

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 24 AUGUST 1881

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 24 August, 1881.

Petitions.—Formal Business.—Railway Extension from Charters Towers to Hughenden.—Adjournment.

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

PETITIONS.

Mr. H. PALMER (Kennedy) presented a petition from the merchants, tradespeople, miners, and other residents at Charters Towers, praying for the alteration of the proposed site of the Railway Station at that place. He also laid upon the table, for the information of hon. members who were not acquainted with the locality, a tracing of the line proposed and that desired.

Petition read and received.

Mr. MACFARLANE presented a petition from certain inhabitants of Ipswich, praying for the introduction of a Bill to prohibit the opening of public-houses for the sale of intoxicating liquors on Sundays.

Petition read and received.

Mr. TYREL presented a petition from the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, asking leave to introduce a Bill empowering them to act in this colony. All the requirements of the Standing Orders had been complied with.

Petition read and received.

Mr. GROOM presented a petition from certain vigneron in the district of Drayton and Too-womba, with reference to the Distillation Bill now before the House.

Petition read and received.

FORMAL BUSINESS.

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

That there be laid on the table of the House, a Return from the Registrar of the Supreme Court, showing an Analysis of the various sums included in Bills of Costs, both before and after the Judicature Act; also, showing the amounts claimed by Plaintiffs, and the amounts awarded by Juries.

RAILWAY EXTENSION FROM CHARTERS TOWERS TO HUGHENDEN.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Macrossan) said, in rising to move the adoption of the plans of the Northern Railway from Charters Towers to Hughenden, he had simply to remind hon. members that this railway was authorised in 1879, and the necessary sum was then voted for its construction to 130 miles beyond Charters Towers. The distance which he intended to move was more than 130 miles—it was 158 miles; but he had every reason to believe that the money voted for the 130 miles would cover the distance of 158 miles, and, probably, something more. The line, in starting from Charters Towers, went through very broken country for the first ten miles, and across several creeks, and after that, for a distance of fourteen miles, the work was very light—in fact, it was simply surface formation until it got to two creeks, branches of Poulathanga Creek, and the creek itself at a distance of 105 miles. From thence to 110 miles beyond Townsville it was still easy until it came to a valley near the crossing of Balfe's Creek. Then for thirty to forty miles it was easy again; and in reality, taking it on the whole, the country travelled through from Charters Towers to Hughenden was comparatively easy. Even at the crossing of the Main Dividing Range the work was comparatively easy, although the range was crossed at a height of 1,400 feet above the sea-level. Hon. members would understand that this was not the same as the great coast range; it was more a plateau than a range, and was ascended easily and gradually. The leading gradient on the line was 1 in 50, except in a few spots here and there where it was 1 in 33. In such places the gradients would not interfere with the working of the traffic, being what were called compensating gradients; that was, the impetus going down on one side would take the engine and train with the usual amount of steam up the 1-in-33 gradient, so that the traffic would be equally as good on the 1-in-33 gradients as on the 1 in 50. He thought he could guarantee to hon. members that the whole distance right through to Hughenden from Charters Towers would be constructed under £2,200 a mile—probably not more than £2,000; and adding to that what they might call the present rates of rails and fastenings required for the permanent way, the whole line would be constructed for less than £3,000 per mile. At the time the estimate was made out they were obliged to pay £874 per mile for permanent way; but since then they had made contracts for permanent way material at a much cheaper rate, which reduced the cost to about £600 per mile, so that the distance right through, with permanent way added, would probably not cost more than

£2,800 per mile. The line brought the Cape River Gold Fields into communication with Townsville and Charters Towers at a distance of about six or seven miles from one of the main camps of the goldfield. It went through country which, although not perhaps fitted so well for agriculture as portions of the country beyond Hughenden, still was of a fair average nature, and avoided that bad country which lay still further to the north. He thought, as the question of constructing this line was fully debated in 1879, it was unnecessary for him to go into that question now; but he had simply to assure hon. members that the guarantee which was given by himself and the engineer at that time—that the line would be made for £3,000 a mile—was very likely to be carried out. From Townsville right through to Hughenden—although portions of the line from Townsville to Charters Towers cost considerably more than £3,000 a mile, owing to the ranges and rivers which had to be crossed between those two spots—yet, taking it right through, it would not cost more than £3,000 a mile, and probably somewhat less. He had, therefore, great pleasure in moving—

1. That the House approves of the Plans, Sections, and Book of Reference of the Extension of the Northern Railway from Charters Towers to Hughenden, as laid upon the table of the House, 9th August, 1881.

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

Before he sat down he was reminded that although the motion carried in 1879 stated that the line was to be taken west of Charters Towers, this was not practicable. If that were done the line would be taken to a plateau from which there would have been no possible descent; therefore they had been obliged to take it a little south of west instead of due west.

Mr. DICKSON said the motions standing in the name of the hon. Minister for Works were of such a character in connection with railway construction that they deserved more notice than would be required by merely formal notices of the continuation of certain lines, because he was of opinion that the policy of the Government in connection with the construction of railways at the present time opened up a very wide field for general discussion—a field that had not yet been opened since the session commenced. He was inclined to think that the motions which were now put before the House by the Minister for Works afforded a better opportunity for the whole Railway policy of the Government to be discussed, than merely the approving of the extension of one particular railway like this. The Minister for Works had not given the House that amount of information in connection with this matter that hon. members were entitled to, but had simply alluded to his ability to extend this line of railway to Hughenden—a distance of 158 miles, instead of the 130 miles which had been previously set down in the Loan Estimates to be constructed. The mere question of the policy of extending any particular line of railway at the present time was not all that deserved their consideration, but they ought to take into consideration the whole expenditure under which the colony was pledged to the extension of these three trunk lines of railway. On turning to the Loan Estimates of 1879, they would find provision had been made for three trunk lines of railway to be simultaneously constructed. He thought it was the duty of the Government at the present time not only to extend these two lines which they proposed to do, but to give satisfactory explanation why the provision was not extended to the other line. Why was not the Southern and Western Railway extended equally with the other lines of railway? He was aware that it would be retorted—but it was a very

disingenuous retort—that the action with respect to that line came from the Opposition side of the House, in suggesting to the Government of the day the propriety of delaying the acceptance of tenders for the construction of the line until the return of the Premier from England; but nothing whatever was said by the members of that deputation which could justify the Government in extending the other two lines and holding over the Western extension. It was a fact that the Government had elected to retard the making of one of the lines, with a desire to acquire popularity in those portions of the colony where they were trusted. He thought it was the duty of the Legislature to point out to the Government of the day the impolicy of favouring any one district of the colony, or to prejudice another district where equal parliamentary provision had been made for the construction and prosecution of public works therein. The hon. Minister might also have informed them, in connection with this Northern Railway, the actual expenditure on the line itself so far as it was yet constructed, including the bridge over the Burdekin. He recollected that the sum of £300,000 was provided for this railway—£200,000 for the construction of the line from Townsville towards Charters Towers, and another £100,000 for the bridge over the Burdekin. He observed that the sum of £71,000 remained as an unexpended balance out of this loan vote of £300,000, to build a line from Townsville to Charters Towers, including the bridge over the Burdekin, on the 30th June last; and he thought it would be satisfactory if the Ministry had informed the House that the provision of £300,000 made for the construction of this line was sufficient for that purpose. In addition to that sum of £300,000, the Northern Railway had received a grant of £390,000 for the 130 miles west from Charters Towers, at £3,000 per mile, voted in 1879, equally with the Southern and Central lines; and he found that of that sum £388,000 remained unexpended at the 30th June last. The hon. gentleman had told them that the construction of the line beyond Charters Towers would be carried out in an equally inexpensive manner as the portion at present under construction. But he (Mr. Dickson) had had representations made to him that such was not the case, as the line went to a considerable extent through broken country, and a greater expense would accordingly be incurred than in the past; and he considered that the 158 miles, which was now before the House, would be very economically constructed if the money now on hand would suffice for it. It would, moreover, have been satisfactory if the Treasurer had been able to inform the House that, in connection with this extension, the sum of money now at his disposal was sufficient, because they had lately had the same answer given to deputations here and in Gympie that the credit of the colony was actually exhausted, and that there was no possibility of their going into the market to borrow any more money for the construction of any line of railway; and that, until the Transcontinental Railway Bill had been agreed to by the House, he would not commit himself to the expenditure of any further sums of loan money whatever for railway purposes. He (Mr. Dickson) could not regard this motion for the expenditure of money on the Northern line apart from the subsequent motions on the paper, some of which involved the expenditure of large sums of money which had yet to be raised. It would be satisfactory to learn whether the Government intended to borrow the money from the public creditor for the construction of these lines, or, if not, what policy had been devised. Again, it would have been better for the Minister to have informed the House whether this extension of line was to be con-

nected with the transcontinental railway. There was a feeling existing that these two lines were to be extended for the special purpose of being connected with the transcontinental line of railway when it was constructed. He considered that it was incumbent upon the Government to explain to the House, and to give a satisfactory explanation to the country, of their desire to press on these two lines of railway when it was as evidently their desire, with a parliamentary provision for another main trunk line, to keep back that line as far as possible. He had not risen to object to this line or any other line, but he considered that they should have more information in the direction he had indicated. They ought to know more of the views of the Treasurer—whether he intended to stop short when his funds ran short in any particular line, or proposed to borrow from the public creditor; for, if his statements to the deputations were to be relied upon, they were not in a position to take the latter course. It was an entire change in their policy which would have to be approved by the House, that they should be asked to consent to the construction of lines of railway for which there was no money yet voted. It was unnecessary for him further to occupy the time of the House. He had no desire to retard the business of the country in connection with the extension of this or any other railway; but at the same time he maintained that the Government ought to show their sincerity in regard to railway construction by proceeding equally with these three lines for which equal provision had been made by Parliament. It was also incumbent upon the Government to relieve the country from the uncertainty as to what the Treasurer would do when his funds fell short, for there was an apprehension which they laboured under at present—unnecessarily he thought—on the subject of these lines, as it had been stated that it would be impracticable for them to borrow further in the money market at the present time. He did not think so. He believed that their credit never stood higher; but at the same time he contended an explanation ought to be given of the words of the Premier—that their credit was exhausted, that they were no longer able to borrow money for the construction of a single line of railway, and that until the land-grant system and transcontinental railway policy had been accepted by the House he would not commit the Government to any further expenditure on a single line of railway. He thought these expressions deserved the consideration of hon. members, and an explanation from the members of the Government; and further, that the Government should explain the extraordinary rapidity with which these plans, sections, and books of reference were got ready, while those relating to the Southern and Western line remained altogether in abeyance. He trusted that the Government would give them an explanation.

Mr. STEVENSON said that he was very glad to find that the hon. member was not going to oppose the passing of this motion of the hon. the Minister for Works. Some of the remarks, however, which the hon. gentleman had made were very amusing to hon. members on this side of the House. One of these was a complaint that the extension of the Southern and Western Railway had been stopped. Now he had no doubt that it would be very fresh in the recollection of hon. members why that railway was stopped, and who took the first step to have it stopped. They could not forget how a deputation from the residents of Brisbane—headed, he believed, by the leader of the Opposition, Mr. S. W. Griffith, and twelve other members of the House, with several other important residents of the city—interviewed the Colonial

Secretary—he thought it was the Colonial Secretary—and well he remembered the arguments they used to bring about the stoppage of the railway, and also the reply they got. He could not help thinking that it was hard that now the railway was stopped they should complain of it after they had contributed so largely to having it stopped. He thought it came badly from the hon. member to object to the Minister not carrying on the extension in the same way as the other two which had been spoken of. Another point alluded to by the hon. gentleman was that some things had been said at Gympie and another place with regard to no more money being spent on extension of railways until the land-grant system was adopted by the House. That statement was all very well as far as it went, but, so far as he remembered, Ministers had not referred to these lines but only to new lines. The lines which the hon. Minister was now asking approval of and adoption were lines for which the money had already been got, for it was included in the three-million loan. That, he thought, was sufficient to say on that subject. The hon. Minister for Works never said anything of the sort about it at Gympie, and the Premier said nothing about these present extensions. They knew that the three-million loan was obtained for these very extensions which the Minister now asked to be allowed. Another thing the hon. gentleman wanted to know was whether this line was to be connected with the transcontinental railway. The hon. gentleman wanted to know too much. He wanted to know a great deal more than the Ministry would tell him at present—possibly a great deal more than they were in a position to give—and until they wished to give the information he would not get it. Another point to which the hon. gentleman paid attention was the extra twenty-eight miles of extension which the Minister had mentioned in moving this resolution—158 miles instead of 130 miles. But the Minister had also explained that he expected the same sum of money would be sufficient to construct the 158 miles as he had previously expected to have been taken to construct the 130 miles; so that if the money lasted out he did not see how they could complain. He did not suppose the Minister would go further than the original distance unless the money lasted; in fact, he could not do so without the sanction of Parliament. The proposed extension of the Northern Railway from Charters Towers to Hughenden was a very useful one. It would open up a valuable country which was now almost lying dormant, and which would be one of the most important districts in the colony.

Mr. McLEAN said that the hon. gentleman who had just spoken was quite at sea in the remarks that he had made. He said they were simply asked to carry out what was voted, when the line suggested now went twenty-eight miles further; and they had only the Minister's statement that it would be made for a certain sum of money—he believed, about £2,800 per mile. He did not think the Minister had stated whether that was his engineer's estimate, or only his own idea. If the hon. gentleman had come down to the House and had said, "Here are the surveys and other particulars, and it is estimated upon them that the railway can be constructed for such-and-such, with so much for the extra twenty-eight miles," he could have understood him. But the hon. gentleman only came with the bald statement that they could make twenty-eight miles further than the length at first stated for the same amount of money. He was not satisfied with this statement. The deputation about the Southern Railway had been referred to, but they must remember that at that time the loan had not been

floated. Tenders had been called for the construction of the lines, and all the deputation asked was that the three lines should be carried out simultaneously. Now they found that the Southern line was to be completely ignored, but that the extension of the Northern line was to be carried on. It would have been well for the Minister for Works to have given some reason why the extension of 130 miles to the westward of Roma should not be carried out at the same time. It was not enough for them to be told that this was a part of the transcontinental railway. If such an arrangement had been at work, and the credit of the colony had been pledged, why should they not carry out the pledge? If they were in the hands of this syndicate, who were to have lands in the immediate neighbourhood of their principal inland towns, were they to have all the benefits before they spent sixpence on the railway? As far as he could judge, the Minister proposed to make this line of theirs, while at the same time they were to have the grants of land, for it was known by telegram from England that there were to be 10,000 acres near Roma, and 12,000 near Point Parker, for the construction of the transcontinental railway. This threw some light as to the reason why the Government were not taking action in carrying out what the House was pledged to—namely, the construction of 130 miles from Roma westward. He had no objection to the construction of this line, but looked to have heard a little more as to the probable income to be derived from it, and whether it would justify their undertaking its construction. Was there any hope of this line paying? When the late Government had moved for the construction of the Maryborough and Gympie Railway, the members of the present Government had stated that it would never pay for grease to the wheels. Now they wanted to know if this line would pay for grease to the wheels.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: You have got it now.

