

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Council

TUESDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 1880

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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.*Tuesday, 2 November, 1880.*

New Member.—Fassifern Railway.—Attendance at Committee.—Pacific Island Labourers Bill—recommittal.—National Association Bill—committee.—Treasury Bills Bill—second reading.—Goldfields Homestead Act Amendment Bill—second reading.—Customs Duties Bill—committee.—Duty on Cedar Bill—committee.—Adjournment.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN took the chair at 4 o'clock.

NEW MEMBER.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN read a letter intimating that His Excellency the Administrator of the Government had that day administered the oath of allegiance to Mr. William Aplin, a member of the Legislative Council.

The HON. WILLIAM APLIN was then formally introduced and subscribed the roll.

FASSIFERN RAILWAY.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, in moving that the report of the Select Committee on the Fassifern Railway be now adopted, said that on reference to the report hon. members would perceive that the committee had taken a great deal of evidence, and that their conclusions were on the whole favourable to the line. It was shown that no less than six surveys had been made of the proposed line of railway from Ipswich to Fassifern. However, the first three were found to be only preliminary, and such as did not require consideration by the committee. The committee directed their attention to the three surveys which were referred to in the report as Nos. 1, 2, and 3—the first going entirely through private land; the second, about one-half the distance through private land and the other half along the public road; and the third, about one-fourth through private land and nearly three-fourths along the public road. As to the cost of the second and third lines the evidence was rather conflicting. The Chief Engineer of Southern Railways said it was his opinion that the expense of a railway with a grade of 1 in 50 would not be £146 per mile more than of a line with a grade of 1 in 30, but the other evidence was rather to a contrary effect. The Minister for Works appeared to consider that the difference would be really a great deal more. The expense of the working traffic at a grade of 1 in 30 and 1 in 50 appeared to be much about the same. It was acknowledged that an

engine could not draw anything like the load on a line with a gradient of 1 in 30 that it could on a line with a gradient of 1 in 50, but the Commissioner for Railways and the Minister for Works both expressed their belief that the traffic likely to be obtained on the Fassifern Railway for a considerable time might be worked at scarcely more expense on a 1 in 30 than on a 1 in 50 line. The committee, on the whole, had therefore come to the conclusion to adopt the plans laid upon the table. They found that on the Central and Northern lines a gradient of 1 in 30 had not been deemed unsuitable for the traffic there, and that the traffic on the Fassifern line would be much smaller.

The Hon. W. H. WALSH: Where did you get that information?

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said it was, he believed, in the evidence of the Minister for Works. But whether it was or not, it was known that the traffic would be much smaller on the Fassifern than on the Central and Northern lines. He thought the committee had sufficient knowledge of the traffic on the Central line to know that, and they had the evidence of more than one witness that the traffic on the Fassifern line would be small for some years. The report itself stated—

* * * * "It is apparent from the information so obtained, as well as from the evidence of the Commissioner for Railways, that the remunerativeness of the line will be dependent upon inexpensive construction in the first instance, and economical management subsequently, rather than upon the large amount of the traffic receipts."

He presumed that hon. members had all read the report, and that, therefore, it would be unnecessary for him to do more at this stage than read the last paragraph, which said—

"After duly weighing all the evidence taken on the subject referred to them, your Committee are of opinion that on the whole it would be wise to avoid payment of compensation by utilising the public road as far as practicable, and to limit the cost of construction by adopting 1 in 30 as the ruling gradient."

Although that was not a recommendation to adopt the plans before the House, there was no doubt that those plans embodied the *desiderata* referred to in the paragraph. He begged to move the motion.

The Hon. W. H. WALSH said that he knew the adoption of the plans for the Fassifern Railway was quite a foregone conclusion. Whatever was said would not stop that. Still, as a member of the select committee, and one who took great interest in the construction of our railways, he would offer a few remarks upon the evidence, upon the report attached thereto, and upon the remarks made by the Postmaster-General. It appeared to him that the necessity—the justification—for making this line of railway was incontestibly proved not to exist. The evidence of the whole of the witnesses, from the Minister for Works down, all went to show that there was nothing whatever at present to justify such a line being constructed. All the witnesses admitted that; and even the very alteration of the grade as suggested was done to justify the making of the line on the very cheapest scale, because no adequate revenue could be expected for years to come. That, he said, was the gist of the whole evidence received by the committee on that one point, and that was the reason why he dissented from the report, for he could not agree to recommend that such a railway should be made. He knew, however, that it would be made, and that it was useless for him to pursue that subject further. But there were other matters which the House was not bound to adopt, and which he would submit to hon. members—namely, that even if we went to a

little expense in constructing this railway it should be made on the same system as the others—that was, that it should be fairly constructed and be made fairly substantial, which was the system which was to be abandoned in this instance, and that it should be constructed with the same gradients with which they were working along the 400 miles of line already completed. The great attraction that the Minister for Works had endeavoured to throw around this Fassifern line was, that it was to be remarkably economical and cheap, because he had issued his fiat that the severest gradient should be 1 in 30 instead of 1 in 50. The only reason the Government could advance for constructing the line was that there was to be an alteration of the gradient. He was very adverse to making any alteration either in the ruling gradients, which in this instance were greater than on the other lines, or in the gauge, unless a better and broader one was adopted. He should take the first point—the necessity for altering the grade. The Minister for Works and the Postmaster-General endeavoured to show—the one by his evidence, and the other by his mode of extracting it—that there was a very great advantage to be gained by this alteration—in fact, until some members of the committee persevered to unravel the difficulty they were getting so confused that they believed the great difference was between a line to cost £3,500 a-mile and the line now under consideration—that was to say, that there was a difference of £1,000 a-mile. They were so confused that they thought this enormous difference was to be saved by altering the gradient, and it was only by putting the question to the Minister for Works in a point-blank manner that they learnt different. If hon. members would turn to question 44 of Mr. Stanley, the Engineer-in-Chief's evidence, they would find—

"44. Did you advise the Government to adopt so steep a gradient as 1 in 30? No, I did not.

"45. Was your advice sought for on the subject? Not formally.

"46. Then you did not give it officially? Not officially. I believe, when I say not officially, that in one of my reports I stated certain reasons for preferring the adoption of the gradient 1 in 50 instead of 1 in 30."

He quoted that evidence just to show hon. members that it was not an engineering question, but appeared to be a question of policy; and hence they had to regard the line not as one made on the approved fashion or recommended by a single professional man. He said that this line was to be made against the opinion of every professional man who was examined. The Engineer-in-Chief was recalled and rather peremptorily examined. If hon. members would turn to page 3 they would see that this question was put to Mr. Stanley—

"69. By the Chairman: I should like to ask Mr. Stanley, if he has estimated the saving that has been effected by adopting the gradient of 1 in 30 instead of 1 in 50? I think I can answer that best, Mr. Buzacott, by reading an extract from the report which I made to the Minister for Works, dated the 21st September, 1880, on the various branch and other lines the plans of which have been submitted to Parliament:—

"Fassifern Line.

* * * *
"The area of land which will require to be resumed from private property for this line is about 41 acres. By the previous survey, based upon a ruling gradient of 1 in 50, the area of land amounted to about 74 acres, as the road in that case is only utilised for a distance of about 9 miles. It, therefore, for purposes of comparison, the value of the land is taken at £25 per acre, to include compensation for injury by severance, the saving in cost by the adoption of the 1 in 30 gradient would be £46 per mile. Adding to this the difference in cost of construction, estimated at £100 per mile, the total saving in favour of the line with 1 in 30 gradients would stand at say £150 per mile, but seeing that a locomotive cannot draw more than one-half the nett load up a

gradient of 1 in 30 that it can on a gradient of 1 in 50, I think it is deserving of serious consideration whether the saving in first cost is not likely to be more than counterbalanced by the additional expenses incurred in the future working of the traffic."

There was the real gist of the Engineer-in-Chief's evidence introduced by quoting a letter, which he felt it his duty to address to the Minister for Works months before this committee was appointed. He (Mr. Walsh) trusted hon. members would bear in mind that Mr. Stanley, in giving that evidence, was doing that which as a professional man he ought to do, and which he believed was in the interests of the department; in fact, he was doing what any other engineer would do if he valued his professional reputation a rap. In corroboration of what Mr. Stanley said, he would quote the answer given by Mr. Ballard on a question bearing on the subject when that gentleman was examined on another line. He was asked, "If it cost no more than £200 or £300 a-mile to make a railway with 1 in 50 gradient than 1 in 30, which would you recommend? 1 in 50, most decidedly." Hon. members would bear in mind that Mr. Ballard was quoted by the Minister for Works as his authority for adopting a gradient of 1 in 30. But here they had Mr. Ballard face to face, and, without knowing what line was referred to, giving the answer that he had quoted. It was far more emphatic, but the words were not taken down. Then a further question was put—

"That would be principally on account of the subsequent working expenses? Yes; I think it would not be wise for the sake of saving £200 or £300 per mile, I think an engineer would be advising wrongly to recommend it."

