

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 1880

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 16 November, 1880.

Government Notice of Motion.—Supply.—Railway Companies Preliminary Bill.

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

GOVERNMENT NOTICE OF MOTION.

On the motion of the PREMIER, that the House go into Committee of Supply,

The HON. S. W. GRIFFITH said that before the House went into committee he would take the opportunity of saying a word with reference to the notice of motion which the Premier had given for to-morrow. He understood it to mean an announcement by the Government that they had now determined amongst themselves that the Commission to investigate further the matters referred to a Select Committee of the House should consist of only one person from this colony, who was named, and one person to be nominated in England. It was only right to inform the Premier now, in order that the Government might have time to consider the matter before the notice came on, that a commission of that kind would not be satisfactory, and that the object they all desired—namely, finality—would not by it be arrived at. The Commission must be one from this Parliament, or it would not be satisfactory; yet the Government were proposing to appoint a gentleman, who knew little about the matter, from this colony, and another in England who knew nothing. Such appointments could never be satisfactory to the community. This was a result both sides of the House would equally deplore, and he for one sincerely hoped that whatever was done the matter would be finally disposed of, and that the Government would take more practical steps to carry out the assurance they had over and over again given to the House that the matter should be thoroughly investigated. If the Premier was determined to accept no amendment, or not to modify his motion to-morrow, it would be necessary for him (Mr. Griffith) to refer to the matter at considerable length; it was to let the hon. gentleman know what his opinions were that he had introduced the subject now; and he would repeat

that the proposal of the Government would be satisfactory neither to the House nor to the people of the country.

The PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith) said he had been under the impression since he had taken the matter into consideration, that no matter what commission was nominated by the Government it would not satisfy the Opposition, and he was therefore quite prepared to hear such a speech as the hon. gentleman had just made; but it would have been much better if that speech had been made to-morrow. As leader of the House, he thought it his duty to embody the recommendation which appeared in the motion of which he had just given notice. That was the stage at which the question stood at present.

SUPPLY.

The House then went into Committee of Supply.

Question—That £22,991 be granted for railways from loan votes.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he wished to take this opportunity of correcting a report of one of his remarks in *Hansard*. When the vote on harbours and rivers was being discussed, he was reported to have said, with reference to the pilot schooner "Clara," that he had been told that "she had gone to the devil." Of course, he said nothing of the kind. What he did say was, that he understood from the member for Fortitude Valley that short iron bolts, called in the trade "devils," had been used in her construction. He did not wish it to be understood that he had begun to use language like that in Parliament.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Palmer) said the reporters had evidently gone mad over this same "Clara." He was made to say that the vessel was ordered from home by Captain Heath, and was built by White, of Cowes. What he did say was that Captain Heath recommended that the vessel should be built by White, of Cowes; but that, unfortunately, she had not been constructed by that eminent builder.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he also had a little complaint to make. He was reported to say that the captain of a slaver broke the collar-bone of a policeman at Mackay.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: So you did.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: So I did not. I said that there was a scuffle in which the captain joined, and that in the scuffle the policeman's collar-bone was broken. I did not say the captain did it.

Mr. GRIFFITH said this was the proper time to inquire what was the intention of the Government with respect to the Western extension. The vote under discussion was for Extension Works and Surveys. So far as he could make out the extensions were stopped, but he could not make out to what extent they were stopped. At anyrate, the Southern and Western extension seemed to have been stopped. What the intentions of the Government were with respect to the Central Railway he did not know, and as to the Northern it was not of much consequence, because it would take till this time next year to get the section under construction complete. Would the Premier kindly state what were the intentions of the Government?

The PREMIER said, with regard to the southwestern line, the intentions of the Government were to wait a reasonable time until they found what offers for constructing railways on the land-grant principle there were. Whether there would be an offer to take it from Roma he did

not know, and it was a matter of indifference to him whether there were any or not, as he believed ultimately the Government would have to take it half the way out to Mitchell. The Government would not go on with any great extensions on any of the lines until they knew the result of the offers to construct railways on the principle they wished to see carried out. Hon. members would remember that there was an understanding that another route of the extension from Roma should be surveyed. He had always been, himself, in favour of this, having always thought that the route to Mitchell should not be adopted until an alternative line had been surveyed. There was one thing he might state that the Government had no intention of doing, and that was of giving one line any preference over another.

Mr. GRIFFITH: The hon. gentleman does not tell us what the intentions of the Government are with respect to the Central line.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Macrossan) said he could inform the hon. gentleman that it would be foolish to stop the construction of the line until they got beyond the Zamia and Drummond ranges; then from the Belyando it was all plain sailing.

Mr. GRIFFITH said, as far as he could make out, the intention of the Government was to push on the Central line and stop the Southern. The Central line was to be taken, it seemed, at least to the Belyando, and as much further as political necessities required. Did they intend to construct the Central line extension out of loan, or on the land-grant system? The Premier stated that the Government would not give one line a preference over another, but the Minister for Works intimated that they were going to give the Central line a preference over the Southern. Which statement was correct? From what the two Ministers had said, it seemed that the Government were free to do anything they liked.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said what he had said was easily understood. To stop the Central line at present would be the same as stopping the main line at the foot of the Main Range. They must of necessity cross the ranges, and then it was comparatively level country, but the lines certainly could not get that length before the House was in session again.

The Hon. J. DOUGLAS said the point seemed to be that Parliament having authorised both Western extensions—viz., that from Roma to Mitchell, and that from Emerald to Belyando—the Government had decided to carry on one and not the other. From the intimation of the Minister for Works it seemed to be the intention to carry on the Central line as far as possible—that was as far as Parliament had authorised, which was, he believed, some six miles beyond the Belyando. They did not intend to do that with regard to the Southern and Western line. The hon. gentleman had told them that the extension of the Central line was to take place because, having got to the foot of a range, it was necessary to go through it or over it, and the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government had told them that he should do little or nothing until he knew the result of offers on the transcontinental line. The Premier, however, ought to know exactly what was to be done. He was the man to whom the constructors would come for advice as to what point should be started from, and the hon. gentleman, of course, knew perfectly well whether that starting point should be Roma or Mitchell. He had had the country surveyed and the line had been authorised by Parliament, but he now intimated that he was not going to do anything until the matter was ripe for consideration. The hon. gentleman

ought, however, to be in a position to tell the House the grounds on which he intended to make his recommendation to whatever company undertook this transcontinental line, for they would look to him, and his must be the advice upon which the project was to be carried out. The people who might probably come into this matter would of course know nothing of the country, but the Government did, and he should like the Premier to give definite information as to whether the starting point was to be Roma or Mitchell. He (Mr. Douglas) thought it ought to be Mitchell. The further west they went the better it would be, and it would be quite as easy to go from Mitchell as from Roma. It was a better starting point than Roma either north or south, and Parliament itself had come to that decision. He could not see, therefore, why the Government should seek indirectly to override a decision already arrived at by Parliament.

Mr. STEVENS said he could not quite agree with the hon. member that there was any doubt as to the intention of the Government. The Premier said distinctly that the intention of the Government was to make other surveys than the one at present made, to find which was the best route, and he had stated that the line would not be carried on, at any rate, until these surveys were made. Another reason for not going on with the work was, that an opportunity might be given to companies to make the line on the land-grant system. Surely this should be sufficient to satisfy anyone. What would be the good of expending £150,000 unnecessarily? When the other surveys were made, and the question was definitely before the House, they would all be in a better position to discuss which was the most suitable route.

The PREMIER said that if the object of the debate was to try and show that the Government were showing an undue preference for extending one particular line, those who had taken that view had gone upon the very shallowest ground. He defied anyone to show that the Government had ever leaned towards extending the Central line in preference to any other extension. They were thoroughly satisfied with the importance of extending the Roma line to the west. The more he had considered the matter—and he had given it a good deal of consideration during the last six months—the more he was satisfied of the correctness of what he had announced at the beginning of the session—viz., that the western extension from Roma to Cunnamulla, from Cunnamulla to Thorgomindah, from Thorgomindah to the border of South Australia, where it would be within 100 miles of Government Gums, would be not only one of the most important lines in the colony, but one of the most important lines in the whole of Australia. He did not think, however, that they should be hurried in so important a matter simply for the sake of trying to prove to incredulous people that the Government had no design for stopping the line. The line was stopped at Roma at the present time because it was considered to be a fair subject for full investigation whether the line to Mitchell was a proper one. He himself doubted it, and had always differed from his hon. colleague the Minister for Works; and he was glad the House had consented to have a survey a little to the south. He believed still it was of great importance to have the survey. The position of the Government was quite plain: they did not want to hang on waiting indefinitely for companies to offer to construct these railways. He believed himself companies would very soon offer, and that the line from Roma to the South Australian border, by Cunnamulla and Thorgomindah, would be one of the most profitable lines and one of the first offered

for. If, however, they did not receive offers, probably before the House met again next session, the Government were perfectly prepared and would go on with the construction of the western extension. He could not make it plainer than that, and that was what he had said all through. He knew that an attempt had been made to try and make it appear that they were a northern Ministry, and had the intention of blocking the extension of the Southern and Western Railway. He himself was the first definitely to advocate the railway to Roma in the House, and he had not given up his idea that the line must be extended many hundred miles further before it would be a success.

Mr. DOUGLAS said it was important also to bear in mind that any company undertaking this or any other railway, either north, south, or westward, must propose to do so under the system of land grants which had been indicated in the Bill already passed. If they were to start from Roma they would be met with the difficulty that the land in the neighbourhood had been sold. The operation of the land-grant principle could not therefore take place there. From Mitchell Downs they would start quite free, unencumbered by any purchases, or the conditions of the Western Railway Reserves. This was an additional reason why the Government should undertake the extension of the line, either to Mitchell or somewhere in that neighbourhood. It must be very clear that it was only beyond Mitchell that the land-grant system could have a fair trial.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that notwithstanding the explanations which had been given, he could not quite reconcile the various statements made by Ministers. Some time ago, the Premier said it was impossible to say whether the Western line should be extended at all, and what the hon. gentleman had been talking about to-day was the transcontinental land-grant line. He (Mr. Griffith) could not help thinking that the Government had no definite intentions in the matter at all. So far as could be gathered, the Government had made up their minds to carry out the Central line without delay, to the fullest extent authorised by Parliament, although the House was told some time ago that on that line also the land-grant principle should be introduced. The Government seemed to change their minds very quickly, if indeed they had any mind on the subject at all. Before sitting down he would ask when they might expect the Supplementary Estimates recommending the expenditure of money for some other lines of railway?

The PREMIER: As soon as the railways referred to are sanctioned by the other House.

Mr. KELLETT said he could not understand the position taken up this evening by members on the other side of the House in reference to this western extension. It was well known that the surveys already made to Mitchell were not in the direction which was considered advisable by the country. That was an opinion that had been given pretty freely both inside and outside of the House; and as they had just passed a Bill for the purpose of making railways on the land-grant principle, and there was a hope that these railways might be extended that way, it was very desirable that they should go on with the line further westward, and try to do it on that principle. They had been told by the Premier that if offers were not made by companies to construct lines on the land-grant principle, the Government themselves would take this line into their own hands, and would at some future time inform the House which was the most desirable route. He himself was perfectly satisfied the route to Mitchell was not the best one. He knew the country as well as most people, and was satisfied

that in going that way they were only getting nearer the Central line. They tapped no new country and would not get a bale of wool more traffic than they got at Roma, except on the few miles between that place and Mitchell. But if the line went in a southerly direction it would tap New South Wales country; it would run through country which was now mostly used for cattle, and which would then, in all probability, be utilised by sheep: it would also secure a lot of traffic that went to Bourke and Maitland, and in a variety of ways take up a quantity of traffic which could not be got by going in the other direction. He was satisfied that no extension could be proposed which would bring in so much extra revenue to the railway as a line in a southerly direction from Roma, and he was very glad to hear that the Premier or the Minister for Works would not be forced into starting that line to Mitchell. The extraordinary part of the affair was that the members of the Opposition who unduly forced ahead the Central line as against the Southern line were now representing that the present Government were unduly fostering the northern as against the southern portion of the colony; they had changed their tone no doubt because they had found that the people of Brisbane did not approve of their actions in the past; they were trying in that way to get back a little of the *clat* they once had. He was satisfied that it was a judicious thing not to push on the railway to Mitchell at present, and he hoped that when the House met again they would find that a survey in a southerly direction had been made. He was confident that there would be an almost unanimous vote of the House that a line by a more southerly route would be better than one by the present surveyed route. He hoped that at the beginning of next session the Government would come forward with a proposal to extend the line from Stanthorpe to the borders of New South Wales. Such a line would add largely to the revenue of the colony. There was the rich Glen Innes and Tenterfield country, where there was perhaps as fine agricultural land as there was in Australia, which was now heavily handicapped because of the long distance to market. Owing to the want of facilities the settlers were growing very little more produce than they required for their own use. He knew that it was the intention of the New South Wales Parliament to push railways into that district, and they would be showing their wisdom in doing so. The Queensland Government could get the lead of them if they chose to take advantage of the opportunity; if they chose to construct a railway to the border smartly, they would find the produce from the Clarence, Richmond, Glen Innes, and Tenterfield, all coming to Brisbane, instead of going to New South Wales. That extension would benefit Brisbane and the southern part of the colony more than any other line which could be constructed. He had delayed mentioning the matter in the hope that he would be in a position to furnish the House with statistical information showing the extent of agricultural settlement in those districts, and he was sorry he had not got it. He knew that the settlement was very large, and the only thing which stood in the way of the complete development of the resources of the districts was the long distance to market, and the want of facilities for carrying produce thereto. The Vegetable Creek Tin Mines would largely assist towards making the extension a paying one.