Mr. McLEAN said it was not sufficient for the hon. the Colonial Secretary to bark in that way. They wanted intelligent information from the Government. They were the representatives of the people, and were not going to be barked at by the Colonial Secretary or any other member of the Government. They were the custodians of the public purse, and when they were asked for the money for a line of railway they ought to be satisfied about it, and to know what was the justification for their doing so; and it was the duty of the Government to give the information which the House was entitled to. He knew it was an omission on the part of the Minister, for had that hon. gentleman remembered it he would no doubt have given all the information; but the House had not got it, and they were entitled to it before they could give any support to the motion. The probability was that it would be a paying line. He thought it would be just as well also that they should know what the intention of the Government was with regard to the construction of other lines of railway. It was easy for the Government to say that they were acceding to what the House had already pledged itself to—the construction of the Southern, Central, and Northern lines of railway. The Premier ought to have been prepared with a financial statement, and to have given them some idea of how the Government intended to supply the cost of construction. They had heard of deputations and statements made on finances by the Government to the effect that there was no intention of further pledging the credit of the country in the construction of railways; and that if railways were to be made they were to be

made on the land-grant system. Supposing this twenty-eight miles, which exceeded the first estimate, should cost more than the £190,000 which was now available for this extension, would the Government go into the London market to borrow the money? He thought it would be as well if the Government would show their honesty of purpose in simultaneously carrying on the three lines of railway that this House had approved—namely, 130 miles from Roma, 130 miles of the Central line, and 130 miles of the Northern line. There was one matter which he thought the Minister had not taken into consideration. He told them that this extension would cost £2,800 per mile; but there was no doubt that the material would have to be carried a considerable distance, and the Government should have taken into consideration the carriage as well as the cost of material. He thought, if that matter had been taken into consideration, the cost of the line would exceed the amount approved by the House.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had not the slightest idea of attempting to argue with or reply to the hon. gentleman who had just addressed the House; he should leave that for the Minister for Works in his reply. What he desired to point out was this—that it was very evident, from the remarks of the hon. member for Logan, that he did not understand the question before the House one bit. His speech might have been suitable before the money was voted, but the question before the House was the plans and specification for an extension from Charters Towers to Hughenden. What had the speech of the hon. member got to do with that? The question was the specification now before the House; but instead of that the hon. member for Logan, as well as the hon. member for Enoggera, chose to travel back and make speeches that might have been highly proper when the money was being voted for these railways. They entirely misunderstood the question; that was self-evident. He wished to correct one error made by the hon. member for Logan with regard to the deputation that waited on him (the Colonial Secretary). The hon. member said the money was not then raised. Now, he (the Colonial Secretary) distinctly told the deputation that the money was raised, that they had plenty of money, and that they need not feel in the least uneasy as to the want of funds, and that was right; the money was raised, and they had plenty of it. The remarks of the hon. member showed that he knew nothing whatever about it. The hon. member for Enoggera talked about the enormous cost of a bridge over the Burdekin. Did not the hon. member know that the bridge had been built long ago? That had nothing whatever to do with this book of reference. This book referred to the line between Charters Towers and Hughenden, while the Burdekin was right between Charters Towers and Townsville. He thought the hon. member ought to look at the map before he came to the House and talked of the enormous expense of a bridge over the Burdekin. It was not on this line at all.

Mr. DE SATGE said he was glad the Minister for Works had not put these lines *in globo*, as it would allow of discussion and of opposing those they did not approve. With regard to the adoption of the plans and specification for the line from Charters Towers to Hughenden, he must support it. The Minister for Works desired to forward the extension of that line, and also to push forward the extension of the Central line—due, no doubt, to the advocacy of the representatives of Central district constituencies. At the same time, no finer dis-

trict could be opened up than the one included in this proposal. It might not be known that the improvement in the trade there had been within the last two years an improvement which warranted this line infinitely more than when the extension was proposed two years ago. The extension would eventually tap a vital part of the district through which the Central Railway passed; and that was a grave question to be considered in this House by the representatives of the Northern and Central constituencies. He should reserve his remarks on the general policy of the Railway question for another opportunity, and he also reserved to himself the right of opposing several of the lines that the Minister for Works now asked the House to approve of.

Mr. FRASER said he had no intention of discussing this particular line; but he wished to refer to the fact that there was one point which the Colonial Secretary had failed to reply to, and that was the reason why the Southern and Western Railway had not been carried on simultaneously with the Central and Northern extensions. Allusion had been made to a deputation which waited on the Colonial Secretary some considerable time ago. The object of that deputation was to arrest the progress of all the lines.

MINISTERIAL MEMBERS: No, no!

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FRASER said he believed he was correct. Why did not the Government, in arresting the progress of the Southern and Western line, also arrest the progress of the Northern and Central lines, or else have gone on with all of them? Nothing satisfactory had been submitted to hon. members to show why the Southern line had not been proceeded with. The money had been voted, and was still in hand; and he believed, from the great improvements that had been made, that that line should be extended as well as any other line. He could not speak of himself, but he was informed that the line now stopped just when it was entering that part of the country which would largely contribute to make it remunerative. He was convinced that, were the Southern and Western line extended beyond Roma, they would have largely increased returns from that fine country. He did not think that hon. members, especially on this side of the House, interested in the southern part of the colony, had had from the Minister a satisfactory explanation of why the Southern line had not been extended.

Mr. WALSH could not agree with the Colonial Secretary altogether. No doubt the matter before the House was the consideration of the plans and specifications for the extension from Charters Towers to Hughenden; but, at the same time, he thought the House should know why the Southern line had not been extended simultaneously. He was afraid the tinkering of the Opposition had something to do with it, as he remembered that the deputation to the Colonial Secretary asked him to stop the line. For his part, as an old colonist, he regretted exceedingly that this line had not been extended long since. There was good land in the immediate vicinity of Roma, but between Mitchell Downs and Charleville the land was perfectly useless; and he was certain that, if the Government expected that any syndicate would undertake the construction of that line on the land-grant system, they would be very much mistaken; no men possessed of the slightest particle of common sense would undertake the work. The land there was not worth 6d. per acre; he would not give 6d. per acre for 20,000 acres of it to-morrow—that was, between Mitchell Downs and Charleville. If this line was extended to Charleville it would tap the Lower

Warrego and the country round about Tambo. It would secure the trade that at present went to New South Wales. It would secure the trade of the Lower Warrego, which now went to Fort Bourke, because Fort Bourke was a better market than Roma. Until recently most of the Warrego had been occupied by cattle, but now large capitalists were stocking it with sheep. Of course the traffic was as yet nothing to what it would be in the future; more goods would be required, because it was known by everybody that in a sheep country there was a considerably larger outlay in the way of the conveyance of materials, rations, and other things than on a cattle station. A few people could manage a cattle station, and the rations they consumed in a year were trifling indeed. It was not so with a sheep station. If the railway was extended to Charleville at the present time he believed that it would have a large and remunerative trade, and he regretted that it had not been extended there. With regard to the extension now under discussion, it had his hearty approval. He was not one of those who would throw any obstruction in the way of the extension of the three trunk lines; he hoped that policy would be carried out. By making an extension in the direction of South Australia they would be benefiting the colony, tapping the richest of our own country, and bringing the trade of the interior to its natural outlet, the eastern seaboard. At the present time the extension of the Rockhampton line due westward, and the extension of the Northern line due westward without a bend to the south, as intended, would be more desirable than the extension of Hughenden line in a south-western direction; because it would come into contact with the Rockhampton line, and that was not at all desirable. There was plenty of rich country there now being utilised by men of large capital, and he had no doubt a large traffic would be obtained if the railway was extended there. Another point to be considered in connection with this matter was that they were expending large amounts of money upon our seaboard: at Rockhampton and Townsville they were spending enormous sums, and he certainly hoped that these lines would be extended, so that the money spent on these towns would not be thrown away. Of course there were many railways in his own district that might have been made with advantage, rather than some of those that had been proposed, but now was not the time to discuss that point. The plans and book of reference of the Charters Towers and Hughenden extension had his hearty support, and he hoped that the line at Roma and the Central line would be extended simultaneously as soon as the Minister for Works had proper plans and specifications. There was one other matter he might refer to in connection with the three-million loan which was obtained to extend each of the three lines 130 miles west. He should like to know, if they extended the line at Roma 130 miles west, where it would take them to. It would not land them anywhere; it would land them where there was no water or population or anything else. He remembered noticing this point when the money was voted, but he was new in the House at the time, and it was not his duty to raise the difficulty. To extend the line 130 miles was absurd. Either the money should have been voted for an extension to Charleville, or should not have been voted at all. There were to be extensions of 130 miles from Rockhampton, 130 miles from Roma, and 130 miles from Charters Towers; and the 130 miles from Roma was the worst extension that could possibly be made, for the reason he had stated. However, they had the assurance of the Minister for Works that he would make the line from Charters Towers a longer distance for the same amount; and he thought, seeing

what the hon. gentleman had done in the past in the way of railway construction, they might take his assurance in good faith.

Mr. BAYNES said it was not his intention to speak to the question, but to correct the hon. gentleman who had just sat down. He could not allow the statement to go unchallenged that land between Mitchell Downs and Charleville was not worth more than 6d. per acre. He (Mr. Baynes) should be glad to take several blocks at Charleville at a higher valuation. It was a pity the hon. gentleman did not know a little more about the country than he did. He (Mr. Baynes) knew there was a lot of bad country in that district, but he also knew that there was some very valuable country between Mitchell Downs and Charleville. He wanted to put the hon. member straight in that matter.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said a great deal had been said that evening about the railway not being extended on the Southern and Western line, and about provision being made to extend the Central and Northern lines. It must be admitted by the House that the Central and Southern lines had a great deal to make up. The Southern line had been extended 316 miles to Roma, but the Central line was only 206 miles long; therefore, they had 100 miles more railway in the southern part of the colony than they had in the central portion. Another thing that had been said by the hon. member for Cook was with respect to the market at Fort Bourke being better than that at Roma. Carriage would always be cheaper to Fort Bourke, because the latter had water carriage, and they all knew that water carriage was cheaper than railway carriage. The hon. gentleman also suggested that the Northern Railway would in time tap some of the Tambo trade, as the legitimate outlet for the Tambo trade was Rockhampton. It was about 700 miles from Tambo to Brisbane, and about 200 miles to Rockhampton. It was utterly out of the question for the Brisbane people ever to get the Tambo trade. With regard to the advisability of the Northern extension from Charters Towers westward to Hughenden, that was all discussed before, and the new country was clearly pointed out. He believed there was plenty of room for the two lines which had been referred to, and that there would be a considerable amount of traffic over each of them. From the returns that he had lately seen published, it appeared that the Central line was the most profitable one the colony had, and therefore he did not see how there could be any hesitation in extending it, because it paid better the further it was extended. He thought the House was prudent in withholding the extension of the Southern line until they knew where it might go. They did not know whether it ought to be extended to Charleville or to Cunnamulla, but he should hesitate very much before advising its extension in either of these directions.

Mr. SIMPSON said he rose with some hesitation, because he had no wish to oppose the line before the House; but, as the general policy of the Government seemed to be under discussion, he should like to say a few words on it. He certainly agreed with the hon. member who had stated that the Southern line should have been pushed along in proportion with the Northern and the Central lines. He did not forget that last year, on the 13th July, he drew the attention of the House specially to the fact that tenders for the extension from Roma to Mitchell Downs had been called, that a number of tenders had been sent in, and that Government had returned the tenders and decided not to go on with the line. At that time he was very adverse to the stoppage of the Southern line, and he was still of opinion

that it ought to be extended at the same time as the Central and Northern Railways. Hon. members seemed to forget how little assistance he then received from the members of the Opposition in his endeavours to induce the Government to change their views. The leader of the Opposition, instead of trying to induce the Government to reconsider the matter, simply attacked them, and also the member for South Brisbane. Speaking in reference to the Government and that hon. member, the hon. gentleman then said that to endeavour to bribe a constituency was just as disreputable and dishonourable as to offer a sum of money to a member of the House; and he also abused the Government in a similar way. Had the hon. gentleman at that time rendered some assistance, it might have been possible to persuade the Government to carry on that line. Instead of endeavouring to do so, a deputation of members from the Opposition side of the House subsequently called upon the Colonial Secretary and did all they possibly could to stop that line. Whatever those hon. members might say now, the general feeling at the time was that they were trying to stop the extension of the main line in order that the money might be spent on branch lines in the southern districts of the colony. Now that there seemed to be a chance that they would get what they asked for, they abused the Government for not going on with the extension of the line. Though he considered that the line ought to be extended, he was not inclined to throw the whole of the blame of its stoppage on the Government, because the members of the Opposition made a strong point in favour of the stoppage of the line and the construction of branch lines, and the branch lines had been given. He did not profess to know whether the land westward from Roma was worth 6d. or £1 per acre, but it was well known that the land between Roma and Mitchell was nearly all sold, so that a line there would not be made by any syndicate on the land-grant system, there being no land there to grant. The Government would ultimately, no doubt, have to undertake the construction of the line, as the southern part of the colony was not now getting its fair share either of expenditure or of the traffic from the west. The money for it was already voted, the plans and sections were prepared, and tenders had been actually received; so that there was no apparent reason for the delay. Some of the proposed lines appearing on the notice-paper he should certainly vote against. Having objected to the actions of former Governments in undertaking railways which could not possibly pay, he was not going to vote in favour of such railways when they were proposed by this Government. He was not going to vote against this one, however, and he rose principally to express the disappointment he felt in common with other hon. members that the Government had made no proposition for the extension of the Southern line.

Mr. MESTON said it was not his intention to make a long speech. He considered that this was one of the most justifiable lines upon the present programme, not only because it would connect one of the richest, and certainly the most extensive, of the goldfields of the colony with the coast, but also because it would provide an outlet for the traffic of the magnificent country on the Flinders and Diamantina Rivers. In his opinion the line was equally justifiable whether it connected with the proposed trans-continental line or not. He agreed with the Minister for Works that the country to be traversed was not a very difficult one; the plans and sections showed exactly what the cuttings and gradients were. The line already constructed between Townsville and Charters Towers

was made at a very low price, and he believed that the cost of constructing the remainder of the line would be equally reasonable. He had taken the trouble when in the North to obtain information about the country and the line, and had, in fact, made arrangements to go to Hughenden, if time had permitted; so that he had not the slightest doubt about the justifiableness of the line. He hoped it would be constructed as rapidly as possible, so that it would not only open up the pastoral country through which it would pass, but also tap what was known to be the richest mineral country in the colony. He did not see any reason to suppose that this line would interfere unfairly with the Central line: each would have its own particular traffic which would gravitate towards it naturally. There need be no interference between the two lines, and it would be quite useless to attempt to divert either. He supported the line believing that it would open an immense extent of mineral, agricultural, and pastoral country, and that it would connect with what would be one of the finest seaports in the colony when the jetty was finished, and would terminate at what he believed would be one of the largest cities on the eastern seaboard.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said the speech made by the hon. member who had just sat down was the worst he had ever made in the House, and the only consolation was that the hon. member did not go to the clouds on this occasion. It was a remarkable thing that every Southern member who had spoken on this occasion had been in favour of the extension of this line, and that with one exception no hon. member from anywhere north or west had spoken in favour of the extension of the Southern line. One of the Southern members, indeed, had not condescended to mention it at all. No explanation had been given—none could be given—why the Southern line was not being extended at the same time as the Central and Northern lines. It was perfectly understood when the three lines were sanctioned that they were to be carried on together; and what was the excuse or reason for this stoppage of the Southern line? Had the reason been handed over to the hon. gentleman just christened "the fifth wheel of the coach," who told hon. members, in the face of the House and the country, that the Government had stopped that line because Mr. Griffith and two or three other gentlemen living in the southern part of the colony had told them not to continue it? Mr. Griffith, Mr. Dickson, and two or three more were not the people of Southern Queensland; they were only three or four respectable gentlemen living in Brisbane, and he (Mr. O'Sullivan) had protested against their action at the time. Now they denied having asked that the line might be stopped; but, granting for argument that they did do so, they did not represent the whole of Southern Queensland, and their action did not warrant the Government in stopping the Southern line and preventing the expenditure of over £300,000. With regard to the statement that land between Mitchell and Charleville was not worth 6d. an acre, nothing could be more incorrect. There was the Burenda country between Charleville and Mitchell Downs.

Mr. STEVENSON: No, it is not.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he had been north, and he remembered that the old mail road left the station on the right hand. The whole of the land from there to the Warrego was good country, and there were immense patches of as fine land as any in the colony. The hon. member must not imagine that he possessed all the information on the subject himself. To say one word for all, he wished it to be perfectly and thoroughly

understood that there were no Southern members in the House who were opposed to the construction of the line before the House; but it might be as well that the Government should understand that the Southern members were determined that the Southern line should be continued—and he was one of those members. There had been no attempt at reasoning by those who opposed it. There was plenty of money, as the Colonial Secretary had acknowledged to the paltry deputation that waited on him; the “fifth wheel” said it was only for the lines going on now, but the Colonial Secretary said there was plenty for the Southern line. The Southern members now demanded that the money should be expended, and also that the line should be carried on as far as the money would extend, as the hon. member for Cook had suggested; and he wished here to thank that hon. member for his advocacy of the extension of the line. If, as in the case of the Northern line, the money would suffice for 158 miles, the line would reach to within a stone’s throw of Charleville—that town being only about 190 miles distant—and to the bank of a river where there was plenty of water, and where a very good township would rise by-and-bye, as there was plenty of good land near. It had been very perceptible for a long time past that this loan money was all being expended in the North. He had no objection to what had been voted for the North being expended there, but he wished that the money voted for the South by the House should also be expended. It must not be supposed that he was opposed to the extension of the Northern line; he was quite sure there was as fine country about Hughenden as any in Queensland, but he also knew that the Southern line would reach country equally good. He was determined that the line should be carried on, and not choked off by the paltry and miserable action of a deputation which chose to call upon the Colonial Secretary. The people of Southern Queensland were determined to have the railway.

