far. By going further the line might get into some agricultural country. They ought to make the best of a gross error committed by the other side. After careful consideration, he thought it would be easier to make

the best of a bad bargain by extending the line further, in the hope of retrieving some of the money already thrown away.

Mr. McLEAN said he supported the line when it was introduced in 1877, and should do so now. Hon. members had spoken against the line more because it was introduced by the late Government than from knowledge of the locality itself. It had been said that the railway began nowhere and ended nowhere; but that was nonsense, for if the line got to the terminus it could very easily get out again. According to the hon. member for Port Curtis, Mount Perry must have gone down considerably during the last two or three years. When he visited the place four years ago there was as prosperous an inland township as any in the colony. The line would run through agricultural country, and it would be a pity to stop it at the foot of the range, and not carry it on to Mount Perry. Mount Perry might revive again, as the copper mines had not been developed nearly so much as they probably would be. He supported the line in the first instance from conviction and a knowledge of the locality, and he should support it now on the same grounds.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he had from the first been opposed to the Bundaberg and Mount Perry Railway, and had he been a member of the House at the time when the bunch of six railways was brought in not even loyalty to his party would have induced him to support it—to saddle upon the country the enormous expenditure involved in the construction of those railways. Quite enough money had been spent upon a line which would never pay anything like interest upon the outlay. A gentleman who was extensively acquainted with the country between Bundaberg and Mount Perry had recently told him that there was not the slightest probability of the line ever paying, as had been said, the grease for the wheels of the railway carriages. Considering that there were other localities where justice required that railways should be constructed, it would be a grievous mistake to spend an additional £125,000 in the construction of a line which, when finished, would be of no use to anybody. From looking at the plans he felt convinced that the expenditure would exceed the estimate: there was an interminable succession of gullies which would necessitate an enormous amount of bridging, and in all probability the cost of maintaining the line would be something extraordinary. They had gone far enough with the blunder, and if it came to a division he should feel bound to vote against the motion of the Minister for Works.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS wished to call attention to the fact that some time prior to the introduction of the railway by the hon. member for Maryborough, an offer came from a Mr. Vickery, a Sydney capitalist, to make a railway from Bundaberg to Mount Perry—such confidence had he in the resources of the district. Other counsels prevailed, and the offer was not accepted.

Mr. DOUGLAS: He did not come up to "the scratch."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he only knew that the offer was made and declined, and that the same line was afterwards bunched with five or six others which must be either taken *in globo* or rejected. Although the making of the line was a mistake in the first instance, yet it would be a still greater mistake to stop it now. He had no desire to persuade members one way or the other, but members of the Opposition were bound to support the motion.

Mr. DOUGLAS: You were one of its original supporters.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he was new to politics at the time, and although he knew the line was a mistake he was induced to vote for it. Had the railways been taken *seriatim* he might, perhaps, have given a different vote. It was easy for the hon. member for Cook (Mr. Walsh) to oppose the motion, seeing he had been out of the colony for so long. Possibly he did not know how the Cook had grown in importance during his absence; and the hon. member had certainly gone a little too far in saying what was going on in a place he had never seen. He would recommend the hon. member to make a call at Mount Perry on his voyage north. He was satisfied from the discoveries made that if there was an easy, cheap, and convenient means of transit provided a reaction would set in. It might not occur this year, or next, but that it would come was as sure as the seasons coming round. It was well not to be too enthusiastic on one side or too depressed on the other, but to take a medium course. However, he had come to this conclusion on the matter—that so much public money having been expended on the representations of the hon. member for Maryborough and his colleagues, who persuaded the House to adopt this Bundaberg and Mount Perry Railway as one of their railway schemes, he believed that money would be utterly wasted—that it would be better to take up the rails and the sleepers, and sell the land that had been purchased back again, if anyone was found willing to buy it, unless the line was continued. That was the only chance there was—and he did not think it a very remote one—of getting a return. At any rate, he believed the chance of many of the railways advocated by hon. members paying was just as remote as this one. He was quite sure that nature or Providence did not create those copper mines for no purpose whatever, and that many latent industries would be developed by continuing this line. If that House was one year to authorise the expenditure of a quarter of a million of money on a railway, and a couple of years after stop suddenly and say they were going nowhere, it was quite time that they paused and looked around. He looked to hon. members on the other side of the House who initiated this scheme of making railways, and particularly this Bundaberg and Mount Perry line, and induced him to vote for it, to continue it so that it might lead to some place, and have a chance of paying something towards the cost of its construction.

Mr. MILES said he had intended to vote for this extension, but he was not going to wait there if Ministers were going to get up and stonewall their own measures. Unless they came to a division he would not wait any longer.