Mr. STEVENS said that the hon. member (Mr. Kellett) was wrong in supposing that every member was of opinion that the line which it was proposed to survey would be the best. His (Mr. Stevens') opinion was that when the survey was made it would be found that the engineering

difficulties would be very great—much greater than those on the route already surveyed.

Mr. KELLETT said he did not assume that every hon. member would be in favour of the new route. What he said was that he was satisfied there would be a large majority in favour of it.

Mr. DICKSON said that if a line by a new route were required, that ought to have been discovered long ago. They had voted £390,000 for the extension of the Southern line in a due westerly direction. Surely before such a line was proposed it was the duty of the Government to consider well the route to be adopted; and if they were not satisfied with the surveys which had been completed when they asked for the vote, they ought to have intimated that fresh surveys would be proceeded with. He looked on the whole affair as showing plainly the deliberate intention of the Government not to proceed with the extension of the Southern line; and it was evident from the remarks of Ministers and of their supporters that the true translation or interpretation of the transcontinental line was the connection of the Central line with the gulf. If the Premier had to wait for tenders to be submitted to construct railways on the land-grant system, he might be justified in withholding the further extension of the lines, but the money had been voted, and so far they had not heard what steps the Premier intended to take so as to obtain such offers. They knew very well that unless some extraordinary expedition was used by the Government to induce tenders being sent in it was not probable that during the next session they would be asked to ratify any contract for the construction of any lines under that system. Preliminary surveys would have to be proceeded with, and a considerable amount of information would necessarily have to be obtained by the contracting parties before they could enter into a contract. No arguments had been advanced for withholding the extension of the main trunk lines up to the limit authorised by Parliament. The funds had been provided, the money had been obtained from the public creditor, and, unless it was intended that the Central line should be *par excellence* the transcontinental line for the northern portion of the continent, then the construction of that line ought to have been equally delayed, so as to have placed the two main trunk lines on equal terms, and to have given them equal opportunities to be connected with the transcontinental system.

Mr. DAVENPORT said he was at a loss to understand the arguments of the hon. gentlemen opposite. Before the Premier returned to the colony they went in a body to the Colonial Secretary and asked that the extension of the Southern line should be delayed, and now they were blaming the Government for not proceeding with it. Where was their consistency? He wondered that the representatives of the Southern constituencies had not been publicly rebuked or called upon to resign because of their action in the matter. By their action they gave a handle to the Government to stop a public work which was of vital importance to the progress of the country, and which would have materially added to the commerce of Brisbane. A few days ago the Premier assured him that a survey of the line south-west from Roma should go on, and that in all probability the plans would be laid on the table immediately the House met next session. That line was urgently required to prevent the inland traffic going to New South Wales, the Government of which colony were making great progress with the extension of railways in that direction. Unless the Queensland Government were

there with their railways to offer facilities for the conveyance of produce to the seaboard, New South Wales would get a firmer hold on that part of the colony than Victoria had on Riverina at the present time. One great advantage of the line would be that it would bring to Brisbane the produce of the Balonne country, which otherwise would be forced down to New South Wales. He would confidently leave the whole matter in the hands of the Government.

Mr. REA said he did not understand that any member on that side of the House had any grudge against the progress of the Central line. What he understood was that they objected to the studied mystery on the part of the Government as to what was to be done. On that side of the House they could get no information as to the intended extensions of railways, and more particularly so with regard to the transcontinental line. The Government had given no indication—except, perhaps, to their secret friends—as to the direction of the line or the parallel of longitude along which it would be taken.

Mr. MILES said that the deputation which waited on the Colonial Secretary did not ask that the construction of the railway should be stopped; they only asked the Government to postpone the works on the Central and Western lines until Parliament met. They had no wish whatever to interfere with the Northern line. He was rather amused at the hon. member (Mr. Davenport) saying that he was surprised that the representatives of Southern constituencies had not been called upon to resign. He was surprised that the hon. member was not called upon to resign because he was acting in direct opposition to the wishes of his constituents.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: I say he is not.

Mr. MILES: I say "Yes;" and my "Yes" is as good as your "No."

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: My "No" is as good as your "Yes," and a little better.

Mr. MILES said he had read the speech delivered by the Minister for Lands yesterday. In all his life he had never heard of such language being used by a Minister of the Crown, and he did not wish to draw the Minister out now, as he would not like to hear a similar speech from him. As to the extension of the Western line in a southerly direction, he knew that it would be Domesday before that work would be carried out on a system of land grants. There was at least a hundred miles of useless scrub land to go through, and it was not likely that any private company would face that.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he did not think that the hon. member (Mr. Davenport) should have referred to the deputation as he did. At the time that deputation waited on the Colonial Secretary the finances of the colony were supposed to be in a very unsatisfactory condition. Tenders had been called for the construction of extensions of the railways; and as it was well known that it would be useless to begin the extensions unless they were prepared to complete them, the deputation pointed out that in view of the altered circumstances of the colony from the time the votes were agreed to it would be desirable to wait till Parliament met before proceeding with the works. The money which the Government had on hand at the time was not sufficient to carry the lines to any point where they would be of use, and the Government were asked to hold their hands for six weeks or two months until detailed particulars of the position of the colony could be given, and the means to be adopted by the Government to meet the deficient revenue could be made known. The result was that the

Government stopped the Southern line altogether and went on with the Central line. It was unfair for the Government to consider the deputation as an excuse for stopping one line and pushing on another.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Palmer) said it was cruel, very cruel, of the hon. member for Toowoomba to refer to the deputation, because he (Mr. Palmer) had seen a good many deputations, but he had not seen one with such a bad case. They came to condole with the Government on the state of the finances when the Government had just floated £2,000,000 of a loan and had an offer for another £1,000,000. If it was any balm to the conscience of the hon. member for North Brisbane, he would say that the result of the deputation on the actions of the Government was absolutely *nil*. They made no impression on the Government, who had made up their minds as to what course they were about to pursue, and they pursued that course exactly as they intended. As to the little speechifying that afternoon, he did not know what the object of it was. Members who were the most interested in the Roma line being sent further out were satisfied with the action of the Government—they were satisfied, at all events, that the Government had no intention to push on the Central and Northern lines at the expense of the Southern and Western lines. It had been proved to the satisfaction of the Government, and to the satisfaction of members the most interested in the matter, that it would be exceedingly unwise to extend the line to Mitchell. Until a fresh survey had been made, and it was shown that no better line could be had to tap the producing country in a south-westerly direction, it was agreed that it was not advisable to go on with the line to Mitchell. Those were the reasons which induced the Government to delay the work. Hon. members could rest assured that the Government had no intention whatever, as was suggested by the ingenious member for Enoggera—who went to a great deal of trouble to get up shams, so that they might be demolished—that it had never entered into their contemplation that the Central line should be the trunk line to Carpentaria. Such an idea had never been mooted: nothing of the kind had entered into the imagination of any member of the Government. The object of the Government was to do even-handed justice to all portions of the colony. He believed that even of more importance than a line to Carpentaria would be a line to the south-western portion of the colony, as it would bring in a great deal of commerce to Brisbane and the colony, which would otherwise go to New South Wales. The Government would not lose sight of that, and the hon. member for Enoggera need not be frightened. The shadows of Emerald, of Withersfield, or of other places on the Central line, need not disturb him. Hon. members must bear in mind that the Central line was quite in a different position to the Southern and Western line, as it was only about half the length of the latter. To stop that line at Withersfield would be like stopping the other line at Toowoomba Range and then expecting a private company to take it over the Range for land grants.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Mr. Perkins) said he would preface the remarks he was about to make by saying that he was one of those who objected to the railway being stopped at Roma. The influential deputation which waited on the Colonial Secretary induced him to stay his hand for the time being; but he (Mr. Perkins) knew it was only a question of time. The whole affair showed the inconsistency of the leader of the Opposition and the way he

had betrayed the interests of Brisbane. The hon. member was in a position for five or six years—he wished to have this recorded so that the people of Brisbane might know it—to run the railway out further, but he took good care instead of doing that to run ahead the Central and Northern lines; and when he held the position of Minister for Works for a few weeks he went up North blowing his gasometer and promising them all sorts of things. He altogether neglected Brisbane. He (Mr. Perkins) hoped that the people of Brisbane—if there were any sensible men amongst the so-called merchants, the Chamber of Commerce, the drapers, and shopkeepers of Queen street—when he presented himself for election again would bear in mind that the hon. member, like the hon. member for Maryborough and others who had the reins in their hands, could have let contracts and sent the Southern and Western Railway 200 or 300 miles ahead of the others. But it seemed to be no use to talk; there seemed to be a class of people who were ready to bellow and shout at any time; people who seemed to have very little to win and less to lose. He had heard the attack which had been made on the hon. member for Toowoomba by the leader of the Opposition. It was not long since that they heard the same hon. gentleman making a furious attack on the Treasurer, and accusing him of filling up his coat pockets and his trousers pockets with money which was obtained in an improper way. He knew what the hon. member was ready to do. He had come to the conclusion that the hon. gentleman was not particular whose character he might destroy so long as he got to a certain position. The hon. member was growing desperate now. He saw that the object which was nearest and dearest to him some time ago was fading away; that it was gradually vanishing like a cloud in the distance when seen on board ship at sea. The hon. member, with all the *prestige* attaching to the position of leader of the bar, was ready to condone a felony and to shake hands with the offender. He said that advisedly. It was done in the House when a committee was moved for—the hon. member was ready then to condone a felony and to swallow words which he had made use of to him (Mr. Perkins) and to others inside and outside the House. Through that and the action of the hon. member in connection with the late inquiry, his confidence in the hon. member was being slowly but surely weakened. The hon. member had done what he had described, and now he had another mission before him. The hon. member might laugh and sneer: he wondered what he was sneering at? Perhaps he did not like to hear the truth; perhaps he was a stranger to it, not even accustomed to being told it. He would repeat that he had seen the hon. member condone a felony in the House, and then walk out of the Chamber, and behave in a way altogether at variance with statements which he had made to him (Mr. Perkins), and to a great many others—in fact, the hon. member offered a premium to crime and rascality. The hon. gentleman might laugh at that. He could afford to let the hon. member laugh. Perhaps he had Mr. Hamilton somewhere on the road home inventing some other tissue of falsehoods after getting his lesson here; but the end was coming! And the hon. gentleman saw that it was very close up, and that he could not prevent the inevitable. This country was in a lamentable state at present because of the schemes and falsehoods circulated through the intervention of certain persons here, who sent letters to Glasgow, to London, and other places, and who seemed to lay themselves out particularly to represent things as being worse than they were. The Press of Brisbane,

at certain times, circulated falsehoods—they did everything they possibly could to make foreigners disbelieve in, and to distrust Queensland. If Queensland was not ruined, it was not for want of effort on the part of the leader of the Opposition and the henchman at his back—the hon. member for Darling Downs. These things had been going on, and to him it was surprising that they survived. There must be some resources in the colony which they knew not of, otherwise the colony, with its sparse population, could not have survived the attacks made on it and the slanders and falsehoods which had been circulated in all directions. By some contrivance the Opposition managed to get hold of that class of persons, or 75 per cent. of them, who wrote for newspapers. He (Mr. Perkins) believed that there were some respectable men connected with the Press in Queensland; but if ever a country was flooded with rascals, liars, and slanderers—with those who thought nothing of writing anything for their guinea or half-guinea—it was the unfortunate colony of Queensland. Instead of being blessed by the Press they were oppressed by it. The hon. member for Mitchell said one night that there was one of the greatest scoundrels in the colony in the gallery. They knew that; they knew the way in which he contrived through the leader of the Opposition to send out filth and muck all round the country. In a libel action against a newspaper, heard in New South Wales the other day, Judge Hargraves used some very significant words. He was glad to find that the Press were being brought to book in New South Wales. The judge said:—

“I have been a public man for thirty-six years. I have never taken any notice of what the Press has thought fit to say about me, as I know that there are some pressmen who will write in a certain way, but for a glass of whisky and water will write in another way.”

He could not find a better definition than that for what was going on in the colony at the present time. The hon. gentleman had not the courage to advocate his own opinions at the present time, for there was no greater aristocrat or tyrant than he nor anyone who despised the people more than he did: he did not care about them except for what he could make or filch out of them in any way. He would do the hon. gentleman the justice to say that when he was employed he gave good value for money; but all the talk about looking after the interests of Brisbane amounted to nothing. The hon. gentleman knew enough about geography to know that Townsville was to the westward of Roma, and yet he took no steps to protect the interests of Brisbane by pushing on the Southern and Western line; but he had gradually, by contrivances and scheming, allowed the prosperity of Brisbane to be sapped and undermined. If complaints were arising in the North, the hon. gentleman was the parent and inventor of them, because he had attempted to bribe the North with promises of railways, breakwaters, and other things. Had the hon. gentleman been in office for twelve months he would have demoralized the whole of the communities on the coast with promises such as he had made while up there. He liked to see a little more sincerity, even in a lawyer, though he knew that that was a scarce commodity with most of them. People were now waking up to the real state of affairs, and it would not do for the hon. member to be coming forward continually with his statements about steel contracts; he must get on to new tracks. He hoped the people of Brisbane would in future measure matters according to their merits, give credit to where credit was due, and not be biased and influenced by the bickerings which were being sown broadcast amongst them, and avoid strife and dissensions. Each

man should become the friend of his neighbour, and not entertain suspicion or distrust, nor indulge in those ideal notions which were placarded before the people day after day; but should inquire how far the hon. gentleman and his colleagues had used their opportunities to forward the interests of Brisbane, whose welfare had been so much neglected.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he was very glad to hear the Colonial Secretary state that the effect of the deputation upon the Government had been *nil*, because an impression had gone abroad that that deputation had been the cause of the stoppage of the Southern and Western main line extension. It would be in the recollection of hon. members that he (Mr. O'Sullivan) lost no time, after that deputation had waited upon the Colonial Secretary, in calling attention to the matter in the House. He had not been satisfied with the state of affairs because it appeared as though there had been undue preference shown towards the Central and Northern districts; but he felt more satisfaction since he had heard the speech of the Premier. There were no obstacles in the way of surveys in the case of the Southern and Western line, and no such obstacles had been allowed to intervene in the case of the Central line, which had gone over one range straight on to another. The speech made by the Premier would no doubt be acceptable to the people of the southern portion of the colony, and they would be now inclined to believe that steps would be taken during the recess to carry on the line. From the first he had regarded that deputation as a mistake, because he believed that nothing was more calculated to injure Brisbane than the stoppage of that line. The event had proved that he was right, for immediately after that, Rockhampton, for the first time in the history of the colony, got ahead of the southern port. If this line were continued he did not think that would happen. There was some reason in the objection of his colleague and the hon. member for Toowoomba that Mitchell was too much to the right and not near enough to the southern border. He believed that Mitchell was about 130 to 140 miles from the southern border, and a line so far away would not have the effect of diverting the Balonne traffic from New South Wales. He would suggest that the line immediately after leaving Roma should take a course towards some point about midway between St. George and Mitchell Downs. As a southern member deeply interested in the welfare of the port of Brisbane, he was willing to take the word of the Government that this line would not be neglected for the benefit of any other port. If the one line were to wait for land grants and syndicates there was no reason why the other should not wait also. The session being now so near its close he wished it to be perfectly understood that as an independent member of the House he should insist, as far as he could, upon that line being extended.