Mr. WALSH, in explanation, said, in speaking of a line from Mitchell Downs to Charleville, he referred to a direct line; a line *via* Burenda would be a roundabout one.

Mr. O’SULLIVAN: Burenda would not be half-a-mile from the line.

Mr. WELD-BLUNDELL said the hon. member for Stanley “pooh-poohed” the deputation, and spoke of it as three or four private citizens; but, on turning to the report in the *Courier* of the next day, he (Mr. Weld-Blundell) found that the deputation included the following gentlemen:—The Hon. S. W. Griffith; Mr. Garrick, formerly a Minister; Mr. Dickson, also an ex-Minister; Mr. Rutledge, a Minister in embryo who was apparently, from his speeches, qualifying for the position of Attorney-General, or to hold a new portfolio as Minister of the Interior; Mr. Miles, an ex-Colonial Secretary; Mr. Horwitz, a distinguished Darling Downs member; and Messrs. Meston, Macfarlane, McLean, Beattie, and Grimes. In fact, with the exception of a few hon. members who might have been unavoidably absent, the deputation consisted of all the members of the Opposition that could possibly have been got together, and they all represented either Southern constituencies or constituencies lying out west of Brisbane. These gentlemen called upon the Colonial Secretary; and the leader of the Opposition, on behalf of the deputation, distinctly asked the Colonial Secretary to suspend any further expenditure on the construction of the Southern line—at least, until the House could meet. With reference to the contention of the hon. member for Logan that the money had not at the time been raised, he found that Mr. Griffith said

that £2,000,000, less 10 per cent.—or £1,800,000—was only raised by the Government; but, of course, it was well known that the balance of the loan could be obtained whenever it was found needful to ask for it. Mr. Griffith, he found, said—

“The Government had power to alter the direction in which the change should be made. The deputation desired to call attention to the fact that, but for unexpected and exceptional circumstances, Parliament would now be in session and in a position to express an opinion on the subject: they therefore suggested that Parliament should be allowed an opportunity to express an opinion. No great delay would be necessary, as in the course of six weeks Parliament would be in session. It could then pronounce upon the policy of the Government, whatever it might be; and if Parliament approved, the Ministry would then have the satisfaction of knowing that they were carrying out the wishes of the country.”

This clearly showed that there was an intention to oppose the further construction, or it could have no meaning at all.

“The deputation had no desire to say anything on the merits of the trunk line policy. They suggested that no harm, but much good, would be produced if Parliament were placed in the position it would have been under ordinary circumstances. They wished to point out that if the money were expended in trunk line extensions there would be none for other works; and they would, therefore, ask the Government to defer the acceptance of the tenders called for those works until Parliament assembled.”

What other meaning than that which he had given could be attached to those expressions? And a little before the hon. gentleman had shown that the deputation did not object to the Northern line, because he said—

“It was clear there was not sufficient to carry on all the extensions authorised. The Northern line did not come into the question, because it had been provided for under previous appropriations.”

He quite endorsed the opinion that it was desirable that the line should be stopped, because recent returns had shown that the further that line was extended the greater were the difficulties in which it became involved. The line had been extended during the past year about twenty or thirty miles, and the revenue from it had fallen off week by week. On the other hand, the further the Central line was extended the better it paid, and during the current year it would pay 4 per cent. on the total cost of construction. If he remembered rightly, the year before last the Southern line paid a little under 3 per cent., and the Central something less than 2 per cent.; whereas this year the returns showed that the Central line had paid £3 15s. per cent., and it was calculated that the returns next year would be equal to £4 per cent. That was a most important consideration, and unless it could be shown that there was at least a likelihood that an increased profit and a fair remuneration towards paying interest would result from an extension, it was folly to go on with further construction. In the same way he should oppose branch lines, unless it were shown that there was a chance of them paying. Of course, in the case of new branch lines there was generally a chance that they might pay; but here was a line of which 316 miles was already constructed, and which became less reproductive from year to year, and from mile to mile as it was extended. Under such circumstances he considered that it was the duty of hon. members to oppose any further expenditure upon the line.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he did not know whether or not the hon. member who had just sat down was to be understood as having enunciated the views of the Government on the subject of the extension of the Southern line, but he thought they should know what were the intentions of the Government with regard to their railway policy. That policy

when first announced was to extend the three trunk lines together, and not one to the exclusion of the others. He would like to know whether the Government had changed their railway policy. If so, it was a very serious change, and the sooner it was disclosed the better, for the country was entitled to know what their intentions were. He had no objection to the line proposed to be constructed from Charters Towers to Hughenden. Three years ago, when Minister for Works, he had occasion to speak of the railway policy of the Douglas Government, and explained that their intention was to push forward the three main lines simultaneously; but he had never yet heard that it was the policy of any Government to push forward only two of these lines. The hon. member who had just sat down stated, as a reason for discontinuing the extension of the Southern line, that it did not pay nearly as well as the others; but everyone knew that at first it was an experimental line and was a very costly experiment. The cost of the line was very much more per mile than any other, and he ventured to say that it paid as well as the other lines in proportion to its mileage. He had yet to learn that the land of the south-western districts was inferior to that of the northern and central parts of the colony. He had very reliable information that the land was just as good out at Thorgomindah, and that beyond there right out to the furthest border there was most valuable land—quite as valuable as the land on the Mitchell and Flinders proposed to be tapped by these two railways. And why should that district not be tapped by railway communication? Was it proposed to make the railway by some other means? If so, before the House was asked to approve of the extension of these two lines westward they were entitled to be told definitely what the intentions of the Government were respecting the Southern line, and this motion ought not to be carried without this information. Some hon. members had excused the Government for not submitting the proposal for the extension of the Southern line on account of the deputation which waited upon the Government in June of last year—suggesting that under the then financial condition of the country, the extension of the Southern and Central lines should be deferred till Parliament met—not that the Southern line alone should be deferred, but that the further extension of the Central and Southern lines, to be paid for out of the loan authorised in 1879, should be deferred. It did not relate to any previous loan: merely to the mode of expending the loan of 1879, of which only a portion had been raised at a somewhat low price.

The PREMIER: A very good price at the time.

Mr. GRIFFITH: A good price at the time, but a somewhat low price absolutely. The deputation had reason to think that the Government did not intend to raise the other million for some time to come, and under these circumstances it was asked that the Government should wait six weeks until Parliament met. Was it to be understood that because several members from that side of the House advised the Government in June of last year that the acceptance of tenders should be deferred for six weeks, therefore they had entirely changed their railway policy? He rose, not to oppose this motion—no doubt the route proposed for the line was the best—but he had risen chiefly for the purpose of asking a definite statement as to the intentions of the Government with respect to the extension of the Southern and Western Railway.

Mr. LOW said he was not in the confidence of the Government as to what line they preferred to adopt in connection with this matter,

but he assumed that if the Government did not intend to carry a line in the direction of Boolooloo or Cunnamulla, they must intend that a very considerable amount of Queensland traffic should go into New South Wales, so soon as the railway line of that colony reached Narrabri; and that, he maintained, it was their duty to prevent.

Mr. GROOM said he should not like the question to pass without a word in relation to it, though he should not have spoken had not the deputation that waited on the Colonial Secretary been referred to. He was asked to form one of that deputation, and in his reply to the gentleman who asked him he was exceedingly cautious in what he said. Though he was unable to be present as a member of the deputation, he was particularly cautious to say that, if the object of the deputation was to stop the Southern extension while the other two lines were being carried on, he would not be any party to it. The answer he received was that the deputation did not propose to stop the Southern line, but simply to defer it till the meeting of Parliament. In reading the report of the deputation, he clearly understood that that was the object of the deputation. The reason for the interview was this: A two-million loan had been floated at a low price; the Government were putting on very extraordinary pressure upon the people of all parts of the colony, and persons were almost beginning to fear another crisis like that of 1866. Their sympathies were aroused with thousands of struggling men, and they asked for a temporary suspension of public works until Parliament met and an expression of public opinion had been obtained. Fortunately for the colony, circumstances turned favourably, and the colony, instead of a crisis, had a financial success. He was particularly struck with what fell from the hon. member for Clermont—that the Southern line was not returning so high a percentage as the Central line—not taking into consideration the fact that the line from Ipswich to Toowoomba and Dalby was an experimental line, and an exceedingly costly one, too. Then there was the fact that from Dalby to Roma it passed through large tracts of country unfit for agricultural settlement. All one saw on either side was bush—no settlement, and not likely to be any settlement. Where was the traffic to come from along that great stretch of country? When the last general election took place he supported the policy of the Government for a three-million loan. It was distinctly understood at that time that it was to be for the construction of the three main trunk lines, which were to be proceeded with simultaneously mile for mile. All districts were represented as far as that loan was concerned, and the country had yet to know the reason why the extensions were to be limited to two lines. He differed from many hon. members with regard to the trans-continental scheme. He had been reading lately how railways had been constructed in the United States on the land-grant system, with the view of eliciting information with regard to that system, and what he saw there confirmed him in his opinion that the construction of railways by the wholesale granting of land would be the most iniquitous system that could possibly be approved of by the Parliament of any country; and he was not at all surprised that the intelligent Premier at the head of the Government of South Australia had revoked the decision of his predecessor, and would have nothing at all to do with allowing any company to monopolise the territory of the country in this way; and that was the conclusion he had come to. He had ascertained that out of the numerous railway companies of the United States only five of them had complied with the conditions of their Acts, and it was a serious question whether some

570,000,000 acres of land should not be confiscated and go back to the Government. The same difficulties would present themselves here, only in an intensified degree, owing to our small population and limited trade. They must not overlook the fact that £390,000 had been voted to carry the Southern line 120 miles beyond Roma, while there were branch lines asked to be approved of, for which no provision was made on the Estimates; surely, if money could be found to proceed with lines for which no provision had been made, there could be no reason to withhold the Southern extension, for which the money had been voted. It was one of the cardinal points of the Premier that this line should be proceeded with—and he (the Premier) could not deny that—and that, having bridged the worthless districts, so to speak, they would now reach that which was admitted to be one of the finest districts in Australia. The land beyond Roma was stated to be equal to any in the districts of Riverina in New South Wales. After having formed the railway trade, and instead of going on with it, future advantages were to be reaped by speculators. He could not believe that the deputation which waited on the Colonial Secretary from that side of the House wanted to suspend the expenditure of the vote beyond the time of the meeting of Parliament. It was simply that there should be a general suspension of lines until Parliament met and an expression of opinion had been obtained. The desirability of the line was not questioned. He thought there was sufficient good sense in this House that when all parts of the colony were favourable to a proposal of this kind it became irresistible. When they found that two lines were to be extended, and that the Southern line was stopped suddenly, where population could be settled, it was sufficient to cause a feeling that that justice was not being done to which the people were entitled.

Mr. DICKSON said, now that the Premier was in his seat, he thought it would be satisfactory to hon. members and to the country, if the views of the Government concerning the discontinuance of the extension of the Southern and Western Railway, for which £390,000 had been voted, were explained. They had had an expression of opinion on both sides of the House from hon. gentlemen who did not regard this question as a party one. There had been a general expression of opinion that some intelligible reason should be given the country by the Government for withholding the construction of that line. They could no longer shelter themselves under the representation that it was because of the deputation that waited on them from this side of the House that the extension of the line was discontinued. He knew that it had been frequently stated, in reply to inquiries concerning the railway construction to the southwestern parts of the colony, that the cessation of the work had entirely resulted from the action taken by that deputation; but after the debate of this evening, and, he thought, after the expression of opinion, that the impression made upon any impartial person outside would be in favour of the view taken by this side of the House. They would see that the action of the deputation resolved itself into this: a request to withhold the acceptance of tenders for the extension of all the lines until Parliament had assembled and hon. members had an opportunity of deciding as to the manner in which these lines of railway should be proceeded with. He thought it was the duty of the Government that the Premier should relieve the minds of the people from any misapprehension, because, unquestionably, his recent utterances made to deputations and on public occasions had led people to imagine

that, until the transcontinental railway policy was affirmed or rejected by the House, he would not appeal to the public creditor for a single penny for the construction of this or any other line. He wanted to know if they affirmed the extension of this line of railway, and if they subsequently affirmed the extension of the Central line of railway, whether the present provision would be adequate. He thought that the Government would have to admit that the provision was inadequate. If so, then they had the right to learn from the Premier how he intended to supplement the loan for the construction of the Central line. He thought, further, that the Premier might fully take them into his confidence, and tell them what his intention was in connection with the line respecting its junction with the transcontinental line. It was freely asserted that there was a desire on the part of the Government to proceed with this line for the purpose of facilitating the transcontinental railway scheme. The supporters of the Government had expressed themselves fully upon this matter, and he thought it was due to the country that the Premier should inform them on these points, because those utterances had certainly led them to that opinion. They knew very well that railway construction was sanctioned last year, such as the branch line to Clermont, for which no adequate parliamentary provision had been made, only £50,000 having been voted. When the construction of this and other lines for which provision had not been made was proceeded with, the £390,000 belonging to the Southern line would be operated on for the purpose. That was an additional reason why they should learn from the Premier how he intended to replenish that £390,000, or whether in the plenitude of his power he intended to deal with that money as he had dealt with revenue derived from sales under the Railway Reserves Act. He had very grave apprehensions that this £390,000 would be transferred by the vote of the House from the extension of the Southern and Western Railway to the construction of some of those lines for which parliamentary provision had not been made. In that view of the case he contended that the attention of hon. members was not unprofitably employed in requesting the Premier to furnish the House and the country with a satisfactory indication of the policy of the Government in connection with the further construction of the Southern and Western line of railway.

The PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith) said the hon. member who had just sat down was always very fond of getting information from Ministers. The Royal Princes had scarcely arrived in the colony when the hon. member asked him (Mr. McIlwraith) what his intentions were with regard to the visit. He had already asked a dozen questions with regard to the Estimates and the Financial Statement, and was always wanting information far in advance of what hon. members should in common courtesy ask from Ministers. Now the hon. member asked for some sort of an explanation of some rumours which had not reached the ears of Ministers, and which he did not think had reached the ears of anyone except the hon. member himself. Whoever heard of such a thing as running the transcontinental railway from the Townsville extension, and leaving a gap, and then connecting it with the Roma terminus! Why should they be called upon to answer such complete nonsense? If there was a rumour, why did not the hon. member bring it before Ministers and ask for information in the proper way? He (the Premier) did not intend to be dragged into a debate on the subject for such small reasons as the hon. member had given. It was the duty of the Opposition to criticise everything the Government did. He did not care

how severely they did it. Good criticism would never harm the Government; if they were weak let them go, and if strong they would be able to bear it. But the kind of criticism they now received, and had received for the last three years, was nothing but pure obstruction, on the principle that whatever the Government did must be wrong. In 1879 the main point of their policy was the extension of the main trunk lines of railway. Those gentlemen who were now coming round and arguing so differently to-day at that time thought it of very great importance that these lines should not be extended, and actually obstructed the Government for weeks. The hon. member at the head of the Opposition then gained an amount of popularity which had made him a different character ever since. He then turned round and bowed to the tail of the party by whom he had been led since that time. Their policy then was not to extend the main trunk lines, because they would go to the homes of the squatters, to the Far West, to the setting sun—as the phrase was in those days. They argued that those lines were intended to increase the present great profits of the squatting community and would do no good to the population, and therefore they would not support them. They held those arguments to be so strong that they considered themselves actually justified in obstructing the business of the colony. Almost all the members now in the House were present at that time, and they would remember that it was an exciting time. Then came the natural sequence. A deputation, carrying out those same views, waited on the Colonial Secretary in his (the Premier's) absence from the colony; and what was its object? Headed by the leader of the Opposition, and supported by all the prominent members on that side, they waited on the Colonial Secretary, asking him to suspend operations with regard to the construction of the Southern and Western Railway until Parliament had expressed its opinion.