Mr. Ballard said a great deal more, but what he had read was sufficient, at any rate, to convey his meaning; so that the Committee had the two Engineers-in-Chief both agreeing that for a smaller sum—the one said £146 per mile and the other £300—it would be most unwise to alter the gradient. He (Mr. Walsh) said that Mr. Ballard's evidence amply justified that cautious recommendation given by Mr. Stanley with respect to the Fassifern line. The total saving would only amount to three or four thousand pounds, and what was that compared with the prospective punishment of having to work it at a disadvantage? And, worse than that, a worse and very severe expense must necessarily be incurred. If they turned to question 212 they would see that the Minister for Works was asked—

"212. Are you aware that Mr. Stanley has informed the Committee that the cost of construction of the 1 in 50 gradient would be only on an average £100 per mile more than the 1 in 30? I have seen that, and I cannot understand how Mr. Stanley has arrived at that conclusion, seeing that he has furnished the Commissioner of Railways and myself with no estimate of the cost of the 1 in 50 line. Neither do I believe he has made any estimate of the cost."

"213. Then, I presume that, in adopting the 1 in 30 gradient, you believed there would be a very much greater saving than £100 per mile? I believe there will be."

"214. You still believe that? I still believe that there will be a much greater saving than £100 per mile. Admitting that Mr. Stanley is correct, at £100 per mile, there would still be a greater saving in this respect: we shall save the same amount of compensation that would be required by going through four miles of private land on the 1 in 50 survey, which would necessitate deviation from the main road to the extent named."

He would ask hon. members to go a little further. Mr. Stanley had stated that he believed the value of the land along the 1 in 50 line was at the most £25 per acre, and judging from that he left a margin in his estimate of the extra cost which he as Engineer-in-Chief thought there would be. The Minister for Works, however, seemed to think and know otherwise—and contra-

dicted the Engineer-in-Chief. Then another gentleman was brought into the field, Mr. Phillips, the inspecting surveyor, who stood in high estimation for his probity and his skill. The Minister for Works had said, inferentially, that Mr. Stanley had made no second estimate, but what did Mr. Phillips say?—

"274. You are aware that two estimates were prepared for alternative lines? Yes; I prepared them myself."

"275. And you know the probable cost? Yes."

"276. Did that estimate of yours include the probable cost of lands to be resumed in each case? No."

"277. Are you sufficiently cognizant of the country to be able to give the committee an idea of what would be the probable value of the lands to be resumed on either route? I could give the probable value of the land; but that is not what would be required for severances. I should say it would range from £10 to £25 an acre."

Mr. Stanley put down the value at £25 per acre. Mr. Phillips, he might say, was intimately acquainted with the district, as was evident from his answer to question 267. He was thus further examined:—

"278. Are there any lands that are likely to be resumed on either line of exceptional value? I should think that £25 an acre would be the highest value after you pass 1½ miles from Ipswich—at least, that is my impression."

"279. Will you look at these plans [*showing the plans of the Fassifern Railway to the witness*]? The black line has a gradient of 1 in 50 throughout."

"280. And you say that you prepared the estimate of the probable cost of construction of each of these lines—of the red and the black lines? Yes."

"281. Do you remember what you estimated each at? As far as I recollect the figures, I estimated the cost of the 1 in 50 at £2,604 a-mile, and of the 1 in 30 at £2,504 a-mile—I know the difference was exactly £100; that is, without purchasing the land."

"282. Then you estimate the probable expense of buying land would be at the rate of £25 per acre—that is, for lands resumed for either line? I think that would be a fair value to pay for the land, but what it would cost for severance I cannot say, as I have never accurately gone into the matter."

"283. Supposing you were called upon to make an estimate of the cost of constructing along the red line a railway with a gradient of 1 in 50, what would be the difference in cost? I do not think you could get a gradient of 1 in 50. The survey was made expressly for a gradient of 1 in 30—that is, the cuttings would be too severe if the gradient was easier."

Three professional witnesses recommended that the ruling gradient should be 1 in 50; and two out of the three gentlemen applied the recommendation to the Fassifern line. Mr. Phillips' examination presently proceeded as followed:—

"As a professional man, if called upon to make any recommendation, which would you recommend? For the Fassifern line I should recommend a gradient of 1 in 50."

"288. Why? Because the country is not so difficult as to require an exceptionally steep gradient."

"289. Do you know any of the country leading to Fassifern? Yes; I have a pretty good knowledge of it."

"290. Do you think there is anything to lead to a sharp gradient? No; it is a very easy line."

He thought he had said enough to show that the alteration of the gradient was simply a design of the Government. If the House were determined to adopt the gradient of 1 in 30 as an experiment, well and good; but he for one objected to approve of the gradient when the whole of the evidence before them, exclusive of that of the Minister for Works, was against it. Of course it was only natural that the Minister should give the best reasons he could for the change he proposed to make. A great deal of evidence was given by the Commissioner of Railways with a view to show that the difficulties of the steeper gradient could be overcome by the use of a modern and more powerful engine—one of Baldwin's engines. But what evidence had they before them as to the use of the Baldwin consolidation engine? He asked the weight of the engines, and it turned out that the engine and tender weighed 10 or

15 tons more than the line was capable of carrying between Ipswich and Toowoomba. The Fairlie engine weighing over thirty-two tons was used there, and it strained the line to such an extent that its use had to be abandoned. Yet they were to get out of the difficulty of a steep gradient by using Baldwin's consolidation engines. Let the House consider this evidence:—

"109. Will you state it to the Committee? In the event of the line being constructed, we propose to work it with a small Baldwin's consolidation engine—one of those we have received from America. On a gradient of 1 in 30, the engine could pull 51 tons on the straight, and 46 tons on curves. That is the gross weight, including the trucks. On a gradient of 1 in 50 it would take 94 tons on the straight, and 86 tons on curves.

"110. *By Mr. G. Sandeman:* What is the weight of that engine? About 30 tons."

That was the evidence of Mr. Herbert. Farther on there was more information relative to the weight of the engines:—

"220. Will you furnish the Committee with information on that subject? The carrying capacity varies with the class of engine employed. I have obtained this information from the Locomotive Superintendent, who is intimately acquainted with the powers of the different classes of engines. I will not read the whole. The E class, Kitson and others, carrying capacity is 92 tons on 1 in 50; on 1 in 30 it is 48 tons. The small consolidation engine, which I may say is the engine which will be very likely used upon the line, under a pressure of extra traffic, if necessary, has a carrying capacity on 1 in 50 of 95 tons, and on 1 in 30 of 51 tons. The carrying capacity of the large consolidation engine on 1 in 50 is 143 tons, and on 1 in 30, 75 tons.

"221. *By Mr. Walsh:* Can you state the weight of that engine? Yes; the weight of the engine is 27 tons. The tender, when full of coals and water, is 19 tons."

He was perfectly sure that the engines could not be used on their railways either to go round sharp curves or to cross bridges. At the cheap rate at which the Fassifern line was to be constructed such an engine would knock the line to pieces. In connection with this matter he must ask the Committee to refer to another part of the evidence of the Minister for Works:—

"227. Would that Kitson's engine, which took such a large load, take it up between Ipswich and Toowoomba? Oh, no! because the ruling gradient is 1 in 50. I am stating this for the purpose of comparison between theory and practice. At Ipswich there is a very steep incline from the works to the wharf on the lines, which I dare say Mr. Walsh knows. That incline is 1 in 28. The small consolidation engine which I have spoken of as the one likely to be used on the Fassifern line was tried on that incline and it took up a load of 61 tons, stopped in the middle of the grade, and started again with the load I have named behind it, clear of the tender."

That answer set him thinking; and he then asked whether that was the gross weight, and received the following reply:—

"Yes; 61 tons. I started with the load from the bottom of the incline, where it had no impetus, and it was stopped in the middle of the grade, and started again, taking the load up. That was a very severe test. The theoretical load is 51 tons on a grade of 1 in 30."

That evidence was given to justify the 1 in 30 grade upon the Fassifern line. Turning to Mr. Horniblow's evidence, he found—

"330. Were you present at the trial made of the carrying capacities of an engine from the wharf at Ipswich up that steep incline? I was not present; but the locomotive foreman reported to me what were the results. He told me the result was that the engine drew 61 tons up a gradient of 1 in 28, but that it was as much as she could do.

"331. What engine was that? One of the small consolidation engines.

"332. Are you aware what speed she went? No; but I believe it was as much as she could do to go up.

"333. Did she go five miles an hour? No; hardly four miles—just about as fast as a man would walk—just enough to keep her going, because unless a locomotive went a certain speed she would stop altogether.

"334. Could that engine have gone ten miles an hour? No.

"335. Then, in fact, it was merely a trial of strength, to see what she could do? Just so; to see what an engine could do at a pinch."