Mr. REA said the hon. member (Mr. O'Sullivan) had taken exception to the prosperity of the Central line, as manifested in a marked manner immediately after that deputation took place; but he (Mr. Rea) could not admit that a deputation could have had any such influence. The Minister for Lands, however, got up and tried to make the people of the colony believe that there had been a conspiracy to take away the trade from Brisbane. Accepting the statement of the hon. gentleman, which was in effect that the leader of the Opposition did do something like justice for the North, what did the people of the South require now more than they had got? They had got their line 200 miles ahead of the Central line, but it appeared as though they would not be satisfied if the North

prospered at all. The complaint everywhere was that the country did not know what the Government were going to do in the matter of railways. It was monstrous for hon. members to be dissatisfied with the progress made on the Southern and Western Railway as compared with that on the Central Railway. Did they want their line to be 300 or 400 miles ahead, or what? If hon. members would look on the map of Queensland, and see the enormous areas of back country behind each port, they would see the childishness of raising such bickerings about the comparative prosperity of the various ports.

Mr. MILES said it would have been much better if the Minister for Lands had left unsaid his unfortunate speech on such a subject.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: What subject?

Mr. MILES said the steel-rails business. Seeing that the subject was to be further proceeded with, surely it was ill-advised on the part of the hon. gentleman to rise up and make an attack on the hon. member for North Brisbane, the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Hamilton, and, in fact, all round. If the hon. gentleman was so satisfied that the action of the Premier and the Government was fair and aboveboard, why should he get up and drag this unfortunate matter before the House night after night? The subject was a painful one to him. According to a motion tabled by the Premier, the matter would be the subject of further investigation, and under those circumstances it would have been better had the Minister for Lands allowed the matter to drop until the investigation was completed. Then, if the hon. member for North Brisbane had made any statements which he could not verify, the House would be in a position to deal with the matter. At the present time it was very unbecoming and ill-advised for a Minister of the Crown to drag this unfortunate subject before the House. Hon. members might abuse the hon. members for North Brisbane and Maryborough, but it was not with abuse that the people of the colony would be satisfied.

Mr. DAVENPORT said that perhaps he ought to apologise to the hon. gentleman opposite for mentioning the result of that deputation. He felt that in the position he occupied, as one who had not been contaminated by party politics in the past, it was one of his privileges to speak out when he saw that anything was going wrong. The hon. member for Darling Downs had, in a friendly way, said that he (Mr. Davenport) did not represent his constituents. In reply to that, he would state that he made a bargain with his constituents that he should vote to put the late Ministry out and to put Mr. McIlwraith in, and he had carried out his part of the agreement.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he noticed that the salary of the engineer in charge of extension surveys had been omitted. He understood that that gentleman was now employed on the Maryborough and Gympie line at a reduced salary. Was that gentleman's salary to be permanently reduced, or did the Government intend to do without an engineer in charge of surveys altogether?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Government did not intend to reduce that gentleman's salary. He now received the same amount on the Maryborough and Gympie line.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the officer was appointed to the Maryborough and Gympie line after the Estimates were framed. No salary for him appeared on the Estimates. It therefore appeared as though the Government had intended to dismiss him. This officer had been permanently employed at £1,000 a-year for many years, and now

he was appointed to a temporary position on a railway which was nearly completed. What had become of the officer previously in charge?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that the officer who was in charge of the Maryborough and Gympie line previously was at present employed in surveying the branch railway to the wharves, and when that was completed would be employed on other lines. His salary would come out of money voted for those lines.

Mr. GRIFFITH asked whether the Minister for Works thought it fair to charge the Maryborough and Gympie line with that £1,000?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. GRIFFITH said it was evident that the Government had intended to dispense with this gentleman's services, but the Minister for Works would not admit it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Government had no such intention.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that £5,000 be granted for a bonus to the Chief Engineer of Northern Railways. Several hon. members, he said, were perhaps better acquainted than he was with the circumstances connected with this vote, seeing that he was not a member of the House when the promise of a bonus was made to Mr. Ballard. The circumstances were these: In 1872 the Ministry then in office having determined to extend the Central Railway from Westwood westward, entered into a certain agreement with Mr. Ballard as to the mode of extending the line and the emoluments to be attached to the work. The correspondence between Mr. Ballard and the Minister for Works (Mr. Walsh), which would be found in "Votes and Proceedings" for 1873, showed that the extension of the Central line from Westwood to the Comet was taken charge of by Mr. Ballard on certain conditions, which were that if when the line was constructed to the Comet it should be found that a saving had been made on the cost of construction as compared with the cost of the existing railways, the Government of the day should propose whatever sum they thought fit to be given as a bonus to Mr. Ballard in acknowledgment of his services. The distance of line constructed under that arrangement was 110 miles. The cost was £655,391, or an average of £5,958 per mile. The lines previously constructed in the colony up to that time consisted of various sections on the Southern and Western line, and the railway from Rockhampton to Westwood. The average cost of the sections from Brisbane to Dalby, and from Gowrie Junction through Warwick, was £9,113 per mile, or £3,115 per mile over the cost of the line constructed by Mr. Ballard. The cost of the line from Rockhampton to Westwood was £10,732 per mile, or nearly double the cost of the extension from Westwood to the Comet. Hon. members who had travelled upon the Central line would no doubt recollect that the line from Westwood passed through very difficult country. It had to cross the Goganjo Range, which was extremely difficult country, and had then to cross the Dawson River, and also a great many large creeks and rivers, before it reached the Comet River, which had also to be crossed to get to Comet. When hon. members considered the difficulty under which Mr. Ballard had laboured in making this railway, owing to the scarcity of labour and the difficult nature of the country, they would allow that Mr. Ballard had performed a very great work and initiated a cheaper system of making railways than had existed in the colony previous to his taking charge. The understanding between Mr. Ballard and the Minister for

Works was clear and precise, as would be seen from the following extract from an Executive minute on the subject:—

"If, on the completion of the works, it is found that they compare favourably, in point of economy and efficiency, with existing railways in the colony, Parliament shall be asked to grant to Mr. Ballard, by way of reward, such a sum as the Government may deem a substantial recognition of his services in addition to the salary and allowances already agreed to."

The figures which he had quoted would show that economy had been attained; and with regard to efficiency, he was perfectly satisfied that any person in the least acquainted with railway construction who visited the line would admit that the line was thoroughly efficient. He had no hesitation in saying not only that there was no better line in the colony, but that this line would compare favourably with any section upon any other line, though it had been constructed for more than £3,000 per mile less. When he took office as Minister for Works this question came before him, but he could not enter into it thoroughly until he had become perfectly satisfied that the work to the Comet was completed, and that Mr. Ballard would be able to show what saving had been effected. When he had found that the conditions had been complied with it became his duty, on behalf of the Government, to carry out a contract which had been solemnly entered into with the then Government. In carrying out that duty it became incumbent upon him to place this sum on the Estimates as being what had been promised, namely, a substantial reward to Mr. Ballard for his services. There was a balance of about £20,000 remaining of the loan raised for the construction of the line from Westwood to the Comet; and if the House agreed to the vote it would come out of that balance. He held that they were bound to carry out an agreement of that sort. If the Government were satisfied that Mr. Ballard was entitled to the sum, it would be a breach of faith not to give Parliament the opportunity of carrying out the intentions of the Government of that day. The sum had been arrived at arbitrarily. There had been a saving on the 110 miles of £400,000 as compared with the cost of the railways previously made. An engineer, working as a contractor's engineer, generally received, besides his salary, a percentage on the profits earned by the contractors varying from 5 per cent. to 15 per cent. He had no intention of proposing anything like 5 per cent. upon the sum saved on the line as compared with the other lines; and he had decided that 1½ per cent. would be a fair thing, although it was certainly small when compared with the amount given to contractors' engineers—and Mr. Ballard's position was virtually that of a contractor's engineer. He had charge of everything except the accounts, which were kept in a separate department, according to Mr. Ballard's own stipulation. It might be said that they were now getting railways made much cheaper. No doubt they were. The line from Dalby to Roma had been made much cheaper. But it must be remembered that it was to Mr. Ballard they owed the initiation of cheap railway construction. The Western line also went through a very different country from that to the Comet. Not only were they getting cheaper lines through Mr. Ballard's efforts, but Mr. Ballard was improving upon himself to such an extent that whatever engineers they had in the colony must follow him. When Mr. Ballard got to the Comet he made further economies. The line thence to Emerald would cost little over £3,000 a-mile, and westward of Emerald still less, in spite of the increased cost of rails over those required for the Emerald line. The Northern line, from Townsville to Charters Towers, under Mr.

Ballard's direction, would cost not more than £3,000 a-mile; and that line would have to cross a difficult range, a good deal of broken country at the foot of it, and several large rivers, amongst which was the Burdekin. It ought to be remembered, also, that four years ago £100,000 was voted for one bridge over the Burdekin. Taking all those things into consideration, he believed he was simply doing his duty in asking Parliament to grant £5,000 as a substantial recognition to Mr. Ballard of his services to the colony.

Mr. MILES said that if the Minister for Works was satisfied that Mr. Ballard was entitled to the money he was very easily satisfied. It was unfair on the part of Mr. Ballard to compare the Central with the Southern and Western line. In the first place, there was not a single acre of land resumed from Westwood to the Comet, whereas the line from Brisbane to Ipswich ran all the way through purchased land, for which enormous prices were paid. Then, again, the Southern and Western line was constructed in short sections, and the contractors for sections of fifteen miles were put to as much outlay for plant as would carry Mr. Ballard from Westwood to the Comet. Again, there was not a single station on the Central line to compare with those on the Southern and Western line—although he did not blame Mr. Ballard for that, because the line ran through a country where nobody resided; and, even when houses were erected for the station-masters, they were erected in so niggardly a manner that they had no fire-places in them. The station buildings between Brisbane and Ipswich cost five times more than all the station buildings on the Central line; but the country was densely populated, and stations were required as a matter of course. On the Central line, from Rockhampton to the Comet, there were only one or two stations, of the most miserable description he ever saw: there was not even a platform. On the Central line, also, there were places which in time of flood were 15 feet under flood-mark, while the Southern and Western line was constructed entirely above flood-mark; and although there had been recently one or two breaches in the embankments through floods, it had been mainly caused by the embankments diverting the water in one particular direction. Then there was not a single fence worth calling a fence on the Central line, although Mr. Ballard was not to blame for that, going through a country in which nobody resided. In that case, again, no comparison could be drawn between the two lines. As to the line itself, as far as he could judge, he believed it had been faithfully built. Mr. Ballard, when he crossed the Dawson, appropriated a bridge that was built for general traffic, and laid the rails across it, thereby saving the cost of another bridge over a large stream. There was no such thing on the Southern and Western Railway, where every bridge built was charged to cost of construction. Of the 110 miles from Westwood to the Comet, sixty-three miles were laid down on the surface, and yet it cost £6,000 a-mile. He should like to know where the saving came in. When he was Minister for Works this question cropped up, the line having been completed to the Comet, and he was anxious to inquire whether Mr. Ballard was entitled to any reward, in order to carry out the promise made by the previous Government. With that view he went up to look at the line, and saw that it was well and substantially built, noticing at the same time that there was no fence worthy of the name, no stations worthy of the name, and that the line was carried across the country in places which in flood time would be 15 feet under water. It was preposterous to compare such a line with

the Southern and Western line. He ultimately came to the conclusion that the proper way to ascertain whether Mr. Ballard was entitled to the reward was to call upon him to furnish all particulars with respect to cost of material supplied and amount of work done, from which it would have been easy to calculate what the saving, if any, had been. But Mr. Ballard declined to do so, and said he would abide by the opinions of engineers from the southern colonies if he (Mr. Miles) would bring them up. He trusted the Minister for Works would postpone the question until he could furnish the Committee with particulars as to the saving that had been effected. If the hon. gentleman would do that he (Mr. Miles) was strongly of opinion that not only would he see that there had been no saving, but that Mr. Ballard was the most costly railway builder that Queensland ever had. The 63 miles which were laid on the surface were a very large proportion of the 110; and yet the cost was nearly £6,000 a-mile. Mr. Ballard had a very high opinion of his abilities and his works—a much higher opinion than he (Mr. Miles) had; and it would be better not to press the motion until the Minister for Works had more information about it to lay before the Committee; and that information could very soon be forthcoming. He believed that, if that were done, instead of Mr. Ballard being entitled to £5,000, it would be found that the country had already paid him more than he was entitled to.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member (Mr. Miles) had evidently made a mistake as to where the saving came in. Did the hon. member expect that there would be a saving in the wages of the men? The saving came in, not in the work that Mr. Ballard had done, but in the work which he had avoided doing. How many miles of the Southern and Western Railway could have been made on the surface had there been a Ballard at that time to construct it? Instead of that being done, especially in a young colony, there were high embankments, tremendous cuttings, and long tunnels, all of which Mr. Ballard had more or less avoided. The greater portion of the line from Westwood to the Comet had been laid down on the surface because of Mr. Ballard's engineering skill, and equally as many miles might have been laid on the surface of the Southern and Western line if the same course had been adopted—indeed, without it, cheap railways would be impossible. The hon. gentleman seemed to forget the difficult country that Mr. Ballard had to pass through before he reached that surface—a range more difficult than the Little Liverpool Range, and only a little less difficult than the Main Range itself; and the whole of that work was included in the average cost of £5,900 a-mile. But for that, the line would not have cost more than between £3,000 and £4,000 a-mile. The hon. member talked about the bridge over the Dawson River. Did the hon. member know that it cost Mr. Ballard nearly as much to alter that bridge as it would to have built a new one? The hon. member also talked about the fineness and the shabbiness of the stations. How many thousands of pounds had been needlessly wasted on stations on the Southern and Western line? Were the people better served, or did the trains travel any quicker from that expenditure? Not a bit. Mr. Ballard saw where economies could be carried out, and he carried them out. Mr. Ballard also built a telegraph line along the railway at a cost of £7,101, and that fully compensated for the difference in the stations; and he incurred an expenditure of £9,715 in constructing permanent dams and reservoirs in a country badly supplied with water, which sums were included in the £5,900 a-mile. The hon. member also said he had asked Mr.