Mr. GRIFFITH: The trunk lines.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The Central and the Southern and Western Railways.

The PREMIER said his point was that they asked for the stoppage of the works on one line. It was all the same whether they asked for the suspension on one or on three lines. In coming before the Colonial Secretary they were expected, of course, to give good reasons; but what were the reasons? The only reason was, that news had come from England by wire that £2,000,000 out of the £3,000,000 had been raised, and the other £1,000,000 was not. But along with that information came the additional information that the price obtained was not only higher than that of the previous loan, but a good deal higher than that expected in London, and a great deal higher than was expected in Brisbane. Not only that, but a great deal more than the sum asked for by the Government was tendered for. The inference all sensible people drew was, that should they desire to borrow the other £1,000,000 they should be able to do so at any time. That was the argument on which the deputation based their request for the suspension of the works. They questioned the stability of the colony. The hon. member for Toowoomba said that was the reason which actuated him in the course he took. But the Opposition would carry on their policy, and to-day to the people by pressing for branch railways and stopping the extension of the trunk lines. In doing so, they were only extending the policy of obstruction on the present occasion. They made the mistake all Oppositions made, of saying that Ministers must always be wrong. They were warned that the policy they opposed would be the popular policy before

twelve months were over; that the extensions of these trunk lines would prove for the benefit of the colony, and that they would suffer retribution for having opposed them. When the votes were on the Loan Estimates, he remembered using that argument against their obstruction, and it had come about as he said. They saw that what the Government did was perfectly right, and now they turned round and wanted to know the reason why one line had not been gone on with. They repudiated the arguments they used in 1879, and adopted those used by the Government when the Opposition opposed these lines for obstruction sake. He (the Premier) believed the Southern and Western line ought to be gone on with, and it was the intention of the Government to go on with it just as expeditiously as any other trunk line. There would be no time unnecessarily lost in proceeding with this extension, whether by contract or by land grant system. The Government could give good reasons for delay—delay which had not hurt the Southern district, but which had benefited it.

Mr. GRIFFITH: What are they?

The PREMIER said they could give good reasons for their action, but that was no reason why they should go into them now. The Opposition ought to be the last people to ask for reasons, having opposed the extension all through. This showed the absurdity of the Opposition opposing anything and everything because it was proposed by the Ministry. If the Government had adopted the policy the Opposition advocated when opposing these extensions they would now have turned round and said that was the very thing they ought not to have done, and would ruin the colony. Of course, this debate on a motion of this sort was entirely irregular. The object of the Opposition was, he believed, to show that the Government had some leaning towards the Northern districts and ignored the interests of the Southern districts. He himself, and on behalf of his colleagues, repudiated the idea, and had done so over and over again. He defied any hon. member to say that they had shown any partiality to the Northern districts in preference to the South. That had not been their policy, nor was it their policy at the present time. He knew perfectly well that it would be futile for anyone to attempt to foster in the House any particular portion of the colony that might, for some reason or other, have influence in any particular way. They knew very well that political influence lay in the South, from the number of constituencies there; and, therefore, in justice they ought, at all events, to look after the interests of other districts. They had done so, and never had any intention of doing otherwise. He declined to be dragged into a debate about the transcontinental system; that had nothing whatever to do with this question. He would be prepared to put his policy with regard to that matter before the House at the proper time. He only hoped, as he had reason to suspect from the leader of the Opposition, that he would not make the same mistake as he did with regard to the extension of the main trunk railway and oppose it merely because it was a Government measure, and then live to find, at some day not far distant, that he regretted his action.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the Premier was called upon, very justifiably, to give reasons why the Government had departed from their policy in going on with two of the proposed extensions and not the third; but instead of giving an explanation he had given the Opposition a homily, founded almost entirely on bad memory. He had told them that they opposed the trunk lines altogether two years ago, and obstructed the progress of business for weeks. The hon. member's memory was very bad. Late at night, about 12 o'clock,

the Premier informed him (Mr. Griffith) that he was going to carry a vote of £1,170,000 before he went home. He (Mr. Griffith) said, "No, you won't;" and the hon. gentleman did not. That was the whole of the obstruction, and it lasted for less than forty-eight hours. The Premier also told him that by his action on that occasion he (Mr. Griffith) had secured for himself a great amount of popularity, but his action secured him the greatest amount of unpopularity. Supposing what the Premier said was correct, what had it to do with the policy of the Government how the Opposition conducted themselves? Surely the Government had a policy of their own. They wanted to know why this Southern line was stopped. The Premier told them the intention of the Government was to go on with it as fast as the others; but why did they not do so? What was the use of stating their intention and not acting on it? He would remind hon. members, if they did not know, how things stood when the Loan Bill of 1879 was passed. Money was voted for the extension of the Southern line from Roma, the Central line from Emerald, and the Northern line from Charters Towers. Then it was proposed to extend each of these lines 130 miles, and a sum of money was voted on the distinct assurance from the Government that the three should go on together. The Premier said that it was always intended that it should be so, but, whatever they intended, they had not done so. At that time the line was not finished to Charters Towers—it was not finished yet; but with respect to the Central line from Emerald, and the Southern line from Roma, tenders were called for both, and tenders for the Central line were accepted, while the work on the Southern line was stopped. Since this, the Central Railway had been extended sixty or seventy miles, and now the Government proposed to extend it 100 miles further. They also proposed to extend the Northern line 158 miles, and do nothing with the Southern line. He did not know what secret ideas they might have on the subject, but those were the proposals they brought before the House and the country.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: They are not.

Mr. GRIFFITH said those were the proposals the Government brought before the House. They proposed to extend the Northern and Central lines, but made no proposal with respect to the Southern.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You forget what has been done already.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he knew perfectly well that an extension of sixty miles on the Southern line had been authorised, because tenders had been called for its construction, but they were not accepted, and the work had been dropped. So that the Government were doing the very opposite of what they said they intended, and hon. members, if they had the courage of their opinions, should insist on having some definite promise from the Government before they passed these motions. What was the use of the Ministry stating the best intentions if their actions did not correspond with them? He should like to have seen in the old days, when members were a little more independent than now, a Government come down and propose to carry on one extension at the expense of another. In those days hon. members would have asked for something more substantial than promises, and now hon. members would not be doing their duty if they allowed either this or the next motion to pass until some promise with regard to the Southern line was made by the Government. There was plenty of time during the session to bring on these motions, and there was no intention, so far as he knew, of

preventing the extension of these lines; but he believed—at any rate, he hoped—that a majority of hon. members intended that the Southern line should go on as well. They did not intend that one part of the colony should be benefited at the expense of another. Supposing the Opposition had always been against all trunk lines, what had that to do with the question? As a matter of fact they had not. He (Mr. Griffith) had, as publicly as the Premier, expressed his opinion in favour of trunk lines. But the question now was whether, the House having decided that the lines should be extended, the Government should extend two lines and leave the other out. He hoped the motion moved by the hon. member for Toowoomba would be carried, so as to give the Government an opportunity of letting the House know their proposals with respect to the Southern line.

Mr. REA said, with reference to the plan before the House, the notions of fairness concerning the extension of the Northern and Central lines was somewhat a puzzling one, because he found that, although a statement had been made to-night that the Central line was paying so well, the Ministry had assumed a very funny way of supporting that assertion. He found that the extension of the Central line was only 107 miles, whereas the extension of the Northern line was 50 per cent. more. When he came to see the comparative importance of the two districts as gauged by the revenue derived from the Customs, he found that it was the very reverse. He found that, if they took that as a basis, the Rockhampton extension ought to be something like 250 miles and the Northern one under 100 miles. The Premier said that he denied the imputation that was supposed to be cast upon the Ministry for encouraging the Northern territory to the disadvantage of the other districts of the colony. He (Mr. Rea) thought there was no unbiassed man in the House, or in any class outside of the House, but who had felt the conviction that for months and months past that the whole of the energy of this Ministry was tended towards the aggrandisement of the North—to support their Western votes by their Northern votes. In fact, it was by their Northern votes that they were enabled to keep in power. They would find that that district which was represented by the Minister for Works himself got a preponderance of consideration—he supposed, because that hon. gentleman might stand well with his constituents. But there were other things besides that that showed the determination of the Ministry to pay special attention to the Northern interests, and the Northern interests only. During the recess they saw that Ministry concluding a contract for a mail by steam line from Thursday Island to the Gulf, without any parliamentary authority whatever. So far as he knew, that was never indicated to the House, nor did they in any way explain why they did so without parliamentary authority. It was evident also that the mail service with England was, if not solely, mainly intended for the Northern ports—more especially the Thursday Island and Point Parker interests—because it appeared that it was very necessary to have that property made valuable that had close proximity to the South Australian boundary. Those were unmistakable facts that entirely refuted the denial of the Premier when he said that the Ministry did not encourage unfairly the interests of the North. He was wondering at the statement of the Attorney-General, because he remembered, when he was elected without opposition for Bowen, he gained that seat upon the supposition that his promises to the electors of Bowen had the authority of the whole of the Ministry—namely, that he promised them a railway from Bowen to Houghton Gap, to be connected with the Northern line; but that seemed

to be entirely forgotten when he had gained his seat. Perhaps if the hon. gentleman were here he would give some explanation to the colony why that express promise had been shunted, and that line was thus shelved. The promise was not in the railway programme, but instead of 158 miles to the Charters Towers line, it would have had quite its full share of railway extension if the odd fifty-eight miles had not been proposed to be granted. So far from it being supposed that the Rockhampton people were envious of them, or in any way considered that the Brisbane line was competing with them, he was sure that the bulk of the electors at Rockhampton were desirous of seeing the southern portion of the colony have its fair amount of railway extension; because again and again had they argued that they were satisfied, and always would be satisfied that they had their fair extension to their back country, the same as Brisbane was also entitled to. He was sure that the electors up there would in no way countenance the system of isolation that the Ministry seemed now to bring to bear upon the Southern interests. The hon. the Premier had blamed the Opposition, or rather made the accusation against the Opposition, that they had entirely changed their opinion of the statement with regard to trunk lines; but there was this distinction between a Ministerial statement and a discussion created by Opposition: at the time those votes were before the House—the moment that those votes were carried by this House the members on the Opposition side bowed to the decision. This Ministry made it a question of life or death that the Southern extension should be a main point of progress at the time the trunk lines were voted, and yet they had seen since then that, wherever the Premier had been interviewed he had made the statement that he could say nothing more about railways until the transcontinental question was settled. Then what was the action of the Ministry? To-night the Premier had the effrontery to come here and tell the House and the country that he was not going to be worried into any disclosures as to what his intentions or the Ministers' intentions were with reference to the transcontinental scheme. If even Mr. Gladstone had made such a statement in the House of Commons, his own supporters would not allow him to remain in the House. The idea that upstarts like these should stand up and tell the people of Queensland that they shall not know how the country was going to dispose of twenty million acres of land!

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Hear, hear!

Mr. REA said he heard the hon. member for Gregory say "Hear, hear!" in derision, but he (Mr. Rea) had to remind him of what his election speech was when he was canvassing the Mitchell electorate a few months ago. He said then that he would not allow the Ministry to pay the Premier £1,000 for his wedding trip.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: That is a lie!

Mr. GRIFFITH called the attention of the Speaker to the words made use of by the hon. member.

The SPEAKER ordered the words to be taken down.

The words having been taken down by the CLERK, were read.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member for Rockhampton, while addressing the House, was interrupted by an interjection by the hon. member for Gregory. The words having been taken down, I now call upon the hon. member for Gregory to offer such explanation as he thinks necessary to the House.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the explanation he had to offer to the House was that the statement

which the member for Rockhampton put into his mouth was a lie. He (Mr. Hill) never uttered it. He did not know how it came to the hon. member for Rockhampton, for certainly he never heard any of his (Mr. Hill's) utterances; but in whatever way it had come to him, it was a lie. It was absolutely untrue. He never said anything of the kind.

The SPEAKER: I now call upon the hon. member for Gregory to withdraw whilst his conduct is under consideration.

The hon. member (Mr. Hill) then withdrew from the Chamber.

The PREMIER said after the explanation given by the hon. member for Gregory he did not think there was much to be said. He had no doubt that when the words were ordered to be taken down the Speaker was under the impression that the hon. member for Gregory had called the hon. member for Rockhampton a liar. That was not the case. The hon. member (Mr. Hill) did what he was perfectly entitled to do; he called the statement untrue which the hon. member for Rockhampton quoted as having been used by him. He (the Premier) did not think that at all transgressed the bounds of parliamentary usage, and he therefore moved that the explanation given by the hon. member for Gregory was satisfactory.

Mr. GRIFFITH said it would be recorded now that an hon. member of that House having used to another hon. member in the course of his address the words "That is a lie," and, having when called upon for an explanation, stated that it was a lie, the Premier of the colony had moved that the explanation was satisfactory. Need he say more?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: State the case fairly.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the Minister for Works said "State the case fairly." The facts were these: The hon. member for Rockhampton (Mr. Rea) was addressing the House, and made a statement, and the hon. member for Gregory interjected "That is a lie."

The PREMIER: That is not correct.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: What was the statement?

Mr. GRIFFITH said he did not know what the statement was. It was not of the slightest consequence what it was. If the hon. member for Rockhampton transgressed the bounds of parliamentary decorum he should be called to order. The hon. member for Gregory said, "That is a lie," and on the words being taken down and his being called upon to give an explanation, his explanation was "It is a lie, and I was justified in saying it was a lie."

The PREMIER: That is not correct.

Mr. GRIFFITH: And the Premier moved in effect that it was permissible and proper for one member of that House to call another a liar.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Ministerial side: No, no.

The PREMIER: That is what he did not do.

Mr. GRIFFITH: That was what in effect the Premier moved—that it was permissible and proper for one member to call another a liar.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Ministerial side: No, no.

Mr. GRIFFITH asked what was the difference between that and saying, "That is a lie." He had been in the House and out of it for some years, and he had never heard that there was any difference between saying to a man "You are a liar," and saying to a man as to what he said "That is a lie."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I can see a vast deal of difference.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the hon. gentleman said he could see a vast deal of difference, but, perhaps, he was thinking of the circumstances under which he would kick a man if he called him a liar. The hon. gentleman would submit to being told to his face "That is a lie." He would not mind that.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No.

Mr. GRIFFITH said the Colonial Secretary would not consider that an insult, but if it were said "You are a liar," it would be an insult. He (Mr. Griffith) confessed his thoughts were not sufficiently fine to draw the distinction between the statement to a man's face that what he said was a lie, and that he was a liar. Perhaps it was his obtuseness; but he hoped that that House was not going to put it on record that it was permissible and proper for one man to tell another he was a liar. It should be recorded by division before it was recorded at all; but he did sincerely hope that the House would never subject itself to such a lasting disgrace as to carry such a motion as this by a division. What would be the nature of proceedings in the House for the future if it was recorded that one member could say of another that he was a liar, or that an hon. member should be told when he was speaking that what he said was a lie? How could there be any order in debate? He thought it a great pity that the Speaker had not ruled at once that the hon. member's explanation was unsatisfactory before the Premier had moved his motion. It was a great misfortune, because he was sure the Speaker could not have ruled such an explanation could be satisfactory. Such language was never allowed to prevail in any Assembly in the world, except where fair argument had to give way to revolvers and bowie knives. He spoke strongly. He had occasion to call attention a short time ago to the danger of allowing a question of this nature to be decided by a party vote. This was the first occasion when the question had arisen, and now it appeared that it was going to be submitted to that House to determine that an hon. member was justified, while another member was speaking, to say that what he said was a lie! Was that to be determined by a party vote? He hoped that some of the older members of the House would not allow the Government to assume such a position as this. Surely it was not yet too late to allow the hon. member for Gregory to express his regret for having made use of this language! There were plenty of ways in which the House might be saved the disgrace of this motion of the Premier's. It was not too late for the hon. member to withdraw these remarks. Surely it was not necessary to go to a division on this motion! He spoke in the interests of every member of that House—in the interests of everyone who desired to preserve order in the House. They were all alike interested in it, and surely there were wise counsels enough on the other side to prevent such a motion as this being passed. He should feel eternally disgraced if a motion of this sort should be carried; and he did most sincerely hope that somebody would induce the Premier to withdraw this motion and let the hon. member for the Gregory do what he (Mr. Griffith) was sure he would do if he were left to his own inclinations—withdraw the statement.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. gentleman, in his usual solemn tone, got up and said that the Premier's motion that the explanation was satisfactory was going to be recorded by a party vote, and that he considered he would be eternally disgraced if such a motion were carried by a party vote. He (Mr. Macrossan)

made bold to say that if this was not carried by a party vote that a majority on the Opposition side of the House would assist the Premier in the motion he was moving; and he made further bold to say that the hon. gentleman could scarcely be disgraced much more than he had already disgraced himself this session.