That was the description of this locomotive superintendent, whose duty it was to know exactly what an engine could do. It turned out that the advantage of using consolidation engines did not counterbalance the difficulties created by resorting to a steep gradient. If hon. members perused the evidence, they would find that there were twelve engines, which were almost useless, not because they were worn out—they were still in good repair—but because of the large loads which were required to be carried. Further on, in Mr. Horniblow's evidence, hon. members would find—

"390. You know that it is proposed to use the consolidation engines on this line? I saw in *Hansard* that in case of heavy traffic on this line the consolidation engines would be used.

"391. Are there not a number of small engines that are not of use, which could be used for working the branch lines? We have twelve small engines which are used between Brisbane and Ipswich; but the traffic department do not like them, as they do not haul enough load.

"Do you not think it would be well to utilise these engines for branch lines? Yes; we have several lying idle owing to their want of power."

Hon. members should bear in mind that these twelve engines represented £20,000, and that by the expenditure of an additional £3,000 or £4,000 upon the Fassifern line the whole of them would be brought into use. That circumstance alone should show hon. members that in adopting the increased gradient they would indeed be a pound wise and a penny foolish. He must remind hon. members that the Minister for Works particularly quoted Mr. Ballard as his authority for the 1 in 30 gradient. What was Mr. Ballard's evidence upon this question? True, he had resorted to a gradient of 1 in 30 on a certain portion of the Central line; but it was not of such a length as to interfere with an ordinary load. The distance was so short that the impetus of the train would carry it over.

"39. At your estimate, will the line be equal to the other railways in point of solidity? I can hardly say that it will be equal to the main line, as I have provided for a reduced quantity of ballast."

The Minister for Works said that even fencing was unprovided for. They were asked, in short, to approve of an altered gradient, to which all the professional evidence was opposed. This new policy of the Government, as it had been styled by the Minister for Works, was to be adopted in order to effect a saving of £3,000 or £4,000. He respected a Government with a good policy, and would support them; but he saw nothing to justify him in joining in this report. If the line were to be made let it be made well; let no difficulty be thrown in the way of working the line as economically as it could be worked. In conclusion, he wished to bear his testimony to the value of these select committees. That was the first trial of the plan; and he hoped when the other Chamber saw the valuable evidence which had been adduced they would take a lesson from the Council. He hoped the Government would in future initiate no railway without taking the course which had been suggested by the Hon. Mr. Gregory, which he maintained was capable of doing a great deal of good for the country. He had taken a great interest in this matter; and although he had not said one-half as much as he would like to say, he thought he had said sufficient to induce the Committee to pause before they adopted the report, and to consider whether it was not their duty to offer the Government wiser advice.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY said that in speaking to this question he could not but regret

that the Postmaster-General had deemed it necessary to press this motion upon the House at so short a notice. Of course, hon. members had had a month to consider the question; but during that time they had been perfectly well aware that the matter was undergoing inquiry at the hands of a select committee which would elicit evidence which it would be impossible for any individual member to acquire. He also regretted that he was unable to be upon the committee; had he been he would have felt it his duty to put a series of questions to witnesses which he thought would have elicited information which would have very strongly supported the view entertained by the Hon. Mr. Walsh. That hon. gentleman had given expression to his views in a very temperate, clear, and concise manner, which must carry conviction with it. He might state that for many years before he came to Queensland his professional duties were in a great measure connected with engineering. He had nothing to do with the construction of railways, but he had to acquire a knowledge of mechanics, and had to go into the question of railways from a theoretical standpoint. He felt bound to make that explanation, or he might be thought presumptuous in speaking so decisively. He would briefly run over one or two points which he wished placed before the House. It was not his intention to vote against the construction of the railway, even although the Government might determine that the ruling gradient should be 1 in 30. He would not vote against the proposal, because there was nothing so convincing as experience. The proposal to construct this railway, too, was of so limited a nature, as compared with the railways of the colony generally, that the money proposed to be expended would be fairly spent in proving the fallacy of this gradient in their surrounding circumstances. With regard to the question of gradients, he wished particularly to call the attention of the House to a salient point which every work upon engineering laid down as a fixed axiom—that was, that, although they might construct a line more cheaply by increasing the gradient, still the proportion between the cost of construction and the largely-increased wear and tear both of the rolling-stock and the line would not justify the increase except under the most exceptional circumstances. It was a question in the neighbouring colony of New South Wales as to whether the engineers there had been right in adopting the gradient of 1 in 30. Some of the most able engineers of the present day condemned it; even the engineers of New South Wales, who were themselves concerned in the construction of the line in which that gradient obtained, confessed that it would have been more economical to have spent a large sum and lengthen the line rather than have such a high gradient. He had paid a great deal of attention to this question for the last six or seven years, and in conversing with engineers in New South Wales he found they all entertained the view of the question which he had just mentioned. There was another point of which they must not lose sight in connection with this matter. This was that in any future extension of the line they would have to use heavy engines independently of a possibly lighter gradient. It had been said that, if the gradient proved a failure, the difficulty could be overcome by a series of deviations; but these deviations would materially enhance the cost of construction. He with a great many others condemned the principle of making railways through private land where it was possible to take them through public lands, upon the principle that the demands for compensation were exceedingly high, and that even

where they were reasonable they added very materially to the cost of the line. This principle had not been lost sight of in the view he had taken relative to the Fassifern line. The Hon. Mr. Walsh had drawn attention to the evidence relative to the engineer of the Northern line having adopted a high gradient. He had made inquiries upon this subject two years ago and at a more recent period, and he found that the adoption of a high gradient was only for a short distance, and would be overcome by the impetus of the train. Reference had also been made to the small consolidation engines and to the heavy Baldwins. He was present at a trial trip of one of these engines on the Little Liverpool Range, and the engineer was able to stop the engine going up a considerable gradient and start it again. He wished hon. members, however, to know one important fact in connection with that trial trip. He was upon the engine himself, and carefully watched the steam pressure. The fact was that the engineer, in endeavouring to get over the line, found that he could not do it, and he reduced his steam to such a low standard that he would have been obliged to stop independently of any arrangement to do so which he might have made. It took him seven minutes to get up steam and move on again, and instead of the trial affording proof of the power of the engine it proved the reverse. It took a 30-lb. pressure to carry the train through the Victoria Tunnel. He could bring up a vast amount of evidence in support of what he had stated; but he had to a certain extent been taken by surprise, and had only been able to make these remarks from his recollection of surrounding circumstances. He felt that the more they examined the subject the more they would find that there was a tendency to condemn gradients greater than the ruling gradients they had already adopted. He hoped that, whatever action was taken that afternoon, nothing absolutely conclusive would be done. It was only fair that hon. members should have a little more time to look into the question and see its real bearing before they came to a decision. For his own part, he thought the evidence was absolutely and unmistakably at variance with the report of the committee.

The Hon. F. J. IVORY said that, as a member of the committee, and a sincere advocate of cheap railways, he desired to offer a few remarks. It seemed to him that the objections taken by the Hon. Mr. Walsh and the Hon. Mr. Gregory to the report of the committee were taken from a strictly professional and technical standpoint. He was quite willing to admit that there might be some force in their objections if they were dealing with a railway in a thickly-populated country, but they were dealing with an entirely exceptional case. They had not that amount of traffic which would justify them in going through all the particulars of expenses which received attention in older countries. For his own part, he thought that if the country had not been so sat upon by engineers in the past, their lines, if they were not so comfortable, would have been constructed in a manner calculated to meet the whole of their necessities. He did not attach much importance to evidence which had been given by engineers in reference to the cost of the resumption of land, side by side with the evidence upon the same subject which was given by the Minister for Works, who had devoted so much time to the consideration of that matter. Mr. Phillips, who was called as a witness by the Hon. Mr. Walsh, admitted that he had not taken into consideration the matter of severance, upon which very large claims were sometimes founded. The Hon. Mr. Walsh stated that the Minister for Works based his views with regard to the gradient of 1 in 30 on the opinion of Mr. Ballard,

and also quoted from that gentleman's evidence respecting the Clermont line. He (Mr. Ivory) would also quote from that evidence. Mr. Ballard was asked by Mr. Sandeman—

"Speaking generally, is there much saving in the first cost of construction between gradients of 1 in 30 and 1 in 50? Yes; speaking generally, I think about as £3,000 per mile would be to £5,000 per mile."

Mr. Ballard then gave evidence, without being particularly asked to do so, upon this question, and he (Mr. Ivory) should read his remarks, as they had a very direct bearing on the question of the 1 in 30 gradients. At question 303 he was asked—

"303. Is there much difference in the carrying capacity between the gradients of 1 in 30 and 1 in 50? The difference would be about in proportion as 30 to 50; but that would apply to lines in which the gradients were continuous and of any length. Such small compensating gradients as I have referred to would not affect the carrying capacity of the railway; it is only in the event of a gradient being of any length."