Ballard for certain information which had not been afforded to him. He need only refer the hon. member to some correspondence on the subject laid by himself on the table of the House as Minister for Works in 1878, in which the very things he asked for were furnished; and they were also to be found at page 9, appendix A, of Mr. Ballard's own report, where every item of expenditure was set forth. The hon. gentleman had no reason for objecting to the vote. He himself (Mr. Macrossan), like the hon. gentleman, had gone over the Central line specially to see whether Mr. Ballard was entitled to the reward, and he was perfectly satisfied that as far as construction was concerned, for purposes of traffic, there was not a better or a stronger line in the colony. He came away perfectly satisfied that Mr. Ballard was entitled to the reward, and that £5,000 was as little as he could ask Parliament to vote for his services.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN asked whether Mr. Ballard was getting a salary, and if so, how much, during the time he was engaged in constructing the railway?

Mr. MILES: Yes; £1,400 or £1,500 a-year.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said it would be a bad precedent to pay a man a salary and then give him a reward for doing no more than his duty. As engineer was it not his duty to make the line as cheaply as he could? Besides, there was no proof that it had been made cheaply. The line was fifteen feet below flood-mark, and cost £6,000 a-mile. Was that cheap railway making? What was the man to get—he supposed it was the Minister for Works—who reduced the cost to £3,000 a-mile? Besides being fifteen feet under flood-mark, there were miserable stations without chimneys, and no platforms; a road bridge had been utilised, there was no fencing, and sixty-three miles of it had been laid down on the surface, and Mr. Ballard had nothing to pay for managing the finances of the line. That was anything but cheap railway making. The Minister for Works had exceeded his duty in the matter. The agreement that the Government came to with Mr. Ballard was that they would ask Parliament to grant a sum of money. If the Minister asked for that money, and did not get it, he had completed his agreement. It was about as absurd a proposition as ever came before Parliament. Where was it to stop? The money was to be paid for cheating the State—for, certainly, making a railway fifteen feet under flood-mark, without platforms, and with station-masters' houses without chimneys, was cheating the State. So far as he could see, not the slightest comparison could be drawn between Mr. Ballard's work and the work—which he granted should never have been done—on the Southern and Western Railway, and therefore he could not think of voting for this bonus of £5,000. As had been pointed out, no compensation had been paid for land on the Central line, and he could not help thinking that the whole thing was a great job. At any rate, the full details of the work performed should have been laid on the table. Until that was done he could not see his way to vote for this bonus.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. member who had last spoken had told the Committee that he could not see his way to vote for the amount on the Estimates, but it was his own fault that he could not, as the very thing that the hon. member and the hon. member for Darling Downs said had never been furnished, namely, the quantities of earthwork, cuttings, &c., was laid on the table on September 3, 1878. At page 9 of that return those hon. members would find all the information, which had already been read by the

Minister for Works. All the quantities and every yard of cuttings were given in an appendix—embankments, cuttings, side-drains, inlets, outlets, &c.; and appendix B gave the cost of everything—of land, clearing, surveys of roads, temporary works, plant, earthworks, stone culverts, tunnels, bridges, box-drains, log culverts, fencing dams, tanks, &c., in fact, the remainder of page 9 and half of the next page was filled with that kind of information. Yet the hon. member for Stanley took the assertion of the member for Darling Downs—that these returns were never furnished. The strongest point made by the hon. member for Darling Downs was that part of the line was 15 feet under flood level; but there the hon. member was wrong again, as it was above ordinary flood-level throughout the entire distance, except at the Dawson dam, where it would have cost £200,000 to have taken the line, merely to provide against a contingency that might not happen again for the next twenty years. Hon. members would be led to believe, from the remarks that had been made, that the line should have been made to avoid floods, but there were many places in the Dawson Valley where floods had risen to a height of thirty feet, as could be seen by the telegraph posts, and to carry a line above that would have involved an expenditure that the House would never have justified. There were two grounds on which the Minister for Works had recommended the passing of the vote before the Committee. The hon. member for Stanley said that if a man was paid a large salary it was a bad system to promise him a bonus for doing his duty, but if the Government engaged a man on the condition that if after a certain time he had proved that he had carried out successfully all he undertook to do he should have a bonus, subject of course to the sanction of Parliament, that was a very different thing. Of course, if Parliament refused to grant the bonus, then the Government could not give it. That Mr. Ballard entered the service of the Government with a distinct understanding that if he succeeded in doing certain works he should have a bonus was proved by a letter from the Minister for Works for the time, dated 18th September, 1872, to this effect:—

"If on the completion of the works it is found that they compare favourably in point of economy and efficiency with existing railways in the colony, Parliament shall be asked to grant you by way of reward such a sum of money as the Government may deem a substantial recognition of your services in addition to the salary and allowances already agreed to."

Then Mr. Ballard in a letter dated 10th December, 1877, said:—

"In taking service under the Government I undertook to effect a saving of from 30 to 50 percent. on the cost of existing lines; also that the line should compare favourably with them on all other points. You had constructed then about 218 miles of line at a cost of over £10,000 a-mile. The railway from Westwood to the Comet will, I believe, cost under £6,000 per mile, so that the above promises will, I hope, be fulfilled."

Mr. Ballard took service under the Government with the express understanding that if he reduced the cost of construction of the line he was about to make to the extent he expressed himself able to do in comparison with the cost of existing lines, the Government would recommend that he should be paid a certain bonus.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: A very safe bargain for him, as he knew that the line would not cost £18,000 a-mile.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that that was not the question. The question was whether the country should not carry out their part of the agreement, provided that Mr. Ballard had carried out his part. He believed that he was right in saying that Mr. Ballard's labours had had the effect of causing a reduction in the

cost of railways in other parts of the colony. He believed it was proved that engineers in other parts of the colony had seen that they could no longer go in for unnecessary cuttings and tunnels, and he considered that Mr. Ballard had done more to show how unnecessary work could be avoided than any other engineer had ever done—in fact, he had pointed out a new path for all the other engineers in the colony to follow. Hon. members would find that the very fullest information that could be given by any engineer was given by Mr. Ballard in the papers from which he (Mr. Palmer) had quoted, and which had been before hon. members for the last two years. He considered that Mr. Ballard had fairly earned this bonus; that the amount had been put down at a very moderate rate, and that the honour of the colony was involved in carrying out the promise made to that gentleman eight years ago. If any hon. member would only refer to the papers laid on the table in 1878, he would find the fullest information he could get. The hon. member for Stanley had evidently been misled by the speech of the hon. member for Darling Downs, who appeared to have forgotten that the papers were laid on the table by himself when Minister for Works. Another strong point made by the hon. member for Darling Downs was that the station-houses had no chimneys, and in that respect that hon. member was followed up by the hon. member for Stanley; but he (Mr. Palmer) would like to know how many private houses in Rockhampton had chimneys except in the kitchens? Why, it would be like sending flannel waistcoats to negroes to have chimneys in houses there —

Mr. MILES : They had to be constructed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that this might be so, according to the extravagant opinions of the hon. member when he was Minister for Works; but he was certain the present Minister for Works would not go to the extravagance of spending money on what was not required, although he had seen some expensive stations on the Western Railway lately. There was no doubt that Mr. Ballard had saved unnecessary expenditure in every direction, especially when it was considered that wages were much higher in that part of the country near the Dawson, on account of the risks to which men were exposed by sickness. If hon. members had seen, as he had, men employed in that part of the colony dying like rotten sheep from fever, they would wonder how the line could ever have been constructed. If they had seen, as he had seen, the number of men dying on one section particularly, they would have better understood the difficulty. He had been told by the medical officer that the mortality was actually appalling, and that on the Panama line, where it was said there was a dead man under every sleeper, the mortality was scarcely greater than on that particular section; if hon. members had seen that, they would know the difficulties under which the line was built.

Mr. DOUGLAS said there was no doubt that Mr. Ballard, when undertaking the construction of the Central line, made a special arrangement with the Government of the day—that could not be disputed. There was also no doubt that from that date the colony entered upon a more economical mode of railway construction than it had been able to achieve before. Mr. Ballard brought to bear an extraordinary amount of energy on the work under his supervision, and he (Mr. Douglas) believed that, had that not been done, the line would not now have been constructed. He had had some opportunity of seeing what Mr. Ballard had done, and he must say that that gentleman had thrown a larger

amount of energy into his work than their engineers had thrown before. He believed that had Mr. Ballard followed the same course as other engineers, the probability was that the Central line would not be so far completed as it now was. There was no doubt that the late Government accorded Mr. Ballard facilities for pushing on that line which they had not done in regard to other lines, as they considered it was desirable to do so. All that Mr. Ballard had said was this, that if his work was examined and found to bear a favourable comparison with the work on the existing lines, and at the same time showed a great saving in construction, a recommendation for compensation to him should be submitted to Parliament; if Parliament refused to grant it then the Government could not help it. He (Mr. Douglas) did not think Parliament would be wise in refusing this vote, as he considered Mr. Ballard had earned this reward, as he had shown what no engineer had yet shown them could be done—namely, how they could cheapen the cost of their railways. When he said that, he might say that between 1872 and 1878 he believed some railways in the southern part of the colony had been made almost as cheaply as Mr. Ballard's line, under other engineers. Whilst asserting this, he was quite willing to admit that Mr. Ballard had shown the way by the rapid manner in which he had pushed on his work, and that in the face of difficulties and great risk of life. If ever there was a man who was entitled to have a bargain it was Mr. Ballard, and he deserved it, as few engineers had deserved such a reward. Hon. members knew that the tendency of engineers was to increase the cost of railways placed under their charge, on the ground that the more substantial the works were the better; but that might be carried too far, as some engineers really expended money on too substantial works where less expensive works would have answered all the purposes. With regard to the Dawson Valley, no doubt Mr. Ballard exercised a wise discretion when he took a low-level line, as it would probably have cost £200,000 to have carried the line beyond all chance of floods, although even with that expenditure that might not have been so. Mr. Ballard preferred to take a low-level with the chance of once in five or ten years having the line submerged. On that point he thought Mr. Ballard exercised a wise discretion, as also did the Minister for Works for the time being who sanctioned such a line. For all those reasons he should support the vote. At the same time he thought the hon. Minister for Works should compare the cost of all the railways since 1872, when Mr. Ballard commenced his work on the Central line, not in order that no other claims should be made, because no other stipulation had been made, but in fairness to those who had carried out railway works in other parts of the colony, and also in fairness to Mr. Ballard. He thought under the circumstances the Minister for Works might very well supply hon. members with the actual cost of lines made between 1872 and 1880, the period during which Mr. Ballard claimed a recognition of his services.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN : For what purpose?

Mr. DOUGLAS said for the purpose of ascertaining what had been the cost, apart altogether from Mr. Ballard's claim. They had been told that on an average the Central line had cost £6,000 a mile, but there was at present no return of the cost of the Stanthorpe, nor the Gympie, or other lines during the same period, and if no other hon. member took up the matter he should himself formulate such a resolution as would result in obtaining such a return, as it would throw light on the construction of rail-

ways which would be of importance in guiding the House in future.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he had listened very attentively to the speeches of the hon. members for Darling Downs and Stanley, and although the former hon. member, from having been a Minister for Works, might do so, he did not think the hon. member for Stanley took into consideration the difficulties owing to climate under which railway works in the North had to be carried out. He had happened to be about two years ago on the Central line, and he was looking at a cutting which Mr. Ballard or one of his subordinates had in charge, and was told that although the cost should have been 1s. 6d. a yard, the actual cost to the Government was 1s. 9d., as he could not get more work out of the men. He (Mr. Perkins) recognised the situation at once—that men could not do more, as the sun was blazing down upon them and they were working between two high walls where no fresh air could get to them. He believed good work had been done by Mr. Ballard, but it frequently happened that when hon. members saw how it was proposed to vote money they offered every objection to it, forgetting that the same sums were often voted away when they did not see them. He was not advocating Mr. Ballard's claim, but he would say this, that were it not for that gentleman's introduction of low-level bridges the bridges on the Central line would have cost three times the money and would not be more safe. These calamitous floods only occurred once in every five or seven years, and he thought that people and traffic could then afford a little delay. He was quite prepared to recognise intrinsic merit no matter from what quarter, and he was quite prepared to say that Mr. Ballard had made use of all his energies and of the experience he got elsewhere to economise the building of the Central line. On that principle alone, and believing that he was honest and sincere in carrying out railways where other engineers would have put the country to greater expense, he should be happy to support the vote.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he should give his opposition to the vote. The arguments he had heard in favour of the proposition were these—that a gentleman of considerable eminence as an engineer made a bargain with the Government that he should be rewarded with a bonus of £5,000 beyond his salary of £1,500 a-year, and £104 a-year for a man servant, provided that he did certain things. Why, the State having engaged him as its servant was entitled to all his time, and to all his attainments, and to all the energy he could bring to bear on the subject of railway construction. He considered it was a most noxious system to establish that a man should say, "If you give me a bonus I will do my work properly."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Mr. Ballard did nothing of the sort.