Mr. GRIFFITH: That is stale.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that, stale as it was, it would often be repeated. The hon. member (Mr. Rea) scarcely ever rose to address the House without insulting somebody, and frequently every member on the Government side; but they had hitherto regarded his conduct with such utter contempt that not a single member on that side had thought it worth while to call the Speaker's attention to it. What had been the conduct of the leader of the Opposition—he who would think himself disgraced if the motion were carried? That hon. gentleman had disgraced himself by urging the hon. member (Mr. Rea) on to the conduct of which he was guilty, and encouraging him by his "hear, hear" and laughter, to insult everybody on the Government side of the House. Even just now, when the Speaker's attention was called to the words of the hon. member for Gregory, the hon. gentleman could not refrain from laughing. What did he laugh at? At the insult offered by the hon. member for Rockhampton to the hon. member for Gregory. That was the hon. gentleman who talked about being disgraced if the motion were carried. Perhaps the hon. member for Gregory would not have used the words complained of if he had thought over them more carefully, but he was quite justified in saying that a statement falsely attributed to him was a lie. He did not say the hon. member had told a lie. The hon. member (Mr. Rea) asserted that the hon. member for Gregory had said, in a speech made by him during an election tour with the hon. member for Mitchell, that a thousand pounds had been taken by the Premier for his wedding tour; and the hon. member for Gregory said that was a lie. Where was the disgrace in a motion affirming that that explanation was satisfactory? The disgrace lay in allowing the hon. member for Rockhampton and his friends to conduct themselves as they had so frequently been in the habit of doing. He should like to have the words read that were taken down.

The CLERK read the words—"The hon. member for Gregory referred to something that fell from Mr. Rea, one of the members for Rockhampton, and said, 'That is a lie.'"

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the words were not applied to that hon. member, but to the statement which he had attributed to the hon. member for Gregory; and he maintained that the hon. member for Gregory was perfectly right in saying of such a statement falsely attributed to him that it was untrue—that it was a lie. The latter was a plain old English term, and it was much better to use it than to beat round the bush as recommended by the leader of the Opposition. That hon. gentleman could not see things as other men saw them; he was, as they all knew, deficient in a certain direction; his mental vision was not the same as that of honest men, and that was something very lamentable and deplorable, not only for the hon. gentleman himself, but also for the honour of the House and of the country. The hon. gentleman could see no difference between one member calling another member a liar, and a member saying that a statement attributed to him was a lie; yet he dared say that that difference could be seen by every other member of the House. Whether the question was decided by a party vote or not, he was certain that the explanation

was satisfactory. The hon. member for Gregory simply said that what was attributed to him was a lie; he did not call the hon. member for Rockhampton a liar.

Mr. DE SATGE said he thought he was the only member present who heard the addresses delivered by the hon. member for Gregory during his celebrated electioneering tour, and in justice to that hon. member he must say that he never heard him utter the words put into his mouth by the hon. member for Rockhampton. He (Mr. De Satgé) would not constitute himself into a judge, and go so far as to say whether it was right or wrong to interrupt an hon. member, and say, "That is a lie;" but he believed the hon. member was quite justified in saying "That is untrue"—a distinction without a difference.

Mr. STEVENSON said that, as one who took a great interest in the election for the Mitchell, he was glad to hear the hon. member (Mr. De Satgé) say what he had just said. He (Mr. Stevenson) was present at some of those meetings, and carefully read the reports of them in the papers, and he never heard the hon. member for Gregory use the words attributed to him by the hon. member for Rockhampton. No doubt the leader of the Opposition felt annoyed because he felt he had "put his foot in it." That hon. gentleman had been waiting for a chance to get some hon. member on the Government side made an example of, but on the present occasion he would find that he had made rather a mess of it. In saying that a statement falsely attributed to him was a lie, the hon. member for Gregory simply called a spade a spade, as they on that side were generally in the habit of doing; and he hoped that hon. members would have sufficient honesty of purpose and regard for truth not to seek to make an example of any hon. member simply to carry out the spite of the hon. member for North Brisbane.

Mr. GARRICK said that if the view taken by the Premier and the Minister for Works was right—that what the hon. member for Gregory alluded to was simply the statement made by the hon. member for Rockhampton—he would put it to them whether that was a sort of interruption that should be sanctioned by the House. The excuse that the hon. member was calling a spade a spade, and that he was using Saxon words, would not do, for there were many Saxon words that would not for an instant be permitted to be used in the course of a debate here. Did the use of such language conduce to the decency or the dignity of the House? He submitted that it did not, and he could not see what provocation had been offered to the hon. member for Gregory. It was said in an ambiguous manner, and it might or might not apply personally to him, or to statements made by him. In his (Mr. Garrick's) opinion, even if applied to the hon. member personally, the interruption was not of a sort that ought to be sustained by the Treasury benches.

Mr. LOW said that, if the kind of language complained of was to be prevented, the best way to do so was for hon. members to take care what they were saying. If the hon. member for Rockhampton was as careful of his speech as he (Mr. Low) was, nobody would call him a liar.

Mr. KINGSFORD said it appeared to him that, according to the expressions used by members on the Opposition side, the hon. member for Rockhampton was perfectly right in doing as he had done. There appeared to him to be a marked difference between calling a man a liar and saying that what he had uttered was a lie, especially under the circumstances. The hon. member for Rockhampton had stated that he did not hear the hon. member for Gregory make the statement alluded to, and therefore he was

only repeating something at second hand; so that the hon. member for Gregory could not be said to have called the hon. member for Rockhampton a liar. If the hon. member for Rockhampton had stated that he had heard the hon. member for Gregory use such an expression, the matter would have been very different. The utmost that could be said with regard to the hon. member for Gregory was that he had used a rather strong term; but that was not a very uncommon thing in the House, and he was not certain that the greatest amount of blame did not rest with those who used the strong language, but with those whose conduct caused it to be used. The condemnation in this case, if any, must rest with the hon. member for Rockhampton, who had made a statement which, on the authority of the hon. member for Mitchell (Mr. De Satgé), who heard all the addresses of the hon. member for Gregory, was untrue. Supposing any stigma attached to the hon. member for Gregory, every excuse should be given him, and the motion of the Premier should be accepted by the House.

Mr. SIMPSON said the hon. member for Rockhampton did not say that the hon. member for Gregory had said a certain thing; but he asserted as a fact that that hon. member did say so, and that made a very great difference in the case. For his own part, he did not care whether it was inside or outside of the House, but if any hon. member were to put words into his mouth which he never used he would tell him so; and he thought the hon. member for Gregory was quite right. It was all very fine for the hon. member for North Brisbane to get up in his kind way; but there was no member of the House who gave more provocation than the hon. member for Rockhampton, especially when the words were put into his mouth. If the old system were reintroduced, that when a man told a lie of anyone he should be knocked down on the spot, it would be a very good thing. If any hon. member were to tell a lie about him (Mr. Simpson), whether inside or outside the House, he should tell him without the slightest hesitation that it was a lie, and take the consequences.

Mr. DICKSON said that if words of the kind used were to be justified by the provocation offered it was an argument for considering whether even something stronger might be done in the future. It was unfortunate that the Premier had been so precipitate in moving that the House should accept the explanation of the hon. member for Gregory. That was a mistake. The provocation might, perhaps, have been such as to induce the hon. member for Gregory to use the words hastily, but if that hon. member would now withdraw them the House would be quite satisfied. It was not for the House to approve of the practice of using such words in debate, even though the provocation might be great. Whatever provocation the hon. member for Gregory might have received, they must all concur in regretting that he had made use of such language, but having made use of it, it was due to the dignity of the House that it should be withdrawn; and, if the Premier could see his way to withdraw the motion, and the hon. member could be induced to withdraw the words, the difference would be settled satisfactorily.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that the advice of the hon. member for Enoggera simply came to this: that the member for the Gregory should withdraw the expression "That is a lie," and so assert that the hon. member for Rockhampton was telling the truth. Was he to do that knowing that the statement was nothing but a lie?

Mr. WALSH said that he understood the question before the House to be whether the language of the member for Gregory had transgressed the rules of debate or not. He (Mr. Walsh) believed that it did so. He was sorry to believe so, but he honestly believed that it did. He was not going into the question of having the old English modes of settling these disputes. He thought that their debates should be carried on in as moderate language as possible. He would make a suggestion to the hon. member for Rockhampton, who had made a gross and false statement, that he should withdraw his words.

Mr. STEVENSON: He is using the same language.

The PREMIER moved that the language be taken down.

Mr. WALSH would suggest—

The PREMIER said the hon. member had just told them that the member for Rockhampton had made a false statement. He moved that the words be taken down.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The words were, "a gross and false statement."

The SPEAKER: Does the hon. gentleman move that the words be taken down?

The PREMIER: Yes, sir.

The CLERK having taken down the words complained of,

The SPEAKER said the words had been taken down, but, as it would be inconvenient to take the second until the first one was disposed of, they would proceed with the first one still.

Mr. WALSH asked if he understood that he could not address the House now?

The PREMIER rose to a point of order. When an hon. member's words had been taken down he was at once to make an explanation, and the House then proceeded to consider it at once.

The SPEAKER said that there was already one point before the House, and he did not see how they could at the same time take the other into consideration. The case was a perfectly unprecedented one. So far he had never known such a case to arise. He thought that the best way would be to reserve the second point until the first was disposed of.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said if that was the case, he thought the hon. member for the Cook should be allowed to make his explanation and then withdraw.

The SPEAKER: In that case the House would proceed to view his conduct.

Mr. SCOTT asked if the hon. member for Cook was not now in possession of the chair.

Mr. WALSH explained that he had not the slightest intention of transgressing the rules of the House, or of debate, by using strong language. It was not his custom at all. But he had been going to state that the hon. member for Rockhampton had made a statement at variance with facts—he supposed that would do—and that the hon. gentleman, having now been informed that such was the case beyond any doubt, he would withdraw that statement, and, then, no doubt the hon. member for Gregory would apologise to the House for the language used.

Several HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Withdraw!

Mr. WALSH: Well, withdraw the expression. That is the mode I suggest, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. BAYNES said he had been very sorry to hear the hon. member who had just sat down use such language as he had, and he hoped he should not hear it again. But he must recall to

their minds how very nearly the same thing had been done by the hon. member for Blackall, whom he had been very much astonished to hear prove the hon. member for Rockhampton an absolute liar. That was done in the hearing of the Speaker, but it was not noticed on account of his peculiarly gentlemanly manner. He proved the member for Rockhampton an absolute liar.

Mr. REA moved that the words be taken down.

Mr. FOOTE rose, amidst loud cries of "Chair," to raise a point of order.

The SPEAKER begged that hon. members would not continue this discussion at the present time, because it would turn the proceedings of the House into ridicule. They had now three of these motions all coming on together.

Mr. FOOTE rose to a point of order. If this sort of thing was to go on, he suggested that the Speaker should adjourn the House.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That is no point of order.

The CLERK having taken down the words complained of,

Mr. BAYNES said that he had been about to state that, although the hon. member for Blackall had proved the hon. member for Rockhampton an absolute liar, and it had been hurtful to his feelings to hear that—

Cries of "Order."

The SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman is continuing to use language that has already been taken down and brought under the notice of the House, and he is doing what is incorrect.

Mr. BAYNES had not done so from any desire to transgress the rules of the House. He believed that when a man stated what was not true, it was better for him to be told that he had done so. He had a way of speaking plain himself, and he liked to hear others do the same. If a man said what was not true, he should be told that it was—he was almost afraid to say it, as he did not like to be placed in the position of a naughty boy—that it was certainly a perversion of the truth. He hoped he should never hear such language again; but, at the same time, he thought that an hon. member's general bearing in the House should be taken into consideration.

Mr. ALAND said that the scene that they had just gone through was a painful one, and he hoped it would soon terminate. He thought that when an hon. member was told that what he said was a lie it was almost tantamount to calling that person a liar. If that language were used, the good feeling which ought to pervade all their doings in the House would certainly not be kept up. If hon. members stated what was not true, and were to be interrupted by the statement, "That is a lie," then he held that if he uttered a thing that was true, and which was not very palatable to any hon. member, that member might also sing out, "That is a lie." If the one thing might be done then the other was also liable to occur. He hoped that this scene would very soon be over.

Mr. MACFARLANE said it was a humbling sight to see the elect of Queensland behaving as they had done that evening. He called the attention of the House to the fact that they had never seen that conduct repeated on the Opposition side of the House. It seemed to him that hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House, even Ministers, found enjoyment in the burlesque that had taken place that night. It was degrading to see so many who were elected by various constituencies, listening to statements which had been made that night on the other side of the House. Even if the hon. member for Rockhampton had made a mistake—even if

his facts were not true—the language of the hon. member for Gregory was certainly not becoming to any hon. member; it was not becoming to the House, and it was not respectful to his own constituents. The Minister for Works had stated that the hon. leader of the Opposition could not disgrace himself more than he had done this session already; but those who knew the leader of the Opposition would not be influenced by such a statement. The hon. gentleman was too well known to be traduced by the Minister for Works. Nothing that the Minister for Works could say against the leader of the Opposition would have any effect in this colony. He hoped, therefore, that in future such conduct as they had seen that night would not be repeated. He thought the Speaker had used his prerogative properly, and he (Mr. Macfarlane) hoped it would be a warning to hon. members on the other side of the House to use language creditable to themselves and to the House.

Mr. HAMILTON agreed with the hon. member for Ipswich that such talk as occurred on the Opposition side of the House should not be repeated. It appeared to him, however, this whole matter was a tempest in a teapot. If hon. members had listened to what the member for Rockhampton really did say they would not have expressed themselves as they had done. He said he had heard that the member for Gregory had stated that the Premier had spent £1,000 on his wedding tour. Now, if he had stated that the member for Gregory had said that the Premier had spent £1,000 on his wedding tour, and that hon. member had stated that it was a lie, then perhaps the hon. gentleman would have been out of order, although he was telling the truth. But when the member for Rockhampton stated that he had heard the member for Gregory had stated this, he looked interrogatively towards that hon. member at the time to see whether it was true. And the member for the Gregory proffered the information, and told him that the statement was a lie. The hon. member for Rockhampton himself did not father the statement. He said merely that he had heard the statement made, and he (Mr. Hamilton) would imagine that the hon. gentleman would be very grateful to the member for Gregory for informing him that it was not true.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said this discussion was quite unworthy of the House, and he thought they had had quite enough of it. It was impossible to defend any language of this kind in the House.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: From either side.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: From either side. The leader of the Opposition seemed to take his chickens under his wing, but the hon. member for Rockhampton was quite able to defend himself; he was old enough to do so. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) would suggest that they should get this matter through, and he would move as an amendment that both gentlemen withdraw the expressions. It was perfectly clear—in fact it was acknowledged on both sides—that the expressions ought not to have been used. Both gentlemen could afford to be generous and withdraw the expressions, so that the House could go on with the business of the country.

Mr. SCOTT trusted the suggestions of the last speaker would be adopted, and that the matter would not be allowed to go to the vote at all.