He (Mr. Ivory) could not at once put his finger upon the answers in the Fassifern inquiry, but any gentleman who looked into the evidence would find that there were no steep gradients of any length, and certainly none that would affect the general working power of the line. Mr. Ballard was then asked—

"304. By the Hon. F. J. Feory: Such as —? Such as the gradients I have introduced on the Townsville Railway recently, where there is a gradient of 1 in 30 for two and three-quarter miles on the Main Range. That would affect the carrying capacity of the line as about 30 in 50. But there are ways of getting over these difficulties in a country where the traffic is so small as ours; that is to say, that where the gradient of 1 in 30 extends for only half-a-mile or a mile, it would affect the carrying capacity very little."

He (Mr. Ivory) might state that the longest steep gradient on the Fassifern line was only twenty-nine chains. Mr. Ballard continued:—

"If you split your trains into half on most of these gradients, the same engine would pull you over; it is merely a question of time, and in a country like this, where time for goods is not a very great object, I think that the capacity would not be much interfered with by gradients of 1 in 30. Moreover, there are cases in which the traffic capacity of the railway is not so much interfered with by steepening the gradient as one would imagine, when we come to compare that railway with a railway we should have to make if we did not steepen the gradient. The case in point I can give is the Townsville Railway. We steepened the gradient there from 1 in 50 to 1 in 30 for about two and three-quarter miles, that is, on the average; but we shortened the line by two miles; so that when you come to consider the mileage engines would have to run annually, even if they had to run up and down to halve their loads, they would not make more mileage on the steep line than on the flatter line, because there would be so much less distance to run. That shows that the advantage is not all on the one side. I wish to show you that if we steepen the line we also shorten the line, and thereby save money on permanent-way, and in the distance to be travelled. Another thing is, as in the case of the Townsville Railway, all the steep gradient is only one way, and only affects the traffic one way."

Further on he said—

"It is a serious thing in America, for instance, to make a difference between 1 in 30 and 1 in 50 because they have perhaps an engine or an engine and a-half to the mile, and it is a question of having one engine to the mile or three engines to the mile, because they have got heavy traffic. It is because the cost of equipping their line comes to within a trifle as much as it costs to make them. In such a country as that the question of grades is an important one; but in a country like this you have no right to think of it at all until you have populated it one hundred times more than it is now; for the simple reason that you have spent, say, £5,000,000 in railways, and in rolling-stock you have not spent more than about £50,000."

It would therefore be seen that Mr. Stanley's evidence had not been so fully corroborated by Mr. Ballard as hon. members might be led to suppose by the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Walsh. He (Mr. Ivory), as a staunch advocate of railway

construction, said that when they found a Ministry prepared with a scheme such as this they should, at all events, not throw obstacles in their way, but give them an opportunity of showing—in one instance, at least—that it could be done notwithstanding that they had certain professional men who set up their conservative opinions against the opinions of gentlemen who had made inquiries here and in other countries, and who, though possessing no technical engineering knowledge, might be quite as well able to judge whether railways could be advantageously constructed on a gradient of 1 in 30 or 1 in 50.

The Hon. C. S. MEIN said the last argument of the previous speaker was one that operated on his mind on this occasion. He was prepared to give his vote for the adoption of the report, throwing the responsibility of the question of policy upon the Ministry alone. If he followed his own ideas on the subject they would be entirely in harmony with what had been uttered by the Hon. Mr. Walsh. He should be very loth to set up his opinion, although he had given the matter some consideration, against the decided convictions of a gentleman who had spent the whole of his life in studying these matters. The evidence of Mr. Stanley on the question of grade was, to his mind, decided and conclusive. In the southern portion of the colony they had established a ruling grade of 1 in 50, and, for the problematical advantage of going thirteen miles over a public road, it was proposed to adopt a new gradient of 1 in 30. He maintained that the argument based on Mr. Ballard's evidence respecting the Townsville Railway had no application to the present line. Mr. Ballard's reason for adopting 1 in 30 on the Townsville line was that he would shorten the distance between the two termini, and cheapen the construction; but on the Fassifern line it had been shown that by adopting 1 in 30 they not only did not shorten the distance but increased it by eight chains, at the same time increasing the cost of maintenance and lessening the carrying capacity. Mr. Ballard also pointed out that the proportionate cost of constructing the railway of 1 in 30 and 1 in 50 varied as between 3 and 5, but that was where they went over precisely the same ground; but in the Fassifern Railway the 1 in 50 grade was over totally different ground to the 1 in 30, and the only reason the Minister for Works had for not approving of the road by 1 in 50 was, that it went through private lands. It was true that experience in the past had shown that, although the officers employed by the Government might make a very moderate estimate of the land resumed and severance, yet the ultimate awards had been considered in excess of their estimate; but he would point out that the object of the Railway and Tramway Bill which had recently been passed was to enable the Government to fix, almost beyond the possibility of a doubt, the mode by which compensation for land resumed was to be arrived at. They had laid down a hard-and-fast rule, which could not be transgressed by the railway arbitrator, and which would prevent persons injuriously affected by the construction of a line to get more than the actual amount of injury sustained by them, while, at the same time, care was taken to set off the enhanced value of the land by the construction of the line. The Government, with that staring them in the face—and, as the evidence went to show that the value of the land was considerably less than £25 an acre—had, he thought, undertaken an unwise responsibility in altering the gradient. In the construction of these lines they could not overlook the fact that no railway was justifiable unless the probability was that within a reasonable period

it would pay interest on the cost of construction. If there were not good grounds for anticipating that the construction of this railway would bring such advantage to the colony as would outweigh the interest on the money borrowed for its construction, they should not embark on the undertaking. He took it for granted that was likely to be the case; and if it were so, the wisest course to adopt would be to make the railway so substantially in the first instance that they would not have to come down, when the increasing requirements of traffic urged it, and ask for further expenditure to strengthen it. However, the Government urged this as an experiment, and he should leave the responsibility with them; at the same time, he feared that the ultimate cost would be considerably greater than it was estimated to be.

The HON. G. SANDEMAN said he had up to a certain period opposed the branch railways. His objections were in a great measure based upon the expense of those lines when the traffic was not likely to meet the expenditure; but the proposal to construct railways upon so low an estimate as was proposed now had induced him to consider that it was an experiment worth trying. As to the gradient, it seemed to him that that was purely an engineering or professional question, and he thought that remarks had been made in parts of the evidence which might possibly be taken as a reflection upon the Engineer-in-Chief, which, from long experience of that gentleman, he thought were not deserved. In Mr. Macrossan's evidence, question 234, he was asked by the Chairman—

"234. As I understand, Mr. Stanley consistently opposes any steeper grade than 1 in 50 anywhere? Yes. Mr. Stanley, I may say, consistently opposed my ideas of economical construction."

He (Mr. Sandeman) did not know whether that could be taken as a reflection upon Mr. Stanley's professional reputation, but he certainly thought that it should not be, because it was a professional question which required a professional opinion. Then, when Mr. Ballard was referred to, he did not think that gentleman contradicted Mr. Stanley's opinion. Mr. Ballard upon this question spoke of the advantage of 1 in 30 gradients in certain cases which he (Mr. Sandeman) thought no engineer would contest; but he could not gather from that gentleman's evidence that he would prefer 1 in 30 in long grades. He said, "If judiciously put in, they will not affect the traffic in any degree. It is only where there is a long grade you require to provide for them." They knew that a great deal of the country over which railways travelled in this colony consisted of long grades, and he thought upon the whole the opinions given by Mr. Stanley were worthy of consideration. For instance, in his report dated January 28, 1879, which he (Mr. Sandeman) understood was drawn up at the instance of the former Secretary for Works, Mr. Griffith, Mr. Stanley said—

"With respect to the adoption of a gradient of 1 in 25, as suggested by the Hon. the Secretary for Public Works, it will be found upon investigation that under ordinary circumstances the saving effected in the first cost is inconsiderable, whilst the carrying capacity of the line would be reduced fully one-half, and the cost of equipment and working expenses largely increased, as more than double the number of trains would be required to convey the same weight of goods."