The PREMIER: Why do you not read the correspondence?

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he had heard the speeches of the Minister for Works and the hon. member for the Darling Downs—who surely knew what they were talking about—and these were the grounds to which the whole thing could be narrowed down: that this gentleman promised under certain circumstances to bring his best energies, skill, and experience to bear upon the construction of this railway provided a bargain was made that he should receive a reward. It was not fair to other Civil servants that such a stipulation should be made, as they were expected to give all their energies and skill to their work. If Mr. Ballard was not satisfied with his salary of £1,500 a-year, and his man servant, he should have

gone to some place where his services would be better appreciated. This sort of thing was calculated to lead to log-rolling, for what right had any particular officer to make such a bargain with the Government, and to say that if his services proved to be of so superior a character he should receive a bonus? The hon. member for Maryborough said that Mr. Ballard had made an arrangement that if he was able to prove that he had constructed his railway at a considerable saving in cost over others he was entitled to a bonus.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Has he not a right?

Mr. RUTLEDGE contended that he had not. He had merely done what every officer should do—given his best energies to his work, and, therefore, it was pure childishness on the part of the Government to consent to such a proposition.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY thought that before the hon. member got up to make a speech he should have first read his text. He had evidently not done that, but got up and made a speech in which he showed more ignorance than any member of the Committee had ever shown. Mr. Ballard did not go to the Government to offer his services, but the Government went to Mr. Ballard, when he was at Gympie as a mining surveyor and doing well, on purpose to secure his services. Arguments like these were beneath the consideration of any honest-thinking man.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN thought that if the Government went after a man like that to make such an agreement it was a shame for them. The question was this: that these low-level bridges were put alongside expensive high-level bridges on the Southern and Western line that cost thousands of pounds, and it was then stated that Mr. Ballard had made such great savings. Altogether this was a most outrageous proposition to make to the House. The thing ought at any rate to have been sent to a select committee to examine the figures, and take evidence as to what had been done. He might say that he did not know Mr. Ballard at all, and had therefore no personal feeling in the matter, but he objected to vote these immense sums of money out of the taxes of the colony; and he objected, being one who was sent to the House to guard the public funds as much as possible. At the same time, he would offer no factious opposition to the vote. He would do what he could to divide the Committee, and would vote against it; but as to trying to reduce the vote shilling by shilling, he was not called upon to do that. The practice of giving these bonuses opened a very dangerous door, and the sooner the thing was put an end to the better. There was £5,000 on the paper the other day for Dr. Hobbs, and now there was £5,000 for an engineer, and they did not know how many more five thousand pounds they would be asked to vote. Sent there as they were to guard the taxes of the people they should scrutinise very closely any proposition of this kind, and he did not feel conscientiously inclined to vote for the sum. At the same time, from all he heard of Mr. Ballard, he had no doubt but that he was well entitled to anything of this kind as any man could possibly be.

Mr. MACFARLANE said they had been informed this afternoon by the Minister for Works that money had been saved to the colony through the superior engineering abilities of Mr. Ballard. He was not now going to dispute the professional abilities of Mr. Ballard, but they had been told by the Minister for Works that he believed Mr. Ballard was entitled to this £5,000. No doubt the Minister for Works was

quite sincere; but when they had the opinion of the previous Minister for Works put against that of the present, it was evident that the Committee would require to weigh the various opinions before they came to a decision. The previous Minister for Works (Mr. Miles) informed them that he visited the line from the Comet to Westwood for the purpose of finding out for himself whether Mr. Ballard was the great engineer that he reported himself to be. It was quite evident that the two men—the present and late Minister for Works—did not agree with reference to the engineering abilities of Mr. Ballard. He (Mr. Macfarlane) was not going to say which was right or which was wrong, but the very fact that they did disagree was sufficient to make him like to see further evidence before he gave a vote for or against the proposal. Mr. Ballard was already paid some £1,500 a-year—how much more he did not know; but it appeared to him that this gentleman was placed in a position superior to any Civil servant in the colony; even superior to the first Executive Minister. He had not the worry and the toil of many other Civil servants, and it was now proposed to give him this handsome bonus. Sufficient evidence had not been given to enable them to come to a decision whether this money had been faithfully and honestly earned, and whether a bonus should be given or not. It appeared that Mr. Ballard had a great deal of confidence in his own ability, and not only that, but he appeared to have persuaded many members in the House to believe of him what he believed of himself. Mr. Ballard was certainly an overrated man. The very fact that he recommended a certain committee, with reference to a certain railway, to adopt a 1-in-25 gradient showed clearly that he was not the engineer that he pretended to be. No engineer should recommend railways to be constructed at such a gradient as 1 in 25. If by doing this railways were made apparently cheaper, they were made dear in the long run by the wear and tear through having to employ more powerful engines. That fact showed that he was not as good an engineer as he fancied he was, or that a few members believed he was. It had been said that it was a bargain, and that they ought to stand by it; but who made it?—a previous Minister for Works to that of Mr. Miles. The bargain appeared to him (Mr. Macfarlane) to have been that if the House was satisfied that Mr. Ballard made railways at a cheaper rate than they were being made at that time he was entitled to a bonus. What nonsense this was. Anybody could do that; anybody working on other people's experience could do the thing cheaper than the first. In the beginning of our railway making railways necessarily were dear. Everybody took advantage of our railways and demanded exorbitant prices for the land, and the consequence was that the first railways were dear, and any person calling himself an engineer would be qualified to make them cheaper than the first were made; but because he did so a bonus was proposed. He never heard such an argument. He was very glad that it was not the Minister for Works in those days that had the power to give bonuses, and he hoped the Committee would show that they were not satisfied to give Mr. Ballard a bonus for his superior engineering skill. Suppose they took the Southern and Western Railway from Brisbane to Roma, and the Central Railway from Rockhampton to the point at which it stopped, which would cost most per mile? He hoped the Minister for Works would inform the House. Would the Southern and Western line, if placed in the same position as the Central line, be made equally cheap? They had been informed by a previous Minister for

Works (Mr. Miles) that nearly all the land had to be repurchased on the Southern and Western line, but not on the Central line, because the land there was unalienated. They were also informed by that hon. gentleman that the line was not even fenced in many places, and platforms were raised to serve as stations, and that 63 miles out of 100 was level ground which required no excavation. The engineer ought to have returned money to the Government instead of working for a bonus;—he ought to have made the line much cheaper than the Southern and Western Railway was made, seeing the difficulties that had to be contended with. However the matter might be decided, he (Mr. Macfarlane) was positive that the country would not be satisfied if the Committee voted away £5,000 to Mr. Ballard as a bonus for making cheap railways. He hoped before a decision was come to, the Minister for Works would reconsider the matter, and give some statistics to prove that Mr. Ballard was really entitled to the bonus. That had not been done up to the present time. In another year, when the House met again, if statistics could be brought to prove that Mr. Ballard was making railways cheaper than any other engineer up to the present time, he would be entitled to some recompense, but not otherwise. It was a disputed point whether the money had really been saved. In Mr. Ballard's opinion no doubt it was, but he (Mr. Macfarlane) hoped it would be shown to be really the case.

Mr. MILES said he must set the hon. member (Mr. Macfarlane) right in a few remarks he made. The hon. member stated that he (Mr. Miles) visited the Central Railway for the purpose of ascertaining whether Mr. Ballard was the great engineer he was reported to be. He (Mr. Miles) never said so. He never said a single word about Mr. Ballard as a professional man. He believed he thoroughly understood his work, and would be sorry if any impression should have gone abroad that he had said one single word derogatory to Mr. Ballard as an engineer. What he objected to was that Mr. Ballard had drawn a comparison between the cost of the Central line and that of the Southern and Western line, which was not fair, and that he had gone on a wrong basis altogether in making out to the Minister for Works that he had made a saving, because he had not done so. His (Mr. Miles') object in visiting Rockhampton and inspecting the line was the result of two interviews with Mr. Ballard, in which that gentleman impressed upon him strongly that he had made a saving of from 30 to 50 per cent. He came to the conclusion that if Mr. Ballard saved this large amount he was entitled to something handsome, and nothing under £30,000 or £50,000 would compensate him, because he would have saved £300,000. As he had stated before, the construction of the line could not be found fault with as far as durability was concerned; and he did not desire to say a word against Mr. Ballard so far as his work was concerned. He did not blame Mr. Ballard for not fencing a line running through scrubs; he did not say that he should have built stations where they were not required; he did not blame him for not putting up platforms where no produce was to be loaded; he did not make these charges, but said that Mr. Ballard started on a wrong foundation altogether by comparing the cost of the lines in the southern portion of the colony with those in the central. He hoped the Minister for Works would not hand over this £5,000 because it was to be paid out of loan, because the interest would have to be paid by someone. If Mr. Ballard were entitled to £5,000, Mr. Hannam was entitled to as much, because, if it had not been for Mr. Hannam, Mr. Ballard would not have constructed

the line for less than £9,000 a mile. He believed the country was under as much obligation to Mr. Hannam for the construction of the Central Railway as to Mr. Ballard, because when the first survey was made from Westwood a ridge intervened between that and the Comet, which it was supposed would have been difficult to get over; but Mr. Hannam, by his ability as a surveyor, discovered a way over the range. With reference to a remark made by the Colonial Secretary, he (Mr. Miles) did not say that the greater portion of the line was under water, but that it was under flood level something like fifteen feet. Then again, they could not tell what the gradient was on the Central line, but on the Southern line there were sign-posts showing 1 in 50 or 1 in 60, or whatever it was. There was nothing to show whether there were steeper grades on the Central than on the Southern line: for his part, he was not sure that they were not sometimes steeper. The Minister for Works might, at any rate, try and give members more information than had been given, and, by going into the amounts of timber and other material, find out to a nicety what had been spent. He (Mr. Miles) believed Mr. Ballard threatened the Minister for Works that if something was not done he would not go on with the works; but no Minister should listen to such a threat.

Mr. MACFARLANE explained that he did not misrepresent the member for Darling Downs, but argued from that gentleman's statement that Mr. Ballard was the most expensive engineer in the colony—that such an officer was not the man from whom cheap railways could be expected.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS hoped the member for Darling Downs did not suspect him of being careless of money because it was borrowed; on the contrary, he was as careful of every penny borrowed as of other money, and he was quite aware that they would have to pay the interest, and some day the principal. He was anxious to come to a decision upon the question, and was quite willing to accept the decision of the Committee. So was Mr. Ballard. An extract from a letter written by Mr. Ballard to the Commissioner for Railways in 1877 would show this, and also that the whole thing was a simple bargain which the Government now proposed to carry out. Mr. Ballard wrote—

"Should the Government, however, in its wisdom voluntarily and gratuitously decide to carry out the terms of the clause referred to, I shall with great pride and satisfaction accept whatever sum they may think fit to recommend Parliament to grant me. But if on the other hand the Government should not think fit to make such recommendation, or the Parliament should not think fit to grant the sum recommended, *there the matter ends.*"

Could any man put a case more fairly? Mr. Ballard merely preferred a claim to which he thought he was entitled, and he (Mr. Macrossan) thought the same. Hon. members were, of course, entitled to differ from him, but at least they should make themselves acquainted with the subject they spoke upon. Several speeches delivered during the debate clearly showed that this had not been done, though, as the Colonial Secretary had pointed out, the papers had been on the table for two years. It was no use saying that they should get longer time; if the matter was brought forward seven years after the claim was made he believed the Minister in power would be asked to give more time. The hon. member, Mr. Miles, said it was unfair to make a comparison between the Central and the Southern and Western lines, inasmuch as there was no land to be resumed on the Central line, whilst land had to be resumed for the Southern and Western line, and because there were fewer stations—and those of inferior quality—on the

Central than on the Southern and Western line. He would give a comparison clear of all that. The cost of the line from Ipswich to Brisbane without buildings, without rolling-stock, without land—simply the construction of the line and the stores consumed in that—was £14,356 per mile. The line for which Mr. Ballard claimed the bonus cost £5,958 per mile, including buildings, rolling-stock, land, telegraph lines, reservoirs, and dams. Was that comparison not greatly in favour of Mr. Ballard's line? Then there was the line from Ipswich to Toowoomba—78 miles—which cost £13,000 per mile for construction alone. The hon. member, Mr. Macfarlane, had said that Mr. Ballard was simply following in the steps of other men, and was able through recently acquired knowledge amongst engineers to construct cheap lines. That came strangely from the hon. member, seeing that the line from Brisbane to Ipswich was being made at £14,000 per mile without land or rolling-stock at a time when Mr. Ballard was making his line at a cost of £5,000 per mile. The hon. member (Mr. Macfarlane) asked for a comparison of the cost of the whole of the Central line and of the whole of the Southern and Western line. The whole of the Southern and Western line from Brisbane to Dalby, and from Gowrie Junction to Warwick, cost £9,113 per mile. The whole of the Central line from Rockhampton to Emerald had cost £6,447 per mile. He must remind hon. members that the cost of the Rockhampton section was £10,000 per mile. These figures showed that the cost of Mr. Ballard's line was only two-thirds of the other. Take the comparisons as they would, they were all in favour of Mr. Ballard. If hon. members chose to repudiate what he considered a bargain which they were in honour bound to carry out, they could please themselves. He was quite prepared, and so was Mr. Ballard, to accept the decision of the Committee.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said it was very good of the Minister for Works and Mr. Ballard to offer to do a thing which they could not evade. If the Committee gave a decision against them they must be satisfied. The comparisons which had been made were unfair, because with one line they had a job managed by an adventurer of an engineer, who, after being here three years or so, left the colony with, it was believed, from £65,000 to £100,000 in his pockets. They might as well make a comparison of the cost of construction of railways at home. The first line in Ireland—that from Dublin to Kingstown—cost £60,000 per mile; the same line could be built to-day for £5,000 per mile. It was known that there were two estimates for the line from Ipswich to Toowoomba. One was a false line with a false estimate to go before the public, and the other was the real plan on which the contractors had to work. He believed that came out in evidence before a select committee. He did not think the present Ministry were in any way responsible for the bargain. The bargain was made some five or six years ago; the Ministry which succeeded that which made it refused to take the matter up, and why should the present Government do so?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The line was not completed when the late Government were in office.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said that, at any rate, that Government declined to have anything to do with the so-called bargain. On the broad principle that he would not allow this sort of wedge to be put into the revenue of the colony, he should vote against the proposal—put it in whatever shape they liked.