Mr. FRASER was not going to trespass much on the patience of the House. Notwithstanding what might be said on the other side of the House, he presumed the real objection was to the use of unparliamentary language. He thought it would be

admitted that the terms were not allowable in the society of gentlemen under any circumstances, and were calculated, however much truth there might be in them, to irritate and create a bad feeling on both sides of the House. He thought it would not be derogatory to either gentlemen—either the hon. member for Rockhampton or the hon. member for Gregory—to admit that they made a mistake in their remarks and had spoken under irritated feelings. He hoped the House would accept the suggestion of the hon. member for Stanley, and allow both hon. members to withdraw the remarks made. He was sure it would be admitted that it would not conduce to the harmony of the House to encourage or justify such expressions as they had heard used this evening.

Mr. WELD-BLUNDELL said he was exceedingly sorry that almost every hon. gentleman on the other side of the House seemed to get up for the purpose of defending the hon. member for Rockhampton, as if he was perfectly justified in making a statement that was absolutely contrary to fact. It was admitted by almost everybody on this side of the House, and he might say by hon. members on the other side, that the words were not true, therefore the hon. member was wrong in making the accusation. He (Mr. Weld-Blundell) deeply regretted that the hon. member for Gregory made the remark he did, and especially as anything that fell from the hon. member for Rockhampton was not worth attention. It would have been noticed that very often when the hon. member for Rockhampton got up to speak most of the hon. members on this side walked out of the House. He hoped the hon. member for Rockhampton would withdraw his statement, and then the hon. member for Gregory would probably withdraw his.

Mr. MACDONALD - PATERSON wished to make one remark. Hon. members on both sides of the House had spoken of the hon. member for Rockhampton. Now, there happened to be no such person as the hon. member for Rockhampton, and he thought hon. members who spoke should designate the member referred to sufficiently to be known to the general public. He happened to come in after tea while this storm in a teapot was on, and he thought it was desirable that hon. members should be designated by their proper denomination.

Mr. GRIMES thought they had got beside the question. The question was not whether the hon. member for Rockhampton (Mr. Rea) uttered words or not; the question was whether the language used by the hon. member for Gregory was parliamentary language? Was the hon. member to be justified in using that language in this Chamber? It appeared to him (Mr. Grimes) that the statement of Mr. Rea had nothing whatever to do with this question. He trusted that hon. members, in going to a division on the question, would consider the matter. They had heard from the hon. member for Dalby what would be the result if they decided that the hon. member for Gregory was justified in using the language. He declared that he would make use of the same terms as the hon. member for Gregory had done; that was the course he would take if the hon. member for Gregory was to be justified in using the language he did. He (Mr. Grimes) trusted there were sufficient hon. members in this Chamber to support the Speaker in his endeavour to have proper language used in debates.

Question—that the explanation of the hon. member for Gregory be accepted as satisfactory—put.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN pointed out that he had moved as an amendment that both gentlemen be called upon to withdraw the expressions.

The SPEAKER said he did not think that could be put, as the expressions of only one of the gentlemen were taken down.

The PREMIER desired to say a few words in reply. He had noticed when a suggestion was made by the hon. member (Mr. O'Sullivan)—that both hon. members should withdraw the expressions they had used—that it was received with approbation by most of the members on the other side of the House. In a case of this sort the only thing that could justify the leader of the House in bringing forward a motion that the explanation made by a member was satisfactory was the fact that the explanation had not been responded to by the other side. The advice of the leader of the Opposition had not pointed that way at all. The explanation given by the hon. member for Gregory was quite sufficient; and if the hon. member for Rockhampton had then simply risen and withdrawn the statement he had made, he (the Premier) had not the slightest reason to doubt that the hon. member for Gregory would have withdrawn his. If the hon. member chose to take the advice of his leader—and that advice could be only one way—it would have settled the matter at once. Let the expressions used by the hon. member for Rockhampton (Mr. Rea) be withdrawn, and the other expressions would be withdrawn also. He did not see that the hon. member for Gregory would be justified in withdrawing otherwise.

Mr. REA said it seemed to him that they ought to study parliamentary duties and decorum. Any feeling of irritation he might have personally was nothing as compared with the necessity of maintaining a proper dignity in their proceedings. If the recommendation made by the hon. member for Stanley, and supported by the Premier, was accepted, then one member could call another a liar: he could say "That's a lie," and then he would be allowed to withdraw the statement. He held that a large majority of the members who had spoken on this question had lost sight entirely of the dignity of the House and the country. Individual feelings should not be considered for one moment in comparison with the dignity of the House. With regard to some remarks that had been made, he challenged hon. members on the other side to mention one instance in which such a remark as that used by the hon. member for Gregory had been used by a member on this side.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Was cause given?

Mr. REA said that was not the question. He challenged hon. members on the other side to mention one instance of such language being used on this side.

Mr. KINGSFORD: That is not the question.

Mr. REA said it was a very important and very significant fact. Such language had been justified by the Minister for Works. During each session that he (Mr. Rea) had been in the House that hon. gentleman more than any other hon. member in the House had supported such language, and had said that the statements made were not true. He (Mr. Rea) had heard him again and again say that; therefore he did not wonder at him supporting this extraordinary language of—well—ill-breeding and blackguardism. They could not go lower. If they went to Billingsgate they could not find any language lower than these depths of blackguardism. The proper course to take in this matter was for the hon. member for Gregory to take his place in the House, and then after he (Mr. Rea) had repeated the statement he had made, for the hon. member to use his parliamentary right to rise to order on the ground that the statement was not true; then he (Mr. Rea) would apologise.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he was aware that he had spoken previously on this question, but he desired to say that he was quite certain that the hon. member for Rockhampton would be ready to withdraw any statement which he had made which might be offensive to any hon. member, if his attention was called to it; but at present the question before the House was as to whether the expression which had been used by the hon. member for Gregory was parliamentary or not. He was certain that any explanation fairly asked would be given, and he himself would be only too glad—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member misstated the question. He said the question was as to whether the expression used by the hon. member was parliamentary or not, while the real question was as to whether the explanation of the hon. member for the Gregory was satisfactory to the House or not.

Mr. GRIFFITH: The explanation was to repeat it.

Question—That the explanation of the hon. member for the Gregory is satisfactory—put, and the House being in division,

The MINISTER FOR LANDS asked if the hon. member for Rockhampton (Mr. Rea) could vote upon the question.

The SPEAKER: There is no Standing Order that I am aware of to prevent him doing so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS asked if the hon. member (Mr. Rea) could vote on the question, he having an interest in it?

The SPEAKER: There is no Standing Order that I know of to prevent him from voting.

The division was then taken:—

AYES, 18.

Sir Arthur Palmer, Messrs. Pope Cooper, McIlwraith, Macrossan, Perkins, Scott, Low, Weld-Blundell, Black, Lalor, Stevens, Baynes, Kingsford, Hamilton, F. Cooper, H. W. Palmer, Stevenson, and Simpson.

NOES, 15.

Messrs. Macfarlane, Rutledge, Griffith, Dickson, Rea, McLean, Garrick, Aland, Francis, Foote, Kates, Fraser, Grimes, Beattie, and Archer.

The question was, therefore, resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. STEVENSON contended that the words of the hon. member for Cook, which had been taken down in the same way as the words used by the hon. member for Gregory, should be dealt with in the same way, so that the question might be discussed as to whether they were parliamentary or not.

The PREMIER said the hon. member was not the member who drew the attention of the House to the words. He (the Premier) had moved that the words of the hon. member for Cook be taken down, but he had no intention of proceeding with his motion, and his reason was plain enough. They had gone quite far enough with the matter. His reason for asking the Clerk to take down the words was that, when the hon. member for Cook was gravely reproving the hon. member for Gregory for using gross language, he in the same breath said the hon. member made an absolutely false statement. He did not think the hon. member for Cook had any intention of using unparliamentary language, but he (the Premier) hoped it would be a caution to young members to be careful in the language that they used. Attention was called in the first place to the language used to-night simply because it was uttered in a strong voice by the hon. member for Gregory. He did not wish it to go forth to the country, as he had heard it stated by hon. members on the other side of the House, that such language never

came from that side, because it was not correct. He had heard grossly indecent words coming from the other side of the House often, and from no one oftener than from the hon. member whose words had been taken down, Mr. Rea.

Mr. STEVENSON submitted that this was not a matter for the Premier to withdraw, and that the House must deal with it. If it was a question in which the modulation of the voice was to be taken into consideration it was too ridiculous altogether. They could talk in any tone of voice they liked. It was not a matter to be treated in that way—that the words should be taken down because they were not uttered in a more moderate tone of voice. It was absurd, and he said that neither the Premier nor the Speaker had a right to withdraw the words which he asked to be taken down. The House must decide that matter.

The CLERK of the House, at the direction of the Speaker, then read the following minute:—

"The hon. member for Cook, replying to the remarks of Mr. Rea, one of the members for Rockhampton, said, 'He has made a grossly false statement.'"

The SPEAKER called upon the hon. member for Cook to make any explanation he thought fit.

Mr. WALSH said he never had the slightest intention—and he thought it was known to every member of this House that he never had the slightest intention—to use any expression that would be contrary to the rules of debate or offensive to any member of the House. He never would use any such expression, and the expressions that were used were only used in reference to a statement—which the hon. member for Mitchell said was a mistake—which the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Rea, made use of. He withdrew the expression if it was unparliamentary.

The hon. member for Cook then, by direction of the Speaker, withdrew while the question as to whether his explanation was satisfactory was under consideration.

The PREMIER moved that the explanation given by the hon. member for Cook was satisfactory.

Question put and passed.

Mr. REA then asked for the words used by the hon. member for Burnett to be read.

The CLERK of the House, at the direction of the Speaker, then read the following:—

"The hon. member for Burnett stated that the hon. member for Blackall had proved Mr. Rea, one of the members for Rockhampton, to be an absolute liar."

The SPEAKER thereupon called upon the hon. member for Burnett to make any explanation he thought fit.

Mr. BAYNES said he was about to speak with regard to the course pursued by the hon. member for Blackall:—probably he did not use parliamentary language, and he thought before he sat down he apologised if he had not used parliamentary language;—but, nevertheless, he went on to state that the hon. member for Blackall, in his gentlemanly manner, proved that something that was said by the hon. member for Rockhampton was absolutely untrue, and he apologised for using plain and straightforward language which might not be parliamentary, and he regretted that such words as had been complained of before the House should be used by the hon. member in the emphatic manner in which they were used. He now repeated his apology, and regretted that any such language should be used in the House.

The hon. member, Mr. BAYNES, then, at the direction of the Speaker, withdrew while the question was under consideration.

The PREMIER moved that the explanation made by the hon. member for Burnett be accepted as satisfactory.

Mr. KATES said, after the proceedings of this evening, this House, he was sure, when the Queensland people read *Hansard* to-morrow, would not compare favourably with other Parliaments.

Mr. HAMILTON said it appeared to him that the hon. member for Burnett was not out of order in what he stated. He simply deplored the conduct of the hon. member for Blackall in having stated—

The SPEAKER: The hon. member for Burnett has withdrawn the language complained of, and the hon. member for Gympie is out of order in further referring to it.

Question put and passed.

Mr. REA said he presumed he was now at liberty to proceed with his remarks. One thing which the debate would show to the people of this country was that if a member on the Opposition side of the House was severe in his language the Premier took care to shield any member on his own side who invented blackguard language or Billingsgate—

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I move that the hon. member's words be taken down.

The SPEAKER asked what were the words to be taken down?

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: The hon. member said the Premier would shield any blackguardism on his side of the House.

Mr. DE SATGE called attention to the presence of strangers in the House.

The SPEAKER ordered that the galleries should be cleared.

After strangers had withdrawn,

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the words he wished to be taken down were as nearly as possible, "The Premier would shield members on his own side of the House who invented blackguardism and Billingsgate."

The words having been taken down by the CLERK,

Mr. REA said those were not the words he used—they were entirely wrong. He would, with permission, repeat what he said. The hon. member said the words he quoted were, as nearly as he could gather, those used by him (Mr. Rea). That was not a statement to be taken down.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member denies having used the words.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: If those were not the exact words they were words to the same effect.

Mr. STEVENSON said he had no wish to use language which had already been objected to, but he would state that the purport of the words used by the hon. member (Mr. Rea) was as stated by the hon. member for the Gregory. He himself heard the words "invent," "blackguardism," and "Billingsgate."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I asked you, Mr. Speaker, at the time, whether the expression "blackguardism" was parliamentary, and you gave no reply.

The SPEAKER said it was impossible for him to hear every word uttered.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the words were used in exactly the sense stated by the hon. member for the Gregory—namely, that the proceedings this evening showed that the Premier would shield anyone on his own side who used blackguardism and Billingsgate.

The SPEAKER called upon the hon. member (Mr. Rea) to speak and then retire from the House.

Mr. REA said the expression he used was "blackguard language." That was what he had denounced all the time, and unless a marked distinction were made and such language stopped the House would be held up to the scorn of the whole colony. The words invented by the hon. member for the Burnett were as bad as any that could be used, and they had caused him to use the language complained of. If such words were used they must be properly designated, so that anyone who knew English could understand. He did not use the word "blackguardism"—that was an act; it was "blackguard language" he had denounced that evening.

The hon. member, at the direction of the Speaker, then withdrew.

The PREMIER said the hon. member admitted the words taken down, with the exception of one word. The hon. member had substituted "blackguard language" for "blackguardism"; but he failed to see the distinction. It was quite as unparliamentary to use the expression "blackguard language" as the expression "blackguardism." The expression the hon. member used was in effect that the Premier of this colony would shield any of his followers who used blackguard language. He (Mr. McIlwraith) held that the expression was highly unparliamentary, and the hon. member, instead of withdrawing it and apologising, had justified its use. The remarks made by the hon. member in justification were not worth mentioning, and he should not refer to them. He moved that the explanation of the hon. member was unsatisfactory to the House.

Mr. GRIFFITH said it appeared that there would be two records to-night—one that it was parliamentary and proper to say "That's a lie," and that it was satisfactory for the hon. member using that expression to say in explanation that what he referred to was a lie; the other stating that when another hon. member said that the Premier sheltered members on his own side who used blackguard language, that was unparliamentary. In the opinion of a majority of the House it was proper and correct for one member to say, when another member was speaking, "That's a lie"; it was improper and unparliamentary for another hon. member to refer to that as blackguard language. He hardly knew what debate in the House was coming to, but he was still of opinion that the expression "That's a lie," was blackguard language; and he should continue to think so in spite of any number of resolutions of the House. The words under consideration might be unparliamentary and unsatisfactory, but they were more parliamentary, reputable, and respectable, and more likely to be conducive to good order in debate, than such language as the House had determined to be proper and parliamentary.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the discussion had in a measure originated through himself in consequence of his having made an interjection which he was bound to admit was contrary to the forms of the House. But when words so highly offensive and so utterly untrue were put into his mouth he could not be expected to refrain from ejaculating a denial in the strongest possible way. He was glad the discussion had arisen, because it was generally admitted that the words taken exception to were utterly untrue, and that when he used the offensive word he spoke the truth. If hon. members would be a little more careful about speaking the truth, and about making assertions—which he should

describe by the words which had been objected to, if they had not been declared unparliamentary—there would be very much less of such acrimonious discussions. It was only for the purpose of pointing out that it was not the Government side of the House alone that made use of strong and unparliamentary language that he had called attention to the words used by the hon. member for Rockhampton.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he hoped the hon. member for North Brisbane would see the mistake he had been making in encouraging the hon. member for Rockhampton (Mr. Rea) in the bad language he had used. It must be patent to every hon. member of the House that if the hon. member for Rockhampton, who had only occupied a seat in the House for two years, had not been encouraged by the hon. member for North Brisbane, his leader, his conduct would not have been so disgraceful as it had been. They had frequently seen during debate that the hon. member for Rockhampton got up and used the most unparliamentary language, and they had seen the leader of the Opposition laughing at him and encouraging him to use the expressions; but they found that if the hon. member for North Brisbane (Mr. Griffith) heard anything on the other side that he thought unparliamentary he immediately took the dignity of the House into his charge. He (Mr. Macrossan) maintained that, if the hon. member for North Brisbane had any respect for the dignity of the House, instead of encouraging the hon. member for Rockhampton, he would have reproved him; and, if the hon. member had any respect for his leader's opinion, he would be induced to refrain from using such expressions. But, so far from thinking the hon. member for Rockhampton had done any harm in using unparliamentary language, he (Mr. Griffith) actually justified him, and said they were wrong in having come to a vote on the previous question: in fact, justifying the hon. member for Rockhampton after his having used the word "blackguardism." It would be well if no more of this sort of thing took place on either side of the House. They remembered a few sessions ago how the hon. member for Rockhampton (Mr. Rea) distinguished himself by certain poetic effusions; and they recollected well how very pleased the leader of the Opposition was with the expressions.