That was an opinion given, no doubt, thoroughly conscientiously by Mr. Stanley. It was a professional question, and they should do the Chief Engineer the justice of accepting the evidence which his professional knowledge enabled him to give. This line was to be taken as an experiment over country that was well fitted for the purpose, and no doubt it was an experiment they should all watch with considerable anxiety to see whether

the opinions of the Chief Engineer were correct or not. He hoped that in any other lines they would be more cautious in the gradients they adopted.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL pointed out, in reply to Mr. Gregory, that reasonable time had been given for the consideration of the report. He admitted that the tendency of the professional evidence was in favour of the 1 in 50; but he could not shut his eyes to the fact that the tendency of all professional advice from the first starting of railways in Queensland had been to incur any unjustifiable expense. Even now, in America, where there was a great deal more traffic than they could anticipate for many years to come in this colony, the ruling gradient of 1 in 30 had been carried out and proved to be successful, and still Mr. Stanley—whose qualifications as an engineer he did not dispute—even where it was known that the traffic would be very light, would not have anything but a first-class railway on a gradient of 1 in 50. In a country like this, where the people in all parts were clamouring for speedy and certain means of communication, it did appear to him to be inconsistent that they should make railways on such a scale as was carried out in older-settled and thoroughly populated countries. It had been shown clearly by the evidence of the Minister for Works and the Commissioner that this railway, with a gradient of 1 in 30, would carry the traffic for a long time with even the small engines Mr. Walsh had referred to. The Hon. Mr. Walsh had pointed out that there are twelve engines which had been used on the main line, but were not sufficiently powerful for the increased traffic, and the Locomotive Superintendent had said that these engines would carry thirty tons over 1 in 30 on the Fassifern line; so that the steepness of the gradient would not preclude the utilisation of those engines. He must take some exception to the professional evidence of Mr. Phillips, upon which the Hon. Mr. Walsh laid considerable stress. Mr. Phillips confessed that he was purely an office engineer—a surveying engineer—and had never been engaged in actual railway construction. They had therefore only the evidence of Mr. Stanley, who was no doubt a very good engineer and made thoroughly substantial railways, but who, in the face of all experience and information obtained from the best possible resources, still adhered to a 1 in 50 gradient for all railways in the Southern district. He thought the colony had paid quite enough for substantial railways, and that it was taxed quite heavily enough without paying for railways which were altogether too substantial for present and prospective requirements, especially in regard to branch railways. The fact that the gradient of 1 in 30 had been deliberately adopted by an engineer of the experience and ability of Mr. Ballard on the Central and Northern line should induce the House to accept that gradient on the Fassifern line without hesitation. The probability was that this line would in time be taken to Warwick over very rugged ranges, and, although the grade might not make much difference between Ipswich and Harrisville, the extra expense of taking the line through to Warwick on a grade of 1 in 50 would be something enormous. With regard to compensation, Mr. Stanley had put down the value of the land to be resumed on this line at £25 per acre, and no doubt it was not worth more than that; but he believed that when they came to resume it and paid for severance and injury done it would amount to a great deal more. During this session the Hon. Mr. Walsh had caused a return to be furnished which contained some valuable information, and he should read a few figures from it to show that if the amounts that had been actually paid for compensation,

were excessive, the demands of owners had been something beyond all belief. The very first item was one where the owner claimed £900 and was awarded £70, and the probability was the property was not worth half £70. Another claim for 1 acre 18 perches in Maryborough was £1,992, and £657 was awarded, and probably the true market value was about one-third of that. In another case in Maryborough £1,800 was asked for 2 acres 20 perches, and £120 was paid, while the value was probably about £15. In another case at Maryborough, £4,259 was claimed and £550 awarded, worth about £150; in another, £200 was demanded and £55 awarded. He thought these figures would show that the estimate of the engineer that the land was worth £25 an acre must be taken for what it was worth, and he was afraid it was not worth much. On the whole he thought the House would do well to adopt the report of the committee. He was pleased to hear hon. gentlemen say that they desired to throw the responsibility on the Government. Without endorsing entirely the policy of the Government in this respect, they thought the Government had the best means of ascertaining what the circumstances of the country required, and they were prepared, therefore, to adopt the line as presented to them.

The HON. W. PETTIGREW said that for many years he had been a strong advocate of cheap railways, and now that there was an attempt to introduce them into the country it was his duty to give it all fair support. The cost of making the Southern and Western Railway had been much too heavy in many instances. Going over the Main Range the railway had been made double or nearly treble the length that was required. By making a short steep line, and having special engines for the purpose of drawing loads over it, it would have been far the most economical in the first instance and the most economical in working for all time to come. And so convinced was he of the truth of what he stated that he believed that even now it would be economy to make a new line, to take sharp, steep inclinations—to be the shortest, in fact. He stated these opinions many years ago, and he saw that they were all being brought into practice now; indeed, quite lately he read of a railway being constructed to the top of Mount Vesuvius. He had read of railways being made at an inclination of 1 in 5, but no such inclination was required going over the Main Range. With reference to the Fassifern Railway, he must say that the evidence contained in the select committee's report, as stated by the Hon. Mr. Walsh, and the conclusions arrived at by the report, were certainly at variance—the one did not bear out the other. If it were necessary to ascend, say, fifteen hundred feet to a table-land, as from Helidon to Too-woomba, the shortest line practicable was certainly the one to be adopted; but this Fassifern line was quite a different matter. Instead of needlessly going straight over the top of hills the line might be taken round them, and be kept level or nearly level. It must be remembered that the working expenses for all time had to be considered, and that an engine could draw

over a level line nearly double the load that it could over the Fassifern railway as proposed. He had looked over the sections of the proposed railway, and such small alterations would be needed that he did not see why the Government should not avoid the hills and make the line nearly level. However, he was not going to refuse credit to the Government for doing what they could in the way of making a cheap line. He would support them, but he thought the suggestions he had thrown out might safely be adopted, and with advantage to the line for all

time to come. The question arose what traffic was there to be taken along the line. He had examined the report for that purpose, and, so far as he could see, Mr. R. J. Smith was the only one who gave any information on the point, and he said that timber would be one of the principal things. Timber certainly would be required for a long time to come, and it might be the means of supplying a deal of traffic; still, it alone would not keep the railway going. The Postmaster-General had stated something about the compensation which would have to be paid if the line were altered, and had referred to the Maryborough line; but he (Mr. Pettigrew) thought that the hon. member's statement with regard to that line proved the very opposite of what he wished to establish. The parties there claimed large sums and got very small amounts allowed. By the Bill which was recently before the Council it was provided that, when a claim was made, the arbitrator should take into consideration the benefit that would be derived by the claimants through the making of the railway; and he (Mr. Pettigrew) imagined that in many instances the advantages to the property-owners on this Fassifern line would be so great that instead of claiming compensation they ought to pay the Government for making the line. He therefore thought, if that Bill were properly carried out, the compensation that would have to be given for any alteration would be very small indeed. As he had already stated he would support the railway, but he really thought there were three points which might be altered with advantage to the working capacity of the line. One point, and about the worst, was between three and four miles out from Ipswich, and by a slight alteration it could be obviated.

Question put and passed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he now begged to move—

1. That this House approves of the Plans, Sections, and Book of Reference of the Fassifern line of Railway, as received by Message from the Legislative Assembly on 23rd September, 1880.

2. That such approval be notified to the Legislative Assembly by message in the usual form.

He presumed that after the debate which had just taken place hon. members would not expect him to make any further observations on the subject of the motion. The motion was one which he thought would follow the adoption of the report of the select committee.

After a pause,

The HON. W. H. WALSH said that when such a large expenditure was proposed, and so little reason was given for it by the Postmaster-General, he had expected that there would be a long debate. Hon. members must bear in mind that they had a vast amount of information, which, had it been obtained by the other Chamber, would, he believed, have prevented this line being approved of there. It behoved hon. members of the Council to give, at least, fair consideration before they approved of this railway. It was one thing to approve of a vague and inconsistent report, and another thing, after having obtained information which was not known to the other Chamber, to sanction a lavish and unjustifiable expenditure. The Assembly voted this railway almost in the dark, but hon. members in this Chamber would do so with their eyes open, and with knowledge which would have staggered the Assembly. It must be remembered that every one of the witnesses acknowledged that there was no traffic—that it was purely prospective. Were they, then, justified in sanctioning the undertaking? He said no. He asked whether there was one hon. member who believed that this railway would pay working expenses? Was there one hon. member who justified

the country being committed to that work on the evidence that had been produced? He did not hesitate to say that if an amendment were carried which would bring about a reconsideration of the approval in the other Chamber, that he did not believe the Assembly would sanction the work for one moment. He said that hon. members of the Council would be abdicating their functions—that they would not be faithful stewards of the duties entrusted to them—if they sanctioned such a lavish expenditure—if they sanctioned a work for which no justification had been shown. He protested against it, and he should certainly vote against it.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR said he did not intend to speak on this question at all, but after what had fallen from hon. members opposite, and especially from the Hon. Mr. Walsh, he found himself bound to rise, particularly as he had some information on the subject. Personally he was not in favour of branch railways, but that question had been solved. With regard to there being no traffic upon this line, or no likelihood of any, he must differ with the hon. gentleman who had spoken. There was a very great quantity of agricultural land in the district between the range dividing the Teviot and the Logan waters. It was mostly a table-top, and there was a scrub from sixteen to twenty miles in length with an average width of four miles, and he thought he might say that nearly every acre of that scrub was taken up, and the cultivation which was now going on there would astonish anyone who had driven through that scrub a few years ago. A very large number of families had settled there, and in fact a very large area of the scrub was already under cultivation. If the country were justified in running a branch railway anywhere, he thought that, with perhaps the exception of the Rosewood Scrub, there was more agricultural land in the district which he had named than any part he knew of. He quite differed with the Postmaster-General in his statement that this Fassifern line was likely to go to Warwick, it being a shorter route. Anyone who had gone over that country would at once see that the experiment of taking the railway over the Main Range, when there was a railway already to Warwick, would never be attempted. In his opinion the railway, instead of going to Fassifern, should deviate at Harrisville and go in the direction of the scrub that he had named, where there was a large quantity of good land and where many people were already settled. There was also a timber trade springing up. He had seen it to his cost, for the trolleys cut up their roads. There was any quantity of cedar on the Main Range, and at present many drays were employed carting it from that district to Ipswich. If men could be found to cart timber distances of 80 miles at the furthest, what would not the trade be when part of the distance could be done by railway?