Mr. MESTON said he regarded this as one of the most preposterous bargains ever brought

before the House for its sanction. Mr. Ballard seemed to have impressed the Minister for Works with the belief that he was the most talented engineer of the nineteenth century, and that without his valuable assistance they would have been still constructing railways at a cost similar to that of the old Brisbane extension. The bargain made with Mr. Ballard contained a vicious principle. It not only implied that there was a special inducement for a Government engineer in the receipt of a large salary to devote the whole of his energies to the country; but it implied a temptation to construct an inferior railway for the purpose of economising the cost. He did not see that Mr. Ballard had any claim on the ground that he had constructed railways cheaper than others had. Let them consider a few figures and they would see that the claim was altogether unfounded. The first 110 miles of Mr. Ballard's line cost £5,957 per mile; the Roma line cost £4,200 per mile; the Stanthorpe line £8,500 per mile; the Bundaberg line £3,500 per mile; and the Maryborough line £5,100—or an average of £4,800 per mile. The Stanthorpe line was constructed over very difficult country. The average of the cost of the construction of Mr. Stanley's railways was £5,600, or £537 per mile less than Mr. Ballard's, and Mr. Stanley's lines included the Brisbane extension at £15,000 per mile exclusive of land. All railway construction in a new country was a series of experiments, and very costly they were, but in that respect he thought they would compare favourably with the other colonies. Their first railways cost £18,800 per mile; the first South Australian railways cost £28,000 per mile; some of the first Victorian lines cost £40,000 per mile; and the Parramatta line in New South Wales cost between £30,000 and £40,000—the first mile costing £56,000. He did not think it was fair to institute a comparison between the Central and the Southern and Western lines, as no doubt an immense amount of money had been expended on stations on the Southern line which might have been reduced considerably. The station at Laidley cost £3,000, when the whole of the raw material required could have been obtained within a short distance of the spot at half the cost of inferior material which was imported. Mr. Stanley's lines were of a superior character—they were fenced in, and were provided with substantial station-houses; and if Mr. Ballard was entitled to a bonus, Mr. Stanley was equally entitled to one. Mr. Ballard's bargain with the Government was one which secured absolute safety for him, as it was preposterous to suppose that the colony was going to construct new lines at the same cost as the Brisbane extension. They had now got down from £18,000 to £4,200 per mile; in New South Wales they had got down from £33,000 to £2,800 per mile; and so the reduction went on from year to year as engineers acquired more experience. A bargain was unquestionably made with Mr. Ballard, but it was so vicious in principle that the House ought to mark its disapproval of it by refusing to vote the money.

Mr. GRIFFITH said that he was Minister for Works when the Central line was approaching completion, and as he thought it might be necessary for him to bring the matter forward, he visited the works so as to form an opinion of the nature of the work done by Mr. Ballard. He must confess that he was rather disappointed at the cost of the line: he had anticipated, and had been led to believe, that it would have been much less than £6,000 per mile; but taking into consideration that a distinct promise was made to Mr. Ballard by the Government of 1873, he thought if the Government should err at all they should err on the side of liability. He considered the bargain a very foolish one, and one which ought never to have been made; but

having been made it ought to be observed. The conclusion which he had arrived at, and he did not think he had communicated it to anyone before, was that as Mr. Ballard had been doing double work for five years—acting both as Government engineer and contractors' engineer—he was entitled to additional remuneration, the amount of which he assessed £5,000. It was strange that the conclusion which he arrived at should coincide with that of the present Minister for Works. He should give effect to the conclusion which he had arrived at by voting for the proposition.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said it appeared to him that the principal ground upon which the claim was advocated was that the Government of the day had made a bargain. That was acknowledged to be a foolish bargain. They had heard of contracts being void *ab initio*; contracts of a character which ought not to be recognised and which were rendered null and void on that account. He did not think the House ought to be called upon to recognise every contract which a member of a Government might enter into. If they admitted the principle that because a Minister entered into a contract they were bound to ratify it, they would open the door to a host of abuses. How did they know but that the different Ministers had contributed towards the cheapening of the cost of railways by their efforts? It had not been satisfactorily demonstrated to him that it was through the intervention of Mr. Ballard that that desirable state of things had been brought about. The House ought to mark its sense of disapproval of such foolish bargains by refusing to vote the money.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: Repudiation.

Mr. REA said as far as he understood the matter, the cheapening of railways had commenced since the bargain was made with Mr. Ballard. The hon. member for Rosewood talked about there being considerable engineering difficulties on the Stanthorpe line. He (Mr. Rea) would undertake to show as difficult country on the Central line as there was on the Stanthorpe line. At the time Mr. Ballard made the bargain it was considered an excellent one; it was considered a good thing that they could find a competent man without having to send to Europe for one, as Victoria had done. Mr. Ballard opened their eyes as to how railways could be made cheaply, and the hon. member (Mr. Miles), whilst opposing the vote, had in a straightforward way, which it was refreshing to observe, borne testimony to the solidity and substantiality of the work done by him. Mr. Ballard had not scamped his work so as to lessen the cost; he had executed it in the way he would have done had he been in receipt of three times his salary and in expectancy of getting three times the amount of compensation now asked. It was true that there had been a great number of deaths in the district whilst Mr. Ballard's line was in course of construction, but he should not like it to go forth that the country itself had such fatal characteristics as were known to exist in Panama. The great mortality was brought about through the laziness of the men, who drank bad water rather than they would go a little further and get good water. The contract with Mr. Ballard was made openly and the House ought to support it, but at the same time they might express their determination not to recognise another of a similar nature.

Mr. MILES said the official minute relating to Mr. Ballard's appointment was as follows:—

“Ministers recommend upon the within memorandum of the Commissioner for Railways and Mr. Ballard's

letters 3rd and 22nd July, 1872, that the services of Mr. Ballard be secured, salary £800 per annum with travelling expenses added.

"As an addition to the salary named, the Government to be prepared to consider any claim to a bonus which Mr. Ballard may be able satisfactorily to establish arising out of savings effected in the works through his (Mr. Ballard's) agency."

It must be remembered that after that Mr. Ballard's salary was increased to £1,500 a-year. Now they were asked to vote £5,000 in addition to that. He thought that was rather too much of a good thing. He entirely disagreed with the hon. member for North Brisbane in the conclusion which he had arrived at. The hon. member was no doubt a very capable lawyer, but he had not had sufficient experience to enable him to judge of railway works.

Mr. FOOTE said he had a distinct recollection of the matter of Mr. Ballard's bonus being mentioned some years ago, but he thought the contract entered into with him was not that which had been read by the hon. member (Mr. Miles). He believed there was some specific arrangement entered into subsequently. Mr. Ballard, he thought, was a very good man for the position he occupied, and had been a good servant to the Government; one who had exercised good sound common-sense in the discharge of his duties. When the line from Ipswich to Toowoomba was being constructed, he remembered there was a place known as Ballard's Camp, and it must have been a considerable time after that line was constructed before Mr. Ballard could have been employed in his present capacity. There could be no comparison between the cost of lines constructed years ago and those which were being constructed now, because the conditions of the labour market were so different. The remarks as to the great mortality amongst the men employed on the Central line had very little to do with the question. When the Roma line was being constructed numbers of the men were seized with fever and ague, and hospitals had to be erected in adjacent townships for the accommodation of the sufferers. He could not think that the Minister for Works was in earnest. No doubt the hon. gentleman thoroughly appreciated the value of the services of Mr. Ballard as an engineer; but, at the same time, he could not help thinking that had the hon. gentleman been in opposition when such a proposition was brought forward he would have strenuously opposed it as wasting the money of the taxpayers. It was all very well to say that the money would come out of loan, but then it must be remembered that the interest would have to be paid, and ultimately the principal also. The proposition came especially ill from a professedly economical Ministry, who guarded the public purse even to the extent of discharging a few men, when £200 to £300 a-month would have been sufficient to keep them on until better times came. Such a Ministry should not bring forward a proposition to pay money to a man who had already been over-paid. If this bonus was to be granted to Mr. Ballard on the ground that he had saved the public money, there was not a public servant of high position who would not be able to claim a bonus on similar grounds. He had on a former occasion stated that he considered this system of entering into a contract in perpetuity as a very bad one, and on that occasion he was supported by the Minister for Works, who had a great objection to works of this kind being carried out by the Government. Had Mr. Ballard continued to occupy his position as engineer, and the works been let by contract, the construction of the line would probably have been much cheaper, many circumstances having been especially favourable. This was inserting

the thin end of the wedge, and he hoped the House would consider the matter very seriously before they assented to the proposition. If hon. members would look over "Votes and Proceedings," and add together the sums of money which had been voted to parties who were not entitled to them, they would see that the amount was a very large one indeed. He hoped the Committee would set its face against all motions of this sort.

Mr. BEATTIE said he had no wish to repudiate any agreement the Government might have entered into; but he wished to be perfectly satisfied that the agreement, whatever it was, had been carried out. A very warm discussion took place on the subject some years ago, in the course of which it was said that Mr. Ballard agreed with the Government to construct the line from Westwood to the Comet on the distinct understanding that the railway was to be constructed for less than £5,000 per mile; and that if he did that the granting of a bonus was to be fairly considered by the Government. He (Mr. Beattie), however, learned now that the railway had cost within a fraction of £6,000. The agreement made with Mr. Ballard, immediately after the removal to the South of the then Engineer-in-Chief for Northern railways, seemed to be that he was to receive £800 a-year salary; but it was found that he immediately afterwards assumed the position of Chief Engineer, at a salary of £1,500. Mr. Ballard had had sole control of the line, he had acted like a little king up there, and had not had much to complain of. To such an extent had his expenditure been uncontrolled that attention had been called to the fact that no audit had been made of the accounts, and, as a consequence, defalcation had taken place. He, however, believed that Mr. Ballard was a strictly honourable man, and that he had carried out his work well; but until it could be shown that an agreement had been entered into with Mr. Ballard, which had been carried out, he should be compelled to vote against the motion.

Mr. HAMILTON said that some of those members who objected to the passing of this vote appeared to do so under the impression that Mr. Ballard was not entitled to any credit for the low cost at which he had constructed the line at present under discussion, because the country did not offer any engineering difficulties. If these gentlemen only took advantage of their passes and travelled over that line they would find their objection to granting him this sum on these grounds untenable, because a great portion of that country was ridgy and involved cutting—mountains had to be crossed, and numerous streams bridged over, which added considerably to the cost of the construction of that line. Those who were best qualified to form an opinion on each side of the House on this question were favourable to Mr. Ballard's obtaining the grant. The present leader of the Opposition, who was Minister for Works in the last Government, supported the present Minister for Works in the matter. The member for Fortitude Valley had just alleged, as a reason for not supporting the vote, that he was under the impression that the Government had made a distinct bargain with Mr. Ballard to give him a bonus only on the condition that he constructed railways under five thousand pounds a-mile. If that was the member's real reason for opposing the vote, he should satisfy him that such a bargain never existed, by reading to him what the bargain really was, and, in connection with this, he might mention it was made subsequent to the extract from a letter which the member for Darling Downs had just read, and implied was the only ground on which Mr. Ballard was

entitled to the bonus. The memo. he alluded to was the following :—

"Memo. from Secretary for Works for Executive action—

"Department of Works,

"24 September, 1872.

"The Secretary for Public Works recommends the foregoing for approval, and also that the following understanding be recorded as promised to Mr. Ballard in letter of 18 September, 1872 :—

"That if, on the completion of the works, it is found they compare favourably in point of economy and efficiency with existing railways in the colony, Parliament shall be asked to grant to Mr. Ballard, by way of reward, such a sum as the Government may deem a substantial recognition of his services in addition to the salary and allowances already agreed to.

"Ministers recommend."

According to a Royal commission about that time railways were then costing over £9,000 a-mile. Mr. Ballard had performed his part of the agreement, and he should certainly support the Government to fulfil theirs.