Mr. GRIFFITH: Very much amused.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said they remembered well how the hon. member laughed, and almost clapped his hands, encouraging the hon. member in that way. The statements of the hon. member were actually treated as a joke, until the hon. member for Gregory retorted across the table, "It is a lie"; then the hon. member for North Brisbane was suddenly seized with respect for the House, and called attention to the words used, when, if he had been sincere in keeping up the dignity of the House, he would have called attention before allowing the hon. member for Rockhampton to go so far. He (Mr. Macrossan) hoped the hon. gentleman would see fit to advise the hon. member for Rockhampton to withdraw his language and allow them to go on with the business of the country. They were having too much of this sort of thing, and if allowed to continue he did not know the extent to which the demoralisation of the Opposition would carry them. The Opposition had become utterly demoralised, and he was extremely sorry that any hon. member should back up the hon. member for Rockhampton in his conduct. He was also sorry to see the undue levity which prevailed on the other side of the House. It must be evident to any hon. member that the members of the other side were not impressed with the

sense of dignity which every member of the House should be imbued with. It was all very well to get up and say that it would be very strange if the people of Queensland should say they were unfit to conduct the business of the country, but they should show by their actions that they were sincere, and not continue to laugh at anything which they thought amusing. They should act in the same way as the hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Kates), who held his tongue and looked as solemn as he possibly could, when bad language was being used. That hon. member never used bad language—he always discountenanced it; and he (Mr. Macrossan) hoped the leader of the Opposition would imitate the example set by the hon. member for Darling Downs.

Mr. KATES protested against the assertion made by the Minister for Works that that side of the House was becoming demoralised. He did not agree with the remarks of the hon. member for Rockhampton; he condemned them just as much as he did those of the hon. member for Gregory, and if the question before them came to a division he would vote against the use of such language.

Mr. HAMILTON said that, according to some members, the fault of the hon. member for Gregory lay not in the words he used, but in his tone of voice; in fact, his fault lay in being a strong-voiced man. He (Mr. Hamilton) now appreciated how it was that Mr. Rea, the member for Rockhampton, had with impunity for so many years been allowed to insult members by charging them with robbery and similar gross charges. To-night, however, his articulation was more distinct than usual, and the consequence was that he had to walk outside the bar of the House. It was amusing to listen to the statement of the leader of the Opposition that he felt disgraced at the levity with which the remarks of the hon. member for Gregory had been treated to-night. The members of the Opposition had taken part, countenanced by their leader, in scenes which disgraced the House far more than that evening's episode. He recollected, when on one occasion the leader had made a foul charge against a member on the Government side of the House, and when a supporter of his consequently left him in disgust and walked over to the Government benches, how that member was treated. Because that member exercised his freedom of conscience and acted according to its dictates, he was actually hissed by the Opposition as he walked to the Government side of the House, and the leader of the Opposition actually stated from his place in the House that he was sorry he had not joined in the hissing. This was the conduct of the gentleman who assumed to uphold the dignity of the House. More disgraceful conduct had never occurred within these walls.

Mr. McLEAN said he must take exception to the remarks made by the Minister for Works, who stood up and condemned any action taken or speech made on that side of the House. From his remarks it would appear that everything in the shape of bad conduct or bad language came from the Opposition. He (Mr. McLean) would not defend the language used by the hon. member for Rockhampton. He believed it was unparliamentary, and he condemned its use, and had no doubt that the hon. member regretted that he had made use of such language.

Mr. SCOTT said he did not see how this course of proceeding was going to end. Certainly, no one could say that the explanation of the hon. member for Rockhampton (Mr. Rea) was satisfactory; indeed, it was no explanation at all. If the hon. member had explained the words and withdrawn them, he (Mr. Scott) could

see where it would end; but truly no one could say that the explanation was satisfactory.

Mr. McLEAN: I did not say so.

Mr. SCOTT said he would suggest that the hon. member for Rockhampton be requested to withdraw the words.

Mr. McLEAN said he wished to explain to the House that he condemned the language used by the hon. member for Rockhampton (Mr. Rea).

The PREMIER said, had the hon. member for Rockhampton (Mr. Rea) withdrawn the words and apologised, he would, as he had done on previous occasions, have moved that the explanation was satisfactory. It was because the hon. member had neither withdrawn the words nor apologised that he was compelled to make the motion.

Mr. WALSH said he had advised the very best way out of the difficulty in suggesting that the hon. member for Rockhampton should withdraw the expression, and, in doing so, he was only repeating language that had already been spoken. If his suggestion had been acted upon, this very disgraceful proceeding would have ended there and then.

Mr. MESTON said, far be it from him to give a moral homily on this proceeding, which had wholly arisen from the interjection that an hon. member had told a lie. There were very many ways in which they could tell a man that he was not telling the truth, without saying "It is a lie." He remembered having occasion at a public meeting to intimate to a man that he had not told the truth, and he did it in this fashion: "About 2,000 years ago a philosopher of Alexandria started a new sect called the Eclectics, who were lovers of truth; if the gentleman who has spoken had lived in those days he would have been a violent opponent of that sect." There would then have been no necessity for all this discussion. They must remember that all virtue was self-denial; and it was a question of self-denial to refrain from using improper expressions to one another. They should curb their passions as much as possible, and try not to be excited under any circumstances whatever. If they were always to remember—or strive to remember—that they occupied the position of gentlemen, there would be less reason for this abuse than at the present time. The Queensland Parliament, however, was not altogether peculiar in forgetting itself occasionally. In the House of Lords and the House of Commons offensive expressions had been made use of.

The SPEAKER: I do not see what that has to do with the question under discussion. The question is that the explanation of the hon. member for Rockhampton (Mr. Rea) is unsatisfactory.

Mr. DICKSON said that the Premier and the Government took up a very peculiar position in attempting to lead the House to affirm that the interjection, "It is a lie," was a satisfactory expression to make use of.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Government side: No.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL rose to a point of order. Had this anything to do with the question before the House? The matter alluded to by the hon. member had been disposed of.

The SPEAKER: It is impossible for me to tell what arguments the hon. member intends to use till he proceeds further.

Mr. DICKSON said it seemed to be intended to curtail debate, but he should not transgress the rules of the House. In a previous resolution it was considered that a repetition—not an explanation or apology—was a sufficient explanation. The words used by the hon. member

for Rockhampton were undoubtedly objectionable, and he (Mr. Dickson) was not going to excuse them or say that they were such as should be used. If the hon. member were allowed to do so, he would explain and apologise for the words used. But it seemed, from the action of the Government and their supporters, that there was one vocabulary for those on the right hand of the Speaker and a different vocabulary for those on the left. And it came to this: that the Government, with the tyrannical action which had characterised them throughout their reign, sought to impose a gag on the liberty of that Chamber. He protested against such one-sided resolutions being attempted to be carried in the House—resolutions condoning highly improper words used on the right, and condemning words—which he certainly did not approve of—because they happened to be used by gentlemen on the left. This would show the country how much value was to be attached to the resolutions of that Chamber in connection with matters of parliamentary procedure which had to be decided by the Government of the day.

Mr. KINGSFORD said, referring to the statement made by the hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Dickson)—that there was one vocabulary for that side of the House and another for the other side of the House—with regard to objectionable phrases, he supposed—that if it were allowable to say “That is a lie” he should most assuredly say so; but he would not say so because it was not allowable. Still, it was decidedly untrue. And, instead of throwing dirt from one side of the House to the other, hon. members on the opposite side, as well as those on his (Mr. Kingford’s) side, ought to attempt to allay the fever of excitement which had been raging for the last hour, and which was raised mainly, chiefly, and solely by the hon. member for North Brisbane (Mr. Griffith), with his high-toned piety, goodness, and virtue which he brought to bear on a solitary word used under strong excitement by an hon. member.

Mr. LOW said that if the gentleman now outside the bar of the House had made a proper apology they should have got out of this difficulty.

The PREMIER said the House had unanimously affirmed that the language used by the hon. member for Rockhampton (Mr. Rea) was unparliamentary, but if the hon. member would withdraw the expression and apologise to the House he (the Premier) would proceed no further in the matter.

Question put and passed.

Mr. REA having been called to his place,

The SPEAKER said: Mr. Rea, the House has decided that the explanation offered by you was unsatisfactory. Under the 95th Standing Order, a member whose explanation is unsatisfactory will be censured or otherwise dealt with as the House may think fit. It has been decided to allow you to withdraw the words complained of and apologise for using them.

Mr. REA said he was quite willing to withdraw the words complained of, and would have withdrawn them at first had they been objected to in a parliamentary manner.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot argue the question. He must withdraw the language and apologise to the House.

Mr. REA accepted the decision of the House, withdrew the language complained of, and apologised. He supposed they must now find some other vocabulary for commenting on the conduct of Ministers. It had been said that he was in the habit of attacking hon. members, but he challenged any member on either side to name

one instance in which he had attacked or used an offensive statement towards any individual member of the House. He had often, in the discharge of his public duty—and he would be unworthy of his seat in the House if he had not—spoken of the Ministry whose acts he had commented on. When doing so he had been interrupted by the hon. member for Gregory, and it was then that he made use of the words complained of.

The SPEAKER: The point of order has been settled. The question before the House is the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. REA said he was taking up the thread of his discourse from the time he was interrupted. He was then commenting on the favouritism shown by the Ministry to one part of the colony. He was then going on to point out that the Customs revenue from Townsville was only £56,000 while that from Rockhampton was £74,000, or nearly 50 per cent. more than that of Townsville; while the apportionment of the railway expenditure was 50 per cent. more for Townsville than for Rockhampton. That was a direct instance of favouritism to the North, in addition to the other instances such as the mail contract from Thursday Island to the Gulf. Further promises made by the Premier when he was in the North showed conclusively that there were good grounds for believing that the interests of the North were furthered as against the South. That was plainly evident from the whole tenor of the Premier’s conduct since his return from England. He held that before they passed those lines the fullest explanation ought to be demanded of the Premier as to what he was going to do with regard to the transcontinental projects, as foreshadowed in the Governor’s Speech. This was the proper occasion for the House, on behalf of the country, to demand the explanation and refuse to pass any one of these lines until they got it.

Question of adjournment put :—

AYES, 17.

Messrs. Griffith, Rutledge, Dickson, McLean, Aland, Rea, Miles, Kates, Garrick, Foote, Macfarlane, Beattie, Francis, Grimes, Fraser, Bailey, and Groom.

NOES, 26.

Sir Arthur Palmer, Messrs. P. Cooper, Macrossan, McIlwraith, Perkins, Weld-Blundell, H. Palmer, Low, De Satgé, F. Cooper, Archer, Scott, Hamilton, Kingsford, Price, H. W. Palmer, Baynes, Black, Walsh, Lalor, Lunley Hill, Stevenson, Simpson, Stevens, O’Sullivan, and Norton.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he thought after this term of interruption it was time to return to more serious business, and at least conclude some part of the business before the House. He was really at a loss to understand the conduct of the hon. member for North Brisbane, who professed to be in favour of this line of railway, and still, at the same time, supported the hon. member for Toowoomba in the motion which he made for the adjournment of the debate. He (the Minister for Works) did not know what was to be gained by such an adjournment. The plans and sections of the line under discussion should be approved or they should not be approved of, and he thought it would be far better and far more honest if hon. gentlemen would take up that course and say that they were opposed to the approval of these plans and sections, and vote against them. He quite understood that those hon. gentlemen, a couple of sessions ago, were entirely opposed to the extension of all trunk lines, and he hoped this was not a continuation of their line of conduct taken then. He was willing to admit that the leader of the Opposition was always in favour of these extensions, but then his followers were not, and he hoped his followers had been converted now to his opinion. It had been said by the hon. member for Enoggera and several other hon. members, to-night, that

they did not believe that he would be able to make this line, upon these plans and sections, at the cost at which he said he could; and the hon. member for Enoggera, especially, showed his great knowledge of the geography of this colony by supposing that the Burdekin River was between Charters Towers and Hughenden. Other hon. members who followed him showed their knowledge of the affairs of the colony in an equally lucid way. It must be well known to the hon. member for Enoggera—or, at least, it should be, although he (the Minister for Works) knew that the hon. gentleman had not travelled in that part of the colony—that the Burdekin River was between Townsville and Charters Towers; and the bridge over the Burdekin had no connection whatever with the approval or non-approval of these plans and sections. The hon. gentleman had got an idea in his mind that because on a former occasion his then Premier, Mr. George Thorn, paid £100,000 for the making of a bridge over the Burdekin River—that, therefore, the great cost of this bridge would prevent him (Mr. Macrossan) from making this line from Charters Towers to Hughenden for anything like £3,000 per mile. After that, perhaps, the hon. gentleman would be very much surprised when he told him that not only had he provided for crossing the Burdekin River, but he had also provided for fifteen miles of line for about one-half the cost which he and his Government reckoned the bridge would amount to. On No. 5 section—the section nearest to Charters Towers—he had provided for the construction of fifteen miles, including permanent way and supervision, at a cost of £50,305, crossing the river; and all at a cost which the hon. member had said, in consequence of this expensive bridge, would prevent him from making this line to Charters Towers. So far from his not being able to construct the line at the price he had stated, he had purposely understated that estimate. The hon. gentleman challenged his statement because, as he said, he had not given the engineer's estimate. He, however, did mention the engineer's estimate. The engineer's estimate for permanent way was made at a time when they had to pay a high price for permanent way. That permanent way cost them £874 per mile, and he was now getting permanent way at a cost of £510 per mile; making a difference of over £300 upon that item alone. The engineer's estimate for earthworks and bridges, and everything, exclusive of permanent way and supervision, was £2,200 a mile. That engineer always made very large estimates, and his previous estimates on the different sections of the line had been from £200 to £300 a mile over what the work was actually executed for; and he had not the slightest doubt that the tenders which would be received for the construction of this line would be equally as much below the estimate from Charters Towers to Hughenden as they had been on the former sections. He was justified, therefore, in coming to the conclusion, knowing the country as he did, that every mile of the line would be done for £2,500. He (Mr. Macrossan) approved of the policy of making this line two years ago, and argued the question at that time, as he believed, to the satisfaction of the country, if not to certain members on the other side, although they seemed now to have come round to his opinion, that this line should be extended, and that, in fact, all trunk lines should be extended—the Southern line, the Central, and the Northern. The Premier, in making his statement that afternoon, previous to the unfortunate interruption which had lost them two hours, stated that the Southern extension would have to be made. He (Mr. Macrossan) said emphatically that the Southern extension would have to be made.