Question put.

The House divided :—

CONTENTS, 11.

The Hons. C. H. Buzacott, F. J. Ivory, F. T. Gregory, W. F. Lambert, W. Pettigrew, J. Cowlishaw, F. H. Hart, W. Graham, J. F. McDougall, J. C. Heussler, and W. Aplin.

NOT-CONTENTS, 2.

The Hons. W. H. Walsh, and C. S. D. Melbourne.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

ATTENDANCE AT COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, it was resolved that a message should be sent to the Legislative Assembly, asking that a Select Committee of the Council might examine the Hon. J. M. Macrossan, with reference to the Oxley to South Brisbane, and the Sandgate railways.

PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS BILL—RECOMMITTAL.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said when this Bill was last in committee he promised the Hon. Mr. Hart that he would give the committee another opportunity of considering clause 41. He also wished to make a verbal amendment in clause 4. He therefore moved that the Bill be recommitted for the consideration of clauses 4 and 41.

The Hon. C. S. MEIN said he did not wish to oppose the motion for recommitment; but before the House went into Committee he would like hon. members to consider both the effect of allowing the Bill to remain as it stood, and of inserting the amendment proposed by the Postmaster-General. The amendment of the Hon. Mr. Melbourne in clause 4 was introduced to permit of those persons engaged in pearl fisheries continuing the employment of the South Sea Islanders in the prosecution of that industry. But they had provided in this Bill that islanders should not be introduced unless it could be satisfactorily shown that they were to be engaged in the prosecution of tropical or semi-tropical industries. The amendment of the Hon. Mr. Melbourne would deal with the fact of the employment of the islanders in pearl fisheries, but it made no provision as to the mode in which those islanders were to be recruited. The Bill was therefore imperfect, and it was difficult to foresee to what extent the provision of the 4th clause could be applied. He was of opinion that it would be impossible for islanders intended for pearl fisheries to be recruited. The proper mode of amending the Bill would have been to have adopted an interpretation of the industry of pearl-fishing, and to have provided in a subsequent clause that islanders should be recruited as well for pearl-fishing as for tropical and semi-tropical agriculture. He did not think that the Colonial Secretary could issue a license under clause 7 for the introduction of islanders to be engaged upon pearl fisheries, and the persons introducing the islanders for this purpose without a license would come under the provisions of the Imperial Kidnapping Act. It would be necessary, therefore, to consider clauses 2, 7, and 19, as well as clauses 4 and 41.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL thought that if they adopted the suggestion of the Hon. Mr. Mein they would be doing more than the committee contemplated when the amendment of the Hon. Mr. Melbourne was introduced. With the amendment he intended to propose he thought clause 4 would have the intended effect. In nineteen cases out of twenty the islanders engaged upon the pearl fisheries were recruited from Sydney after having been brought from the islands under license from the Government of New South Wales. It would be unreasonable to take the small proportion of islanders engaged from Queensland under their protection.

Question put and passed, and the Council went into Committee.

Upon clause 4—

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved that the words "now or hereafter" be inserted after the word "labourers." The clause would then read "but shall not apply to any Pacific Island labourers now or hereafter employed in pearl fisheries upon the Queensland coast."

Amendment put and passed.

The Hon. W. APLIN moved that the words "and bêche-de-mer" be inserted after the word "pearl." As hon. members were aware, there were a considerable number of islanders employed upon the bêche-de-mer fisheries.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he had a prior amendment. He moved that the word "solely" be inserted after the word "employed."

The HON. C. S. MEIN said that, without wishing to prolong the discussion unnecessarily, he must make a final protest against the clause in its present form. He could foresee that great efforts would be made by means of the provisions of that clause to evade the Act. In the first place, the amendment was inappropriate; but that was not his main objection to it. What was there to prevent a person who desired to introduce islanders contrary to the provisions of the Act, from declaring that they were introduced for the pearl or bêche-de-mer fisheries? How could the contrary be proved unless there was some overt Act showing that the islanders were intended for some other employment? Before the matter could be determined, the offending captain and his ship would be beyond the jurisdiction of the court. The Postmaster-General was not strictly accurate when he said the amendment had been accepted: as he understood, the amendment was allowed to be inserted pending further inquiry. He did not wish to be misunderstood in this matter. He was one of the first to point out to members of another Chamber before the Bill came up to the Council that they were likely to do an injustice to the pearl fisheries. He thought they had quite as much right to encourage the preservation of that industry as the sugar industry, if not more right, because it was an industry which could not be carried on by white men. He was anxious to foster the industry, but he did not wish to see a loophole in the Bill whereby its provisions might be evaded.

The HON. C. S. D. MELBOURNE said he should have been glad if the Hon. Mr. Mein had pointed out a more efficient way of dealing with his amendment when it was first introduced. He believed the omission of a clause relative to pearl fisheries was quite unintentional on the part of the other House. As the Hon. Mr. Mein pointed out, it was absolutely necessary that islanders should be employed upon the bêche-de-mer and pearl fisheries. If it were not for the amendment in clause 4, pearl fisheries could not be carried on, because that Bill in its original form provided that islanders must be engaged in tropical or semi-tropical agriculture. As far as he could understand from persons engaged in the industry, the majority of the islanders were shipped under the Imperial statute. The present Act did not preclude their employment upon shore, without which the industry could not be carried on, but that Bill restricted the employment of the islanders to tropical and semi-tropical agriculture. Some provision was absolutely necessary for the protection of this trade, and he thought the Hon. Mr. Aplin, who was thoroughly conversant with the subject, would be able to give some valuable information respecting it. If his amendment was not in the form desired by hon. gentlemen it could be amended. His object was simply to supply what appeared to him to be an omission in the other Chamber.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR was entirely opposed to a reconsideration of a number of clauses, which would only re-open the whole discussion; and as it appeared that the object of the Hon. Mr. Melbourne would be carried out by the present amendment, he did not see that anything further was necessary.

The HON. W. GRAHAM thought the clause, with the alteration proposed by the Postmaster-General, was quite sufficient; and if that were agreed to it would prevent the reconsideration of other clauses, which would have to be altered if further amendments were made in this clause.

The HON. F. T. GREGORY said the Council was frequently indebted to the Hon. Mr. Mein for the legal acumen he brought to bear on the various subjects under discussion, and on the present occasion he agreed with that hon. gentleman to the extent that there was a legal opening for expressing the opinion he had given; but at the same time, if they looked at the question practically he could not see in what way it was ever likely to bring about the dangers which that hon. gentleman seemed to anticipate. He thought they would be perfectly safe in passing the clause as amended.

Question put and passed.

The HON. W. APLIN proposed, as a further amendment, after "pearl-shell," to insert "bêche-de-mer." He pointed out that a large number of islanders were employed in these fisheries in the North, and it would be a great hardship if the persons engaged in that trade were prohibited from employing them. Those islanders came under the Merchant Shipping Act, and were well protected in every way.

The HON. C. S. MEIN congratulated the Council upon the presence of the Hon. Mr. Aplin, a gentleman who had been so long identified with the northern portion of the colony, and who, he was sure, would be a valuable acquisition to the Council. The hon. gentleman had already commenced to show the intelligence he could bring to bear on matters likely to come up for discussion, and, as he had pointed out, a large number of persons were engaged in this industry, which it was very desirable should be encouraged and protected. So far as the islanders on the ships' articles were concerned, no statute could interfere with them. The object of this Bill was merely to deal with islanders who were brought to the colony and employed here. He (Mr. Mein) did not mean to oppose the clause, but he doubted whether it was the best form to carry out the object intended.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said as the Hon. Mr. Mein had congratulated the House on the acquisition of the Hon. Mr. Aplin, he might be permitted to join in that congratulation, particularly on this point: the present Government had always seen the necessity of the different parts of the colony being represented in that House as well as in the other, and although no doubt they had to pass over a great many eligible gentlemen who were resident here and could always give their attendance without inconvenience, he thought they acted wisely, and in accordance with the true interests of the colony, in making a recommendation for the appointment of an old and respected resident of the northern districts to a seat in that House. The incident that had occurred that evening was, he was quite sure, a decided vindication of the theory of the policy the present Government had always insisted upon—that if they would have that House perform its functions in the most effective manner, and most satisfactory to the country, they must have every part of the colony represented. Therefore, although appointments to the Council were not direct representation, they were indirect representation, and Government were bound to see every part of the colony fairly represented.