Mr. FRASER said this was not the first time that this bargain with Mr. Ballard had been under the consideration of this House. He was under the disadvantage of not having heard the basis upon which the Minister for Works had founded his proposal. It would, however, be admitted on all hands that the nature of the contract was a thoroughly vicious one; in fact, the terms of it were dictated by Mr. Ballard to the Minister of the day and accepted by him. When hon. members remembered that Mr. Ballard, at an early stage of the negotiation, estimated the value of his own services at £800 per annum, and suggested that the Government should in course of time advance his salary to £1,000, and that now he had been for some time receiving considerably more than that, they would probably agree that Mr. Ballard could expect very little further consideration. It must also be remembered that the basis of the bargain was very favourable to Mr. Ballard. The railways already constructed had been carried out at an extravagant rate per mile, and any competent man like Mr. Ballard, notwithstanding the engineering difficulties he might have to contend with, would have no difficulty whatever in constructing a line to compare favourably with the railways which had been previously constructed. The cost of constructing the line between Ipswich and Brisbane, for instance, was extravagant to the verge of absurdity, and was only to be accounted for on the supposition of the grossest mismanagement in the whole matter. Admitting that Mr. Ballard had accomplished what he had proposed to do, the question arose upon what ground he would be entitled to the £5,000 after having received £1,400 to £1,500 per year for many years. He did not deny that Mr. Ballard was entitled to have his claims considered by the Ministry and the House, but he felt quite certain that if the Minister for Works had been sitting on the Opposition side of the House he would have thoroughly canvassed the vote, and would probably have opposed it to the utmost. Without detracting from the merits of Mr. Ballard as an engineer, he would submit that, considering that Mr. Ballard had for many years received a salary in excess of that paid to the Engineer-in-Chief, the Committee should pause before giving the liberal bonus proposed by the Ministry. It should be opposed if for no other reason than to mark the disapprobation with which the Committee regarded such contracts. He did not believe there was anything at the time to justify the contract: there were any number of competent engineers who would have undertaken the work for a fair and reasonable salary, and carried it out as efficiently, satisfactorily, and

substantially as it had been carried out under Mr. Ballard.

Mr. HORWITZ said that as Mr. Ballard had been appointed at £800 a-year, and had been for a number of years receiving £1,500, it appeared to him that Mr. Ballard had been getting a bonus at the rate of about £700 a-year. A public servant should be treated in the same way as the servant of a private employer, and, looking at the matter from that point of view, Mr. Ballard ought to be very well satisfied. No doubt the Minister for Works would find employment for him as long as he was able to do it properly, and if he thought he could make more money by carrying out contracts on his own account he had better say so and leave the public service. It was well known that a number of people were always trying to get into the public service, and when they did get in they seemed to think that all the revenue of the colony belonged to them, and that they could treat the public as they liked.

Mr. DICKSON said that, if a distinct promise had been made to Mr. Ballard that he should receive special remuneration on condition of proving that he had constructed the line from Westwood to the Comet at a cheaper rate than that at which previously existing lines had been made, then he thought the Committee ought to consider the claim entirely apart from the consideration of the remuneration Mr. Ballard received as Chief Engineer of the Northern Railways. He could not accept the argument that, because Mr. Ballard had subsequently occupied a better position and received a larger remuneration than previously, his claim on the ground of economical construction should be entirely ignored. Mr. Ballard based his claim upon an understanding arrived at on the 18th September, 1872: that if, on the completion of the works, it could be shown that they compared favourably in point of economy and efficiency with the existing railways Parliament should be asked to grant a sum of money as a substantial recognition of his services in addition to salary and allowances already agreed to. But then Mr. Ballard proceeded to state that he did not lay claim to any particular amount, but would leave that in the hands of Parliament. He (Mr. Dickson) was quite sure that Mr. Ballard, while he considered himself entitled to recognition, did not wish to press his claim upon the consideration of the House unless it could be fully and completely substantiated. He did not feel disposed to agree with those who said that Mr. Ballard might have no claim. There was no doubt that he had constructed the railway under great difficulties, and possibly he might be able on paper to show that less money had been expended on that line than other lines simultaneously constructed. It was well known, however, that the Central line was constructed on a cheaper principle than other lines made about that time. His opinion was that Mr. Ballard had not yet substantiated any claim; but, at the same time, he thought it was a matter that well deserved further investigation. He would suggest that it would be wiser on the part of the Government, and fairer towards Mr. Ballard, if this motion were now withdrawn and a select committee appointed at the earliest convenient moment next session to investigate the matter fully and report. He felt sure that many hon. members would then feel more inclined to consider the matter on its merits. He gave every credit to those hon. members who were satisfied with the claims of Mr. Ballard, but so much antiquity had accumulated about the subject that more investigation was required. It was not a question of party. All hon. members

would admit that Mr. Ballard had done good service to the country, and his (Mr. Dickson's) sympathies were entirely given to the encouragement of men of professional abilities who had constructed railways in a part of the country where the engineering difficulties were very considerable. If the Government now pressed the matter to a division he should feel disposed to consider the claim as not yet proven. He should wish it, however, to be distinctly understood that his eyes were open to the fact that the claim might be substantiated. If the Government withdrew the motion for further inquiry, as he had recommended, the position of Mr. Ballard in the matter would be more satisfactory than it would be if the motion were made and negatived.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said the purport of the memorandum read by the hon. member for Darling Downs appeared to have been conveyed to Mr. Ballard by Mr. Herbert by letters of the 28th July, 1872, and the 18th August, in the same year. In those letters Mr. Herbert said that in addition to the salary named (£800) the Government would be prepared to consider a claim for a percentage on the savings effected by Mr. Ballard as compared with the cost of other railways in the colony on the completion of the works, and on satisfactory proof being given that the savings had accrued. That was the essence of the so-called contract: first, that the works should be completed, and secondly, that the saving effected should be satisfactorily demonstrated. Up to the present time the Committee had not been furnished with any proof that the savings had been really effected, though that should form the basis of any calculation with regard to the value of the services which Mr. Ballard was supposed to have rendered. Mr. Ballard, however, was not altogether satisfied with the terms of Mr. Herbert's letters, and two or three telegrams passed. On the 17th August, 1872, Mr. Ballard wrote to the Commissioner for Railways. In that letter he pointed out what he called the stumbling-blocks in the way of the agreement. In the first place, he said that his ambition was to be appointed Engineer-in-Chief, with all the authority which that title could give. From the first, Mr. Ballard had been dictatorial about his claims, and the Committee had a perfect right to know what those claims really amounted to. Since the agreement was made, and from that time, Mr. Ballard had been receiving a salary of £1,500 a-year, or in all £3,500; more than the original salary of £800 a-year. And he thought that was a very substantial recognition in advance of that gentleman's services. Seeing that Mr. Ballard had been so handsomely treated, he failed to see upon what grounds his claim for an additional sum of £5,000 was based.

Mr. FRASER trusted that the suggestion of the hon. member (Mr. Dickson) would be accepted, and the whole question referred to a select committee next session for further investigation and report. If Mr. Ballard's claim was a just one, it would not place him in a worse position; and if he was not entitled to it, it was only fair that hon. members should be enabled to come to a proper conclusion on the subject. As to Mr. Ballard being the author of cheap railways, he believed the colony was greatly more indebted to the present Minister for Works, and to the agitation that had taken place in the House.

Question put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 18.

Messrs. Palmer, McIlwraith, Macrossan, Perkins, Cooper, Amhurst, Douglas, Norton, Weld-Blundell, Beor, Stevens, Griffith, H. W. Palmer, Archer, Hamilton, Rea, Swanwick, and Price.

NOES, 12.

Messrs. Garrick, Dickson, O'Sullivan, Miles, Rutledge, Meston, Foote, Fraser, Macfarlane, Beattie, Horwitz, and Groom.

Question, therefore, resolved in the affirmative.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY moved that £1,300 be granted for the salary of the Agent-General in England.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that a further sum of £177 13s. 6d. be granted for *Hansard*—salaries and contingencies.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that a further sum of £116 1s. 11d. be granted for gas, Parliamentary Buildings.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that a further sum of £663 19s. 6d. be granted to the Colonial Secretary's Department.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that a further sum of £4,535 10s. 2d. be granted for Police, Gaols, and Reformatories.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he wished to draw the attention of the Colonial Secretary to a state of things among the warders at St. Helena which required looking into, and which was anything but conducive to the efficient discharge of duty. The case he particularly wished to refer to was that of a warder named Sneyd, who had been dismissed by a trumped-up case got up against him by another warder named Hamilton and a prisoner named Halliday, a man of most disreputable character, whom Sneyd had been obliged to have flogged. Such a fact revealed a state of things that ought to be inquired into.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he believed he knew a good deal more about St. Helena than the hon. member. He was responsible for the management of the prison, and was perfectly satisfied with the way things were going on there. Warder Sneyd was not the first, nor the fourth, nor the fifth warder who had been dismissed within the last twelve months; and a good many more would be dismissed if they did not mind what they were about. With the warders at present at St. Helena he was satisfied.

Mr. GRIFFITH asked what was the meaning of the £50 additional salary to the police magistrate at Townsville?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY replied that the police magistrate had that salary at the place from which he was moved, and police magistrates generally took their salaries with them.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that a further sum of £742 16s. 3d. be granted for Medical, Board of Health, and Government Printing.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that £2,532 19s. 4d. be granted for Charitable Allowances.

Mr. GRIFFITH said some of the items appeared very large ones. There was a sum of £862 down for Clermont Hospital, and £200 for the Rockhampton Benevolent Society, which was a new kind of item.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that although the amount seemed large, a portion of it, amounting to £5,334 9s. 3d., had lapsed. There was no limit to the arrangement that where funds were contributed to a hospital the Government must give double. These amounts

they were obliged to put on the Supplementary Estimates, although they had a large surplus on the whole vote of last year. The Benevolent Society at Rockhampton took the place of the Relief Board in Brisbane. The money voted for the Relief Board at Rockhampton was expended by the Ladies Benevolent Society, which, as he had often stated in that House, was one of the most useful and the best conducted societies in the colony.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that a further sum of £2,185 5s. 11d. be voted for Benevolent Asylum, Brisbane; Lunatic Asylum, Ipswich; Public Institutions; and Thursday Island, Harbour of Refuge.

Mr. DICKSON said he observed there was an item "in aid of schools of art." He did not object to the vote, but only to the meagre information given to the Committee. He should like to know to what schools of art the sum had been paid, and why such a large sum was necessitated on the Supplementary Estimates.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. gentleman ought to have remembered that a resolution was carried last session on the motion of the hon. member, Mr. Groom, that a sum should be placed on the Supplementary Estimates for schools of art at the rate of 10s. for every £1 subscribed; this was the money that was paid for that purpose.

Mr. GROOM said he would take that opportunity of asking if there was any probability of the new Asylum at Toowoomba being commenced? The hon. gentleman mentioned to a deputation that waited upon him the other day that the matter had not escaped his notice; but he (Mr. Groom) had heard that a portion of the money already voted for the building had been expended at Sandy Gallop instead. He believed that the Surgeon-Superintendent at Woogaroo was very anxious to have the Asylum at Toowoomba commenced for many reasons, and therefore he (Mr. Groom) would be glad to receive some information from the hon. gentleman.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the hon. member was mistaken in supposing that any portion of the money voted for the Toowoomba Asylum had been spent on Sandy Gallop; the money for which would come on on the next Supplementary Estimates. The Government had no intention to commence the asylum at Toowoomba until a further sum was put on the next loan, but the hon. member could make up his mind that the work would be done.

Mr. DICKSON said the Colonial Secretary had misunderstood him; he did not object to sums being paid to schools of art, but had only objected to not having any information respecting that particular item.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that a further sum of £8,714 1s. be voted for "Volunteers" and "Miscellaneous Services."

Mr. DICKSON asked whether the Government were in a position to give the actual expenditure in reference to the Sydney Exhibition, and also what the Melbourne Exhibition was likely to cost?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that all that information was laid on the table of the House and ordered to be printed on the 3rd of August last; but he had no objection to give the hon. member the information. He believed the expenses of the Sydney Exhibition would amount to £877 4s. 2d. in addition to what had already

been paid. A good many of the exhibits sent by this colony had been purchased by the Government and sent on to Melbourne for exhibition there. It was difficult to say what the expenses at Melbourne would be; but this he hoped, namely—that there would not be another Exhibition for ten years. £1,359 odd had been spent on the Melbourne Exhibition already, and about £2,000 more would be required. He might tell hon. members that the cost of fitting up the Queensland Court had been very great, owing to its having been assigned a very bad position in the building. He would remark that the accounts so far received from Melbourne had been very satisfactory, and were considerably less than the travelling expenses in connection with the Sydney Exhibition.

Mr. GRIFFITH asked how many copies of "Wilkinson's Magistrates' Guide" were purchased by the Government?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he could not remember, but what were calculated to be sufficient. They were bought at trade prices, or 25 per cent. on the cost of publication.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that a further sum of £1,984 15s. 9d. be voted for salaries, &c. in connection with the "Administration of Justice."

Mr. GRIFFITH asked what was the object in making the appointment of interpreter for the aborigines a permanent one?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. Beor) said it was previously very often found difficult to obtain the services of an interpreter. He believed there was only one competent interpreter in the city, and when he was required it was sometimes impossible to obtain his services. He was informed that this £100 was less than was previously paid in fees for one year when the interpreter was only paid for those occasions on which his services were required.

Mr. RUTLEDGE thought the Colonial Secretary would do well to make an exception in the case of the German Interpreter at Brisbane, who had been long engaged in discharging the duties of interpreter, and who was invaluable as an interpreter, as he was also able to give the court a great deal of useful information about the Germans in cases of appeals. To his knowledge that interpreter had been attending the courts for days interpreting for German people who without him would be unable to make known their wants. He thought, therefore, that the German Interpreter should be made an exception to the rule recently established by the Government, and should be made a permanent officer.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had no objection to the German Interpreter being attached permanently to the Brisbane court, provided he gave all his time to it; but he did not believe in paying a man for kicking his heels about a court for a day doing nothing.