The Premier also said that there were several reasons why it had not been gone on with before, and he (Mr. Macrossan) would give those reasons before he sat down. He wished that hon. members, in approaching a question of this kind, would divest themselves as far as possible, not only of their own prejudices, but of pandering to the prejudices of any people outside the House. It had been said here to-night that the Government were showing a deal of favour to the northern portion of the colony and neglecting the southern portion. That statement was incorrect, and he would show it to be so before he sat down. Hon. gentlemen in their position as legislators ought to be aware that it was incorrect. The length of the Southern line to Roma was 316 miles; the length of the Central line was 206 miles; and the length of the Northern line was 35 miles. Thus, the Central and Northern lines together were a great deal shorter than the Southern line alone; while at the present moment there were actually more miles of branch lines being made in the South than there were miles constructed in the entire North. Hon. members forgot those things. On the very notice-paper of to-day there were four branch lines for the South, in addition to the two which were at present under construction, and those two—namely, the Sandgate line and the Fassifern line—had more miles under construction than had been made in the North. Hon. members seemed also to be under the impression that the Government had been spending the money voted in 1879 in the Northern and Central districts to the neglect of the Southern district—another statement which was quite incorrect. Not a single penny of the amount voted in 1879 for the extension of the trunk lines had yet been spent, and where was the injustice done to the South, when they all stood in the same category? But thirty-seven miles of line were being made in the South independent of that, and yet those gentlemen had the audacity to accuse the Government of favouring the North to the detriment of the South. Those statements should never have been made by men who from their position were bound to know the facts, and who, if they did not know the facts, were unfit to represent their constituents. He would now state one or two reasons why the Southern line was not gone on with. One reason was, the deputation which waited on them requesting the extension to be stopped, although the expression used by his colleague, the Premier, that the day would come, and come soon, when the constituents of those who interviewed the Colonial Secretary and himself to stop the trunk lines, would insist upon the trunk lines being made, and that they themselves would be the first to cut out for the making of them. That time had come, and they were crying out for them to be made, and were, he was certain, sorry that they had ever interviewed the Government on such a flimsy pretence as that set forth this evening by the hon. member for Toowoomba. That hon. member said people believed the colony was approaching a crisis like that of 1866, that there was a scarcity of money and a depression in trade, and that the remedy for that scarcity of money and that depression of trade was actually to stop the public works of the colony. That was the remedy proposed, according to the statement of the hon. member—to stop the public works of the colony because trade was depressed. In other countries and colonies when trade was depressed, it was the duty of the Government to give employment, as far as possible, to the working men, and not to stop public works. On that pretext those gentlemen asked the Government to stop the extension of trunk lines. But the real motive of those gentlemen

was not as stated: it was a parliamentary intrigue to put the Government out of office and to have the spending of the money themselves. He was certain of it, for they themselves had said so, and that was sufficient for him. Another and a very sufficient reason for stopping the extension was that the Government were embarrassed because many of their own supporters, as well as many on the other side, were not quite certain whether the line as surveyed for the extension was the correct line or not—whether it should be extended towards Charleville or towards Cunnamulla. That was a very strong reason why the line was not gone on with. A collateral reason was that all the gentlemen who interviewed them on the subject represented Southern constituencies. If a proportional number of Northern or Central members had interviewed them at that time with a similar object in view the extensions there would have been stopped also. The extension of the Southern line was stopped because those gentlemen who were supposed to represent their constituents asked for the stoppage. Hon. members must recollect that last year the late hon. member for Toowoomba (Mr. Davenport), acting as the mouthpiece of those here who were uncertain as to the direction which the line from Roma should take, placed a notice of motion on the paper; and if hon. members on the Opposition side of the House had been extremely anxious at that time for the extension of the line in any direction they should have shown it. The terms of the motion, which was moved by the late Mr. Davenport on the 4th November, were as follows:—

"1. That, in the opinion of the House, it is desirable that the extension of the Southern and Western Railway line beyond Roma be immediately proceeded with.

"2. That the resolution approving the plans and sections of the Southern and Western line from Roma to Mitchell, on the 16th of September, 1879, be rescinded.

"3. That a line be surveyed in a more southerly direction than the line from Roma to Mitchell, with a view to secure the traffic of the Balonne, Culgoa, Warrego, and Paroo districts."

Not a single objection was raised to the motion by hon. members on the other side, and the hon. member withdrew it, because, as he said—

"He had received a promise from the Government that if he withdrew the motion the survey of the line would be proceeded with as advocated. The Government considered that they had funds in hand available for such a purpose, and consequently he begged now to withdraw the motion."

He (Mr. Macrossan) had carried out that survey, and hon. members would agree with him that it would have been wrong to make the line to Mitchell while they were surveying a line to Cunnamulla to see which was the best direction. There was also another embarrassment. The Premier had had some negotiations with a company of gentlemen in England, and also with a company of gentlemen in Australia, willing to make a railway on land grants; and it was uncertain where the connection of those two lines with the existing line would take place, whether in the direction of Mitchell or Cunnamulla. That difficulty no longer existed. He had had a report of the survey of the line to Cunnamulla, and it was known that a company had been formed to make a line to Cunnamulla on certain conditions. The survey had proved that a good and cheap line could be made from Roma to Cunnamulla, and they knew where the connection of those two lines with the main line should be made. If the particular plans under discussion were approved of to-night, they would only be in the same position as the plans and sections of the Southern line were in; for tenders for the latter could be called to-morrow

morning, if necessary, for the line to Mitchell, whereas they could not be called for the next six or twelve months for the line from Charters Towers to Hughenden, or for the proposed extension on the Central line. Now, he thought he had proved conclusively that the Government had never had the slightest intention to withdraw from the making of this line. The reasons given were, he believed, sufficient reasons. He thought hon. members would agree—that even those on the other side of the House would agree—that they were reasons which justified the Government in not making the line. But now the time had come when the line should and must be made. The Government did not, and had not, shown favour to any district. They would be unworthy of their position if they did, and he maintained that before hon. members on the other side of the House rose to make statements—such statements as had been made that evening—they should come better prepared with facts, and not draw so much on their imaginations. It was easy to say that the Government was a Northern Government, and favoured the North, and possibly the statement would influence some people in Brisbane who would not take the trouble to examine the facts of the case. Now, the facts were, that all the money voted in 1879 was still intact, and that not a penny of this money for the line from Charters Towers could be spent for the next twelve months, and yet that many miles of the Southern and Western line could be made within twelve months; and he hoped that would satisfy the House. He had expected when he came to the House to pass the whole of these plans and sections through in the evening, knowing that they had been fully debated some time ago with the exception of the line to South Brisbane, which was only debated last session. Now hon. members had received this explanation he hoped they would pass this motion. Before he sat down he wished to make a statement that the Southern and Western line—the line from Roma in the direction towards Mitchell, and perhaps beyond it—would be made, and made, perhaps, before a single mile of these two lines. The line from Charters Towers to Townsville could not be extended yet beyond its present position. Tenders were let as far as Charters Towers, but it would be unfair to let tenders beyond it, as they were not in an advanced position to guarantee the tenderers a supply of permanent-way material when they were ready for it. Therefore it was impossible to call for tenders for any portion of this extension for six months, or of that which followed it for twelve months; so that there could be no possible danger of favouritism when to-morrow morning he could call for tenders for fifty-one miles of the Southern and Western Railway. He hoped they would come to a division—if they were to have a division—that evening, and that they would be allowed to go home without wasting any further time about the matter.

Mr. KATES said that if the hon. gentleman extended the line from Roma to Cunnamulla he would have to alter his charges to make it profitable. Numerous teams were now carrying goods direct from Dalby to Cunnamulla, *via* Cecil Plains, down the Moonie River, and *via* St. George, to Cunnamulla, for £9 per ton; whilst the charge from Dalby to Roma by rail was £7 per ton, and from Roma to Cunnamulla was another £7 per ton—a clear saving by team direct to Cunnamulla of £4 per ton. That was enough to show the hon. gentleman that unless he altered his tariff it would never pay. It was well known that people in Burenda were sending their wool teams down direct to Dalby at £9 the team, avoiding the railway altogether, because it was cheaper—a saving of £4 per ton—to take

the wool by teams. He had been told that day, by a gentleman lately arrived from Roma, that waggons and drays laden with goods amounting to thirty tons were lately on the road, the country being a heavy loser thereby. The passenger traffic to Roma had increased by £1,800, whilst the goods traffic had decreased by £1,000.

Mr. WALSH rose to a point of order. The hon. gentleman was discussing the railway traffic: was he in order?

The SPEAKER said the hon. gentleman was discussing the expediency of making railways, and was therefore justified in making the remarks.

Mr. KATES said the matter was one of great importance in connection with the making of the railway to Cunnamulla, as they would never get the traffic if the rates were not altered. From Toowoomba to Roma the Government were now charging fifteen guineas per ton for drapery, tobacco, wines, and spirits, and ten guineas a ton for tea, while drays carried the goods for half the price. He was given to understand that engines capable of drawing sixty-five tons from Ipswich to Roma were generally arriving with only twenty tons. How much better would it be for the hon. gentleman to reduce the rates of charges and carry three times the quantity.

The PREMIER rose to order. The hon. gentleman was evidently speaking as if the question before the House was the Southern and Western line, instead of the line from Charters Towers to Hughenden.

Mr. KATES said he had no reason to believe but that the rates would be the same up North as on the Southern line. He thought it right to bring the matter under the notice of hon. members, as numerous drays were now on the road carrying at a lower figure than the railway.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he would not prolong the discussion at any great length. He regretted he was not in the House sufficiently early to have heard the arguments of the Minister for Works in introducing the motion. He had heard some observations of the Premier which struck him as being unnecessarily harsh. The Premier stated that the Opposition seemed to make it their business to oppose everything the Government introduced in the interests of the colony, simply because it came from the Government; that nothing was received on its merits; and that a policy of obstruction was the only policy by which the Opposition met the policy of the Government. The hon. gentleman endeavoured to strengthen his argument by a reference to 1879, when the three trunk lines were proposed to the House. The obstruction which then arose, as was very well known, was owing to the hon. gentleman's arbitrary and high-handed manner in endeavouring to compel the Opposition to consent to borrowing more than a million of money at 12 o'clock at night. The Opposition were not to be coerced into that, and it became a trial of strength, and so they went on. The Opposition had never changed their mind as to the policy of extending the three trunk lines into the interior of the country; but, seeing that the Government were sufficiently powerful to carry these or any other resolutions that they wished to carry through the House—he spoke for himself, and not for other hon. members—that was one reason why they gave way, and so incurred the odium of other hon. members, such as the hon. member for South Brisbane. The reason of the change in their action was that it was rumoured that the Government were prepared to make a compromise with the Opposition—that of discontinuing the projected extension of the line beyond Roma, and of carrying through

the other lines. He took that view of it; and rather than let the interests of the South be imperilled, he thought it would be better to have the three lines of railway. He considered it far better to give way than to injure the prospects of the Southern districts, and then to have the odium cast upon them for doing so. They intended this line to be made at the same time as the others, and they were not prepared to play into the hands of the Government so far as to let the other lines be constructed without it. He thought they would be justified at this stage in requiring to know the pronounced policy of the Government as regarded this question. The Minister wanted them to be content with his saying it should be made, without showing them how. Propositions might be received from some gentlemen who wished to construct a line from Roma on the system of land grants. But suppose Parliament was opposed to this system? The sanction would be given for these two Northern lines, while they would have to wait for the line from Roma for two years at least. It was no argument to say that the South had an enormous extent of railway in comparison with the North, and that, therefore, the South was receiving what was its due. Was not Brisbane the capital of the colony? Was not the South the parent of the entire colony, from whence the Northern provinces had sprung? Did not the prosperity of all other localities depend upon the prosperity of the South? It was a sort of mutual interest. If the South suffered in respect of any advantages to which it was entitled in proportion to its greater age and its greater population, the North would suffer also. He thought they ought to have more time to consider the matter, and with that object he would move that this House do now adjourn.

Mr. GRIFFITH wished to ask for some information. He understood that a motion for adjournment would be agreed to; but he found it was not to be, and he should like to have some explanation.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY presumed the hon. gentleman referred to a conversation that he had had with him across the table, when he told the hon. gentleman that if he would get the hon. member who was then speaking to stop, the information required would be given. That was what he (the Colonial Secretary) promised; and the Secretary for Works had given the fullest information. If the hon. gentleman understood that he (the Colonial Secretary) was going to allow a member of the Opposition to carry a motion of adjournment against the Government, he altogether misunderstood him. That was not the way in which he (the Colonial Secretary) carried on warfare in this House. To suppose that he was going to allow the motion of the hon. member for Toowoomba (Mr. Groom), for the purpose of giving the hon. member for Enoggera an opportunity of making a speech that he had made before this evening, was absurd; he never even dreamt of such a thing.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he did not understand the hon. gentleman that way at all. He understood him to say that he would consent to an adjournment.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had distinctly stated that if the hon. member then speaking would stop, the Minister for Works would supply the necessary information.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member for Enoggera had misunderstood him.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: He does not want to understand you.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS remarked that the hon. member had said that it was probable the Southern line would be extended by a company under the land-grant system, but he (the Minister for Works) had told the House that the line would be extended by the Government from Roma in the direction of Mitchell, and perhaps further. He never said anything at all about the land-grant system. If the hon. member knew anything about the country between Roma and Mitchell, he would know that the line could not be extended on the land-grant system, because nearly all the land had been sold.

Mr. SIMPSON said he perfectly understood the Minister for Works in what he had said, and he thought his explanation was satisfactory. He understood that the Southern line would be extended before any portion of the other lines; that tenders would be called for the line from Roma to Mitchell—not on the land-grant system, but that payment would be made out of the loan fund. He, as a member of a Southern constituency, was perfectly satisfied.

Mr. DE SATGE thought the Minister for Works should pause before carrying the line to Mitchell or in any other direction. The question as to the best points to carry their lines ought to be well considered, and they might do as South Australia had done—appoint a railway committee to travel into the interior and decide on the best points to which they should carry the lines, so as to avoid making the egregious blunders that had been made in their railway policy. Though the explanation of the Minister for Works was fair and candid, he thought they should pause before pushing on the lines under any system of log-rolling, and determine, according to the probable trade and traffic, and the greatest benefit conferred, what direction the line should take. The money was voted, and the number of miles had been fixed, so that they could not be altered. The great question now was, where could they get the most traffic and the most profit, and play their game against New South Wales. He hoped to have an opportunity to-morrow, if the discussion came on, of explaining the reason why he thought that the Southern line should not be extended to Mitchell, but should go to Cunnamulla instead.

Mr. WALSH said, with regard to the extension of the Southern line, though he could not speak positively because he had not been across the country, he thought that it should not go to Charleville at all.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: We are on the Northern line.

Mr. WALSH said he was speaking on the motion of adjournment.

The SPEAKER said the motion for adjournment superseded the motion for the adoption of the plans from Charters Towers to Hughenden.

Mr. WALSH said he was perfectly right in speaking, though he did not wish to prolong the debate. He had pointed out before when this railway was before the House for consideration that there were a number of small townships, and that it would be better, if such a thing were permissible, to give £5,000 or £6,000 to meet their claims, rather than alter the direction of the line and take it in a wrong direction. It was a question whether the line should go to Cunnamulla or Charleville at all.

The SPEAKER said the question was not whether the Southern line should go to Cunnamulla or Charleville, but the adoption of the motion for adjournment.

Mr. WALSH said he would not prolong the debate further, as he would have another opportunity of speaking on the question.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he had intended to take very severe measures to get some explanation with regard to the extension of the Southern line, but the explanation given by the Minister for Works had fully satisfied him, and he thought there was no necessity for postponing the adoption of the motion.

Mr. GARRICK said they had now had the policy of the Government clearly enunciated by the Minister for Works to be the extension of three trunk lines. He was now satisfied, and should vote for the adoption of the motion, on the assurance which the Minister for Works had given that the line from Roma to Mitchell, the working plans of which had been already approved, should be constructed before any part of the line they were now authorising would be made. He understood this to be a clear statement made by the Minister for Works, and on the faith of that statement he should vote for the resolution.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said, with the permission of the House—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Ministerial side: Spoken, spoken!

The SPEAKER: The hon. member has spoken.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he wished to say—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: Spoken, spoken!

The SPEAKER: The hon. member has spoken.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he had only made a personal explanation. He had not spoken on the question.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member addressed the House.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said all he wished to say was that he believed the hon. member for Enoggera knew that his motion would supersede the question before the House.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he never thought anything of the sort.

Mr. REA said the Minister for Works had complained of hon. members on the Opposition side of the House prolonging the discussion; but had his explanation been given at the beginning instead of at the end of the debate, he would have saved all the comments which had been made in the interval. Hon. members on the other side had no right in any sense to talk of the delay of the time of the House when they kept back information that they ought to have given at the start. They might bluster, but it would not prevent the Opposition side of the House from commenting on the unjustifiable way in which it had been treated.

Question—That the House do now adjourn—put and negatived.

Original question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it appeared that the Colonial Secretary had promised they would adjourn after the passing of the plans which had just been agreed to. If he had done so he would agree to it, but otherwise he thought they ought to go on with the work.

ADJOURNMENT.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House adjourned at twenty-two minutes past 10 o'clock until the usual hour to-morrow.