Amendment put and passed; and clause, as amended, agreed to.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved that clause 41, now clause 40, stand part of the Bill. He had explained that he recommended the Bill for the purpose of reconsidering this clause; but, on further examination, he was induced to think that the third clause—which provided that no person should introduce islanders into the colony, except under the provisions of the Act—and the 44th—which provided a penalty not exceeding £10 for all offences against the provisions of the

Act, for which no penalty was specially provided—would be sufficient to meet the case. He might inform the House that the clause, as it stood in the Bill, was, to all intents and purposes, the same as the existing law; and it was for the Committee to consider whether it was desirable to alter it.

The HON. F. H. HART said when he moved an amendment in this clause the other night, his sole object was to afford a certain amount of protection to coastal steamers. He thought the clause might be read contrary to what was intended, and that vessels might be unjustly forfeited. He had no wish whatever to restrict the operation of the Bill in any way, as he was anxious to guard against the importing of these islanders illegally. He thought there was no necessity for this clause, as clause 44 provided all the protection necessary, and that the Bill would be better without it.

The HON. C. S. MEIN pointed out that if they omitted this clause they might as well abandon the Bill altogether. It was one of the fundamental clauses of the Bill, and if it were excised they would have to fall back on clauses 3 and 44, and the result would be that there would be nothing to prevent a man from bringing a ship-load of 500 or 1,000 islanders to our shores, and the penalty imposed could not be greater than £10. In addition to that the islanders would not come under the provisions of the Bill, and would be under no restriction or supervision whatever. He could fully understand that the feelings of those whose policy was to allow these islanders to be introduced without any restrictions whatever would be in favour of eliminating this clause, but he was surprised that the Postmaster-General should consent to it. The Hon. Mr. Hart seemed very much alarmed at the stringency of the provisions of the clause, but he (Mr. Mein) pointed out that similar provisions respecting forfeiture existed in all our Customs Acts, and that the present Act provided a penalty of £20 for every islander introduced contrary to its provisions. He hoped if they were anxious to improve the existing law they would not insist upon excising this clause.

The HON. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR agreed that there was a great deal in what the Hon. Mr. Mein had said. The great objection the Hon. Mr. Hart had was that the ship should be absolutely forfeited in addition to the penalty. He (Mr. Murray-Prior) found that the present Act provided that, in default of the payment of the penalty, the vessel should be forfeited, and he thought a similar provision in this clause would effect all that was desired.

The HON. F. H. HART said his object the other night was to prevent a ship being absolutely confiscated from the fact of islanders being found on board. He had no objection to the penalty of confiscation where a man wilfully infringed the law; and as it appeared to be the wish of the Committee not to eliminate the clause, he would move as an amendment to insert after "sea" the words "the Pacific Islands either directly or indirectly." He would afterwards move that the words "and in default of such payment" be inserted before "absolutely forfeited."

The HON. C. S. MEIN said offences of this description would be analogous to officers under the Customs Acts, and it was the policy of such Acts to leave the matter to a great extent in the hands of the governing authorities to be dealt with according to the circumstances of the case. Where a man acted from error of judgment and not from a predetermination to do wrong, no doubt that would be taken into consideration in regard to the forfeiture; and in the same way it

was very desirable that the Government should have power to penalise an old offender. On that ground he was entirely in favour of the clause as it stood, and no doubt something of that kind was in the mind of the Government when they altered the provisions of the present Act; but he had no wish to force his views on the House if it was the opinion that it should be only an alternative power.

The HON. F. T. GREGORY thought the risk the hon. gentleman seemed to anticipate respecting the absolute forfeiture of a vessel was more imaginary than real, because he could not imagine the master of a ship introducing one or fifty islanders contrary to the Act. It would not be worth while introducing one, and to introduce fifty would make the penalty equal to the forfeiture of the vessel. He thought the insertion of the words "in default of payment" would meet all that was required.

The HON. C. S. MEIN pointed out that the owner of a ship might reside out of the colony, and if the master landed islanders illegally he would clear out as rapidly as possible; and unless they could go against the ship they would have no remedy whatever.

The HON. F. J. IVORY said that he thought the desire of the Committee might be embodied by providing that if any islander who had not served his term of three years as a labourer was introduced into the colony by sea, certain penalties should be inflicted. At present it seemed to him to be a monstrous provision that simply because a man happened to be born in one of these islands it should be a punishable offence to bring him into the colony. The captain of a ship would be liable to be punished for coming into port with a Polynesian seaman.

The HON. C. S. MEIN said that the amendment suggested by the Hon. Mr. Ivory would render the clause almost inoperative. The onus of proving that the islander had not served his three years would be thrown upon the prosecuting party, and there the difficulty would come in. He would admit that in a few isolated instances the clause might possibly work unfairly to the interests of islanders who had served three years, but the cases would be few in number, and could not be specially legislated for.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL was understood to say that as the whole of the penalties which might be inflicted under the Act would have to go into the Treasury, there would be no reward or inducement to the informer. No information would be laid except by the Government, and it was not likely that proceedings would be taken for a breach of the clause unless there was good reason.

After some further discussion, the proposed amendment was withdrawn by the Hon. Mr. HART.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the words "in default of immediate payment" were inserted after the word "and" in the 46th line; and the clause, as amended, was passed.

The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with further amendments, and the third reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION BILL— COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the HON. C. S. MEIN, the House went into Committee to consider this Bill.

The Bill was passed without amendment, and the third reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

TREASURY BILLS BILL—SECOND
READING.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said that this Bill was to carry out a principle which was affirmed by the Bill passed last year, partially repealing the Railway Reserves Act. It was no doubt a measure of considerable importance, although it was not one in which the Upper House of the Legislature usually interfered. He took the opportunity, however, of explaining the provisions of the Bill, because he saw a great deal of misrepresentation in the public press with respect to it. Some five years ago the railway reserves system was introduced by the bringing in by the Government of the day of the Western Railway Act of 1875. That Act was followed in 1876 by the Railway Reserves Bill, which did not pass through that session, but was reintroduced in a slightly different form in the year 1877. It became law, and under its provisions a large quantity of Crown land was sold in the year 1877, he thought, and the proceeds of the sales were applied in terms of the Act to the purpose of railway construction. The Opposition at the time strongly opposed the railway reserves system for several reasons, one of the most prominent of which was that it would introduce confusion into the accounts of the Government, and would invariably cause embarrassment to the Treasurer. He did not wish to trouble the House with extracts, but he found in a speech of his own on the Continental Railway Bill, as it was called in 1875, that he warned the House of the effect upon the Treasury of the attempt to carry out the system designed by the Bill. In 1876 he again, in common with hon. members of the then Opposition, warned the Government of the day in the same way. The following year he went so far as to not only point out what he conceived to be the impracticable and undesirable features of the Bill, but he also presented a series of resolutions in a tabulated form showing what, in his opinion, were the evils to be apprehended from the Bill, and the principles which ought to guide the Government in carrying on railway construction. One of the propositions laid down was, that the leading principle of the Bill was radically unsound, and calculated to inflict permanent injury upon the colony, because it would embarrass the Treasurer and disarrange the public finances. The Opposition of the day carried their opposition to the Bill to the utmost limits within Parliamentary usage. They did not resort to obstruction, but by lengthy debate, and repeatedly pointing out the evils to be apprehended from the adoption of the proposed system, they endeavoured to prevent the Bill from being carried. He did not mention this circumstance to revive party feeling, but to show that, whatever fault might be found with the Bill of the present Government, the course they were then taking was a consistent course. It was one which every member of the Government had pronounced in favour of five years ago. It was shown that they wanted the whole of the proceeds of the sale of Crown lands to pay the yearly-increasing interest charge. It was shown they could not carry on the system of railway construction by applying the proceeds of lands to construction, and also by borrowing money for carrying on other railways—that was to say, that the two systems could not run along together. If hon. members referred to the speeches of various members of the House on the occasion to which he had referred they would see that they were so true in their remarks as to be almost prophetic. The state of their finances during the last eighteen months was predicted as positively as though the members who uttered them could see into futurity. The reason was just this—they put two and two together and it produced four.