Mr. GRIMES was pleased to be in the fortunate position of being able to vote with perfect freedom against this railway. He could hardly imagine how the late Ministry managed to get a majority to support them in carrying the Bundaberg and Mount Perry line, but he presumed that at that time the copper mines at Mount Perry were much more prosperous than they were now. The scheme was a mistake from the first, and the best way would be to make the first loss the only loss, and close the line up, and let it remain there as a memento of the folly of bunching five or six railways together for the purpose of getting them all passed.

Mr. DAVENPORT said that this line was an unfortunate bantling which the Government had inherited from the past, and a very expensive one it was. To carry it out to any useful end they would have to spend about £120,000. They

were asked to support the motion on the mere chance of the speculation of mining gambling, and possibly of speculators, and that the mining industries might be set to work. They were not sent there to gamble with their own money or that of the public. He was prepared to move that the motion would be considered that day six months.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN had listened with the greatest attention and care to all that was said about the matter. He need not remind the House that he was as much against the railway as any member of the House, but he did not see his way clear to allowing all the money formerly thrown away upon the line to be wasted. He thought the railway need not terminate at Mount Perry. He agreed with the hon. member who said that he did not believe that nature had placed those ranges there without some reason, and for aught they knew, as soon as the railway went there these ranges would yield large profits, and pay the expenses of the line, better than some of the branches proposed. He had it on the authority of an engineer that the line could be very well taken over the ranges to Gayndah, and open up the country on the Dawson River. If that could be reached a good deal would be saved. It would be a great joke if when they had got the railway the copper mines were opened up, and deceive them all by their prosperity. Taking that view of the case, he was inclined to save the money already lost—not, of course, that he approved of the matter himself, but after building a house he would not leave it without the shingles. As they had burnt the candle, they might as well burn the heel of it. He was perfectly willing to take his share of the responsibility of carrying the line out according to the first intention, though he had voted against it, and would do so again if such an occasion arose. If the colony could survive what it had already lost it could survive the expenditure of another £125,000.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the arguments used by the hon. member were very extraordinary. He appeared to be going on the old principle of sending good money after bad—letting the tail go after the hide. After slinging £150,000 away the colony was to sling another £150,000 after it, without the slightest chance of the proposed work being made reproductive. The House was told that there must be something in the range to be developed; but he had seen some ranges with very little in them, and he thought some more definite prospect should be shown. He had read an account of the final meeting of the shareholders of the Mount Perry mine, and if he remembered rightly there was a dividend of a few shillings in the £ for the creditors and nothing at all for the shareholders. That did not seem like a successful mining industry. The Mount Perry mines had not to pay for long carriage either, as those of Peak Downs had, and it was not likely that carriage by railway would be so very much cheaper than by drays. He would not go so far as to advocate the pulling up of the rails, but he certainly would not agree to the line being carried any further until some better assurance was given that it would be a paying speculation. He looked upon that line as one of the greatest jobs of the late Ministry; and though he, with the hon. member for Port Curtis, voted the money last year, he did so simply because the Government were so harassed by the Opposition, and he wished to bring things to a close.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: A strange reason for voting public money!

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he might have made a great mistake then, but he would not

make another with his eyes as wide open as they were upon this occasion. He should take the opportunity as recording his vote against the line.

Mr. KATES said it was his intention to vote against the motion, not so much on account of the expenditure of the £125,000 as of the other expenses which the construction of the line would entail. Stations would have to be built, station-masters appointed, and a large sum voted for maintaining the line.

Mr. FRASER said he wished to offer a few words on this subject, because it had been emphatically stated that when an hon. member once committed himself to what might be considered a mistaken course, he was ever afterwards bound to adhere to it. To that he objected entirely. He had never been in favour of either the Bundaberg nor the Maryborough line; but had voted for them from party considerations. He had regretted having done so ever since, and he had expressed his regret when before his constituents, and stated that if ever an opportunity occurred of correcting the mistake he then made he should embrace it. It might not be a very sound proceeding, having spent so much money already, to arrest the work at the present stage, and he should not have been a party to doing so if the Minister for Works or any other supporter of the extension had shown that there was any probability of the work becoming remunerative. Nothing of the kind had been shown, and he had been informed by persons who knew the country that the line could never be made to pay. Under such circumstances it was the bounden duty of any hon. member entertaining the conviction he did to arrest the expenditure of public money in that direction.

Question put, and the House divided:—

AYES, 18.

Messrs. Palmer, McIlwraith, Macrossan, Perkins, Beor, McLean, Dickson, Miles, Beattie, Scott, Douglas, Weld-Blundell, H. W. Palmer, O'Sullivan, Swanwick, Hamilton, Price, and Amhurst.

NOES, 14.

Messrs. Garrick, Baynes, Rutledge, Feez, Fraser, Grimes, Davenport, Morehead, Lalor, Stevens, Kellett, Kates, Lumley Hill, and Norton.

Question, therefore, resolved in the affirmative.

The House adjourned at ten minutes past 11 o'clock.