Mr. GROOM asked if the same answer would apply to the German Interpreter at Toowoomba?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he was not aware that one was wanted there, but he had ordered that one should be paid for whenever required.

Mr. GROOM said that even on Tuesday last there was a case in the court which broke down in consequence of there not being an interpreter. Toowoomba was an assize town, and had a district court four times a year.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that a further sum of £4,462 5s. 11d. be voted for the Department of Public Instruction.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he noticed that there was £350 put down in addition to £500 voted in the Estimates-in-Chief for the orphanage at Townsville—was that for a building?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that part of the amount was for increasing the building, which had been doubled in size and had been fenced in. The number of children had been increasing at the same rate as in Brisbane, but instead of having them sent down he considered it was better to keep them at the Northern ports. The orphanage at Mackay was established by a Roman Catholic priest and maintained at his own expense for a considerable time; but it was now a licensed orphanage, and was visited periodically by the police magistrate there, who reported very favourably on the management of it.

Mr. REA said it appeared that the orphanages in Brisbane cost £7,900; in Rockhampton, £1,100; whilst for Townsville a sum of £850 had been voted. He should like to know whether the proportion of population justified such a sum as that.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that a further sum of £3,335 4s. 5d. be voted for services in connection with the department of the Colonial Treasurer.

Mr. DICKSON asked whether since the Estimates-in-Chief were under consideration the Government had received any advices from the Admiralty on the subject of surveys, or whether it was the intention of the Government to open a correspondence with the Lords of the Admiralty with a view to their continuing the survey.

The PREMIER said the matter was fully explained when the Estimates-in-Chief were discussed.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that a further sum of £10,201 4s. 1d. be granted for services in connection with the Department of Public Lands.

Mr. GRIFFITH said there were many items that required some explanation under the head of "Miscellaneous." For instance, "Refund to C. W. Cox;" "Compensation, H. Porter, Toombul, for readjustment of survey;" and then, "Law costs—McDonald v. Tully"—"re Simpson's selections."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that he had not expected to be asked for information, or he would have come prepared with all the details; but with regard to Cox's case, he was a selector on the Logan, and had his selection misappropriated, and this sum of £42 18s. was given to him as compensation. Hon. members would remember that the case was brought forward by the hon. member for the Logan last session. With regard to the compensation to Porter for readjustment of survey—speaking from memory—he believed the man was entitled to the money, as a wrong had been done to him. As to the costs in McDonald v. Tully, he supposed they went partly into the hon. gentleman's pocket. He could not account for particular items, but vouchers were sent to the Lands Office by Little and Browne, and he supposed that everything was done in proper order.

Mr. DICKSON asked if that was to be the last of "McDonald v. Tully"—whether there was to be any finality to that case, or whether it was to run on for another long term, and there was to be more litigation. He should be glad to learn that all the money in connection with the recent verdict would be paid, so that there would be an end to the matter.

Mr. GRIFFITH asked what law costs there were in connection with Simpson's selections, and *re* "Nerang Swamp."

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he could not speak with certainty on the subject, but he believed the swamp formed part of the land of the Manchester Cotton Company. As to "Simpson's selections," he was perfectly warranted in saying that they had no reference to the hon. member for Dalby.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he strongly suspected that they had, although in saying that he might appear to doubt the correctness of the hon. gentleman's statement. He remembered being asked to advise the Government in connection with the matter; but, not thinking it desirable that he should do so, he declined. There were probably some large expenses, but it seemed a lot of money for merely advising.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said there was an investigation at Toowoomba, which was very expensive, as lawyers made their own charges, and there was no option but to pay whatever they asked. There was an inquiry there about a Mr. Simpson's selection. Mr. Real and the Attorney-General were there, but the country had been recouped to some extent by the lands which had been forfeited.

Mr. DICKSON again asked what the intentions of the Government were with respect to "Macdonald *versus* Tully?" Would the Premier inform the Committee whether this was the last time the sum would appear on the Estimates?

The PREMIER: Neither the Premier nor the Minister for Lands can give the information, because the matter is not yet decided.

Mr. MILES was understood to ask the Minister for Lands what the intentions of the Government were with respect to the selectors' at Prairie? He had heard that the Government had notified that if they did not pay up their back rents the selections would be forfeited. He hoped this would not be so, because they were very deserving men who had been unfortunate through bad seasons. He hoped the Government would give them some little consideration, and grant them more time in which to pay their rents.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said that his aim had always been to do all he could to induce people to settle on the land. Rumours had been got about somehow that these persons who came from Victoria had been treated in a different way from other selectors in the country. He need not say that was not true. The men had been there something like three years, and with the exception of their deposit money they had paid nothing. He felt it was unfair that other selectors in the colony should be made to pay up, and he therefore instructed Mr. Hume to give them notice to pay. They, however, did nothing in the matter, and did not even make any excuse. He (Mr. Perkins) had been interviewed since, and a year's rent was offered: and as the object of the Government was to settle the people on the land and the selectors showed a desire to recognise the situation by paying something on account, he could only say that if they continued to show a determination to stick upon the land and cultivate it, they had no occasion to be alarmed or apprehensive.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said this was not at all a satisfactory answer. The men ought to know what they had to expect. The selectors were respectable men, who suffered severely from a succession of bad seasons. He had been told that some of them had paid 7s. 6d. an acre for their land, and others 30s., and that the land at 7s. 6d. an acre was really better than that for which the higher price was paid. The House ought to know what was to be done, and some principle should be laid down for their guidance.

when times were bad. After all, the Government and the country had the security of the lands, and his suggestion was that if these men paid 5 per cent. on the overdue balances the Government and the country should be satisfied. As it was, these selectors were really at the beck of the Ministry, and it was not right that they should be placed in that position at election times and so forth; they should be made independent by establishing the principle that until they recovered themselves they should only be called upon to pay 5 per cent. on the overdue balances. That would be forgiving nothing, but the owners would still pay what they owed in instalments.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said it would be cruel to encourage these selectors to believe that they would be dealt with in the way the hon. member suggested. The men did not complain. Calamities had overtaken them as they overtook other people, and what they now wanted was to have time. They took up their selections with their eyes open, and at present they were inclined to pay; but it was a pity if persons in the position of the hon. member raised their expectations and made them believe that they would get twenty or thirty years, grace—in fact, need never pay at all so long as they were ready with their 4 or 5 per cent. The selectors in question were industrious men, who were anxious and willing to pay, and as the turn of the tide was now at hand it was not fair for the hon. member for Stanley to delude them with false hopes. It was very easy to make such a suggestion as the hon. member had made in the House; it was quite a different thing to put it into practical operation. He did not like to hear a practical man like the member for Stanley make such a suggestion as this, because it might result in injuring the persons it was intended to benefit, and who at present were being really generously treated. Any man who desired to stick to his selection and pay up the rent would find that no forfeiture would take place. As to the value of the land and the hardships that fell upon the selectors—if there was any place where land could be taken up by selectors on better terms than in Queensland, he would like to know where it was.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he was quite willing to grant that the Minister for Lands was as desirous as any Minister could be of encouraging settlement on the land. It was a mistake, however, to believe that these selectors had not complained, because only within the last fortnight he had received letters of complaint. What he (Mr. O'Sullivan) had been urging was, that it would be the best way to all parties concerned to settle the manner in which they should be treated. He wanted to raise no false alarm; he was quite ready to believe that these farmers and settlers were inclined to pay up, and he was very glad to hear the assurance of the Minister for Lands that so long as they showed an inclination to do this they should not be disturbed, although, after all, it was only holding out an inducement for them not to pay at all. He still held that some fair and definite system should be adopted, and that the selectors should either be made to pay, or have a certain percentage on the balance due to the State.

The PREMIER said it was waste of time to discuss this matter in committee. What the hon. gentleman wanted was an alteration of the Land Act. What the Minister for Lands had to do was to carry out the law as it was.

Mr. REA said the statement made by the Minister for Lands was made in so loose a way that it would really give the idea that, no matter how backward the selectors were in paying their rents, nothing could be done against them. He

noticed that anything that took place on the Darling Downs secured immediate attention, but if it concerned the outside districts nothing was done. The hon. member for Stanley had spoken of the trials of the Darling Downs selectors, but he (Mr. Rea) had always understood that it was the most prosperous place in the colony. In the North they got no remission at all.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Just the same as in the South.

Mr. MILES was understood to say that he knew the selectors in question were anxious to pay what they could. They had had many difficulties to contend with, and as they were a good class of men it would be a pity if they were driven out of the colony. What they wanted was a little longer time. He himself was perfectly satisfied with the answer of the Minister for Lands, who had held out no hope that they would not be ultimately required to pay, but who had still said all that he could be expected to say.

Mr. GROOM said that, without wishing to prolong the discussion, he might state that the Minister for Lands brought forward the case of these selectors two years ago. The Minister was not to blame for the high rents, nor did he fix the land at 30s. an acre, but it was a most extravagant sum. The holders of the neighbouring stations got their land for 5s. an acre, and these unfortunate men were called upon to pay six times as much. Other land on the Downs had been reduced, and what he suggested was that these selectors should participate in the reductions, and have their selections reduced from 30s. to £1 an acre. He heard that one of the selectors, if called upon to pay the whole of his arrears, would have to pay £1,500; a thing that of course was utterly impossible. The man did not want, however, to shirk payment, but he wanted to know, now that the first good season out of four had set in, whether a reasonable time would be given to pay arrears. He (Mr. Groom) suggested to the Minister for Lands the advisability of reducing the price of the land—which was not worth more than 10s. an acre—from 30s. to £1.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that the sum of £11,140 be granted for Public Works.

Mr. BEATTIE said he noticed the sum put down of £542 as compensation for injuries. To what did this refer?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was for injuries sustained by a gentleman living at Ipswich, in consequence of a railway accident. The case went for arbitration before Judge Paul, and this was the amount awarded.

Mr. BEATTIE said he was informed that a week after the accident took place the man was walking about the streets of Ipswich. Still, if the matter went for arbitration he (Mr. Beattie) was quite satisfied.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the man was examined by three or four doctors, and he himself was quite satisfied with the justice of the award.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said the man in question had never thoroughly recovered from the effects of the accident, and never would.

After some further discussion,

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the sum of £1,197 was granted for commission and exchange, the sum having been omitted from last year's Estimates.

Mr. GRIFFITH: Might I ask the hon. the Premier whether there are to be any other Estimates this year besides the Loan Estimates?

The PREMIER : No.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Chairman left the chair, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

RAILWAY COMPANIES PRELIMINARY BILL.

The House resolved itself into Committee to consider the Council's amendment in this Bill.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the amendments in clauses 7 and 13 were agreed to.

The PREMIER moved that the amendment omitting clause 15—"employment of Asiatics or Africans—restrictions"—be disagreed to. He considered the clause an important one for the reason that it was the intention of the Government—no matter what proposals might be put before them—to insist that part of the agreement should be in accordance with the clause. The feeling of the Government was that contractors should not be allowed to import Chinese or Africans beyond the limit stated, and he was sure that was the feeling of a majority of the House, and would be for a long time to come. It was far better that intending contractors should know that from the outset. The same end might possibly be served without the clause, but with that provision distinctly before them in the Act, contractors could not have the idea that they were going to be allowed to import Chinese labour wholesale.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that the amendments in clause 16 be agreed to. He said the first amendment was merely a correction, and the other seemed to be only a fair one—it was that if any company took land from a lessee the latter should be entitled to claim for improvements on it.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that the amendment in clause 19 be agreed to. The amendment was to the effect that contractors should be allowed to import materials free during the construction of the line—and not for five years after the line was completed, as the clause in its unaltered form proposed. The amendment was in accordance with his intentions when he got the Bill framed.

Question put and passed.

The amendment in clause 22 was agreed to.

The PREMIER moved that the amendment in clause 25 be agreed to.

Mr. GRIFFITH pointed out that, as amended, the clause was inconsistent, as the first part of it referred to any persons committing an offence, and the second provided that certain parties only should be liable. The intention was that anyone connected with the railway refusing to give up peaceable possession of it should be liable to the penalties prescribed.

The PREMIER agreed that the clause, as amended, was illogical.

Amendment disagreed to.

The amendments in clauses 26, 34, 35, and 38 were agreed to.

The PREMIER moved that the amendments in clause 39 be agreed to.

Mr. GRIFFITH objected to the amendments. The word "must" was inserted purposely, and the word "shall" would not convey so well what was intended. The Council had struck out the word "shall" wherever they possibly could, but had put it in a place where it was most objectionable.

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The PREMIER said he could not see how the sense was to be altered by the substitution of the word "shall" for "must."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that at the time when the hon. gentleman proposed the clause he thought the form was unusual. The form was more suited to a proposal for a contract.

Mr. GRIFFITH : That's what the Bill is.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : But the Bill in other respects is in the usual form of an Act of Parliament.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed and the Chairman reported the resolution of the Committee.

The report was adopted, and the Bill was ordered to be returned to the Legislative Council with the following message:—

MR. PRESIDING CHAIRMAN,

The Legislative Assembly having had under consideration the Legislative Council's amendments in the Railway Companies Preliminary Bill—

Disagree to the amendment which proposed to omit clause 15, because it is of importance that intending contractors should know the limits for the employment of Chinese.

Disagree to the amendment in clause 25, because it is expedient to provide a penalty against all persons committing the offence contemplated by the clause.

And agree to the amendments in the remaining part of the Bill.

The PREMIER moved the adjournment of the House.

Mr. GRIFFITH asked what business would be taken to-morrow?

The PREMIER said that after the motion of which he had given notice, and the formal Government business, had been disposed of, the remainder of the sitting would be devoted to the business of private members.

Question put and passed, and the House adjourned at twenty-three minutes past 10 o'clock.