They saw that if they burnt the candle at both ends they would go into ruinous extravagance. Had there been any principle carried out in applying the proceeds of Crown lands to railway construction there might have been some reason for allowing what Parliament had deliberately sanctioned to remain as an experiment to prove that that system was a fallacy founded upon wrong principles. But there was no principle involved in it. The first railway carried out under the Railway Reserves Act was between Dalby and Roma. It started with an advance from the Loan Fund of £250,000, and when that money was spent the Western Railway Fund was recouped by the sale of Crown lands to the extent of £300,000. When that amount was exhausted the Government had to fall back upon the Loan Fund again, so that they had a railway of 165 miles commenced by the Loan Fund, assisted by the proceeds of Crown land sales, and finally completed by falling back upon the Loan Fund. It was really only a transfer of accounts. By that system the lands which were required to pay the steadily-increasing interest during the five years from 1875 to 1880 was all realised in one year and spent in construction. The inevitable result was that in the two following years the revenue was insufficient to meet the expenditure, and they found themselves last year with a deficit of £130,000. The Government brought in a Bill to appropriate a sum which was to the credit of the Railway Reserves Fund and unexpended. Parliament sanctioned that proposal, and the amount extinguished last year's deficit. The abnormal sales of Crown lands under the Railway Reserves Acts of 1875 and 1877 interfered with the proceeds of the Crown lands again last year, and the proceeds were not so large as they ought to have been and would have been but for these abnormal sales. The Government found themselves, therefore, with a deficit of over £200,000 at the end of the financial year. Naturally they said—"The proceeds of the land sales which were appropriated for the construction of the Dalby and Roma railway ought to have gone to credit. If they had gone to revenue there would have been no deficit. We will therefore complete the work begun last year, and ask Parliament to authorise the transfer of the whole of the amount to revenue." It had been said that that was paying the deficit by loan. It was nothing of the sort. Although they had had the *Sydney Morning Herald* quoted to prove how unsound was the proposition of the Treasurer in making this transfer, he thought it would be well for their neighbours to first look at their own affairs. They had sold enormous areas of land, and had appropriated enormous sums of money to current revenue which certainly ought to have been otherwise expended. The amount of land they had sold in this colony was infinitesimal by comparison with the amount sold in New South Wales. In that colony the money had been placed to the credit of the Consolidated Revenue in a separate fund, but they had gone on spending and spending until now the whole amount was gone. They first spent abnormal receipts from land sales, instead of borrowing in England. They got authority from Parliament to construct certain railways by loans, but as the proceeds of the sales of the land came in so fast they did not want to borrow, so they spent the money in a similar manner as they in Queensland had spent money upon the Western Railway. The whole of this money was spent upon public works, and when it was spent they fell back upon their Loan Act, and borrowed the money to repay what they had spent out of revenue. New South Wales had done precisely what they had done in this colony, only on a much larger scale and in a different way. He maintained that the Government could not fairly go to the taxpayers

with increased taxation when the revenue which was required to pay interest had been injudiciously diverted to railway construction. It would have been very improper—Queensland being already the highest taxed colony in Australia—if the Government, with such a fund available, had resorted to increased taxation, more particularly as under the Divisional Boards Act of last year they had increased the taxation of the colony during the present year. He was sorry to take up the time of the House so long upon that measure, but he felt that the Press of this colony had not given the Government fairplay in regard to it. Whether rightly or wrongly, the members of the Government were perfectly consistent. They warned Parliament in 1875 and 1876 and 1877 that that result would come about, and they would have been false to their principles if they had not, when public necessities required it, asked Parliament to repeal what they had stigmatised as an injudicious and impracticable Act. A reference to the Bill would show that the Government were authorised to issue Treasury bills to raise £252,525. That was the amount which had been spent upon railway construction after deducting all charges and expenses, in addition to the £129,000 which was transferred under the Act of last year. The Government did not want to negotiate these bills at the present time, but authority was asked to issue them to enable the Government to comply with the requirements of the Audit Act. At present they had had to draw upon their Loan balance to temporarily cover a deficit in the Consolidated Revenue. The issue of Treasury bills would enable the Government to recoup the revenue and comply with the requirements of the Audit Act. It was not intended to put these bills upon the market, because it would be absurd while they had a million and a-half of money to their credit to issue the bills. They would be held as security for the amount of £252,000 until the next Loan Bill was introduced. When that Bill was introduced and the amount of £252,000 was voted on the Loan Estimates, these bills would be redeemed and would be destroyed. It was a temporary expedient to avoid drawing upon the Loan Fund to extinguish a deficit in the Treasury. He would not go further into the details of the Bill. The interest was not to exceed 5 per cent. The moneys raised were to form part of the Consolidated Revenue, and there were provisions for the loss of bills and for the cancellation of discharged bills.

The Hon. C. S. D. MELBOURNE said he would draw attention to the fact that when the last discussion took place respecting a Loan Bill it was understood, and, as far as he could make out, was stated that no further Loan Bill would be introduced for a period of several years. The Bill before the House appeared to be a Bill which would have the effect of adding on to their next Loan Bill the sum of £252,525. They were about to pay off a deficit by rather extraordinary means—that was to say, by attempting a transfer from a fund which had been expended. He failed to see why the Bill was necessary. If, as he believed, the Government did not intend to take the Western Railway beyond Roma, they would have a surplus of £390,000 in the sum voted for railway expenditure. They had that large sum of money to their credit, and whether it were intended that the sum should be employed in the construction of branch lines or not, they should at all events introduce a Bill so that the public creditor would know what was being done with the money. It was all very well for the Postmaster-General to say that the Bill was to balance an account. It was for the purpose of an additional loan. Having the surplus on the Western Railway line to their credit, why should they not take that to

clear the deficit and let the public creditor know the new purpose to which it was to be devoted? As far as the Bill was concerned the first clause was the only clause in which they were interested. If that clause were passed the remaining clauses would have to be passed. In passing that Bill they were not dealing with the public creditor in a manner calculated to increase their borrowing powers.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he could not exactly understand the bearing of the financial speech of the Hon. Mr. Melbourne. As far as he could understand the speech, however, he might say that the object of the Government in introducing that Bill was the very opposite of the object supposed by the hon. member. They were not going to borrow any more money. They were simply going to apply for a transfer of moneys and the issue of Treasury bills, the amount of which would be placed in the next Loan Estimates, which certainly would not be presented this year.

The Hon. J. C. HEUSSLER said he thought the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Melbourne were overdrawn. No doubt a great deal of what the hon. member had said was true; but they must remember that their policy of railway construction had been altered. He had predicted when the railway reserves were constituted that the sale of the land would not furnish sufficient funds for the construction of these railways. After the experience of a neighbouring colony he did not think it would be wise to go into the market and sell a great deal of land for this or general revenue purpose. As long as they could sell sufficient land to pay the interest, that would be quite sufficient. The Hon. Mr. Melbourne said they should have acted more openly to the public creditor in this matter; but he could not understand the hon. member's reason for saying so. If they did not extend their railways from the Roma terminus he supposed the money asked for that purpose might be used for some other purpose; but there would be ample time when they came so to use the money to inform the public creditor. He did not see what that matter had to do with the transfer of the proceeds of the railway reserves to the general revenue.

Question put and passed, and the committal of the Bill made an Order of the Day for tomorrow.

GOLDFIELDS HOMESTEAD ACT AMENDMENT BILL — SECOND READING.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said its introduction had been rendered necessary, because the present Divisional Boards Act had affected the provisions of the Goldfields Act of 1870. The Bill provided that all rents and revenues received or collected under the Goldfields Homestead Act should be paid into a special fund, to be kept by the Colonial Treasurer, and should be expended in the construction of roads and bridges and other public works on the goldfield where they were raised, under the superintendence of the divisional board of the division within which such goldfield or portion of a goldfield was situated. Under the Act of 1870, money so collected was spent on the goldfields in the way proposed, the only difference being that it would now be placed in the hands of divisional boards. He had one or two amendments to move in committee with a view of placing the expenditure in the hands of the municipal council, when it happened to be within the boundary of a goldfield, so that it would be expended either by the divisional board or a municipal council, whichever might have jurisdiction in the locality,

The second clause was intended to give people living on goldfields some better security of tenure than they had at present. All they could get at present was a miner's right, or business license; and this clause would enable those desirous of having permanent tenure to take up a quarter of an acre of land on the terms of the Goldfields Act of 1870, but no person should be allowed to hold more than one allotment within the limits of any township. The Bill would be of considerable value to goldfields, and could not interfere with any existing interests. He moved that it be now read a second time.

Question put and passed, and the committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

CUSTOMS DUTIES BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the House went into Committee to consider this Bill, which was passed without discussion, and the third reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

DUTY ON CEDAR BILL—COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the House went into Committee to consider this Bill.

On clause 1—"Export duty on cedar"—

The Hon. W. PETTIGREW said he would be inclined to move an amendment on this clause, if he thought there was any utility in doing so. If not, of course it would be only wasting time, and no good would be accomplished. If he thought it would effect any good he should move that the export duty be considerably increased, as he thought the duty proposed was too small altogether.

The Hon. T. L. MURRAY-PRIOR pointed out to the hon. gentleman that it was not competent for that House to alter taxation in any way.

Clause put and passed.

The remaining clauses of the Bill were agreed to after brief discussion; and, the House having resumed, the third reading was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, in moving the adjournment of the House, said that he would like to state that to-morrow he intended taking the Railway Companies Preliminary Bill, and afterwards the Marsupial Destruction Bill.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at a quarter past 10 o'clock.