

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 30 AUGUST 1881

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 30 August, 1881.

Insanity Bill.—Petition.—Extension of Central Railway.—South Brisbane Railway.—Railway from Toowoomba to Highfields.—Brisbane Valley Railway.—Warwick to Killarney Railways.—Fire Brigades Bill.—Thomas Railway Bill.—Adjournment.

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

INSANITY BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, forwarding, for the concurrence of the Assembly, a Bill to amend and consolidate the laws relating to the Insane.

On the motion of the PREMIER (Mr. McIlwraith), the Bill was read a first time, and its second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

PETITION.

Mr. KINGSFORD presented a petition from John Smart Crate, having reference to excursion trains.

Petition read and received.

EXTENSION OF CENTRAL RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Mr. Macrossan) said, in rising to move the adoption of

the plans of the extension of the Central Railway as laid on the table of the House on the 9th August, he would remind hon. members that the plans for the construction of the Central line had already been approved up to the 260-mile peg. These were plans which went from there to the 367-mile peg. This extension was over comparatively level country; there were a few ranges here and there, but nothing of any importance. The plans started about seven miles south of Beaufort Creek and about six miles west of the Belyando River, and then proceeded over pretty level country across Native Companion Creek; then across a small range and over the valley of Alpha Creek until it surmounted the Main Dividing Range, at a height above the sea-level of 1,497 feet; but the Dividing Range at this point was little more than perceptible, and was very small as compared with the range on this side, being very little raised above the level of the surrounding country. It proceeded on over very easy country until it got to a creek called Jordan Creek, at 304 miles; and about a mile beyond Jordan Creek they had determined to construct a station, at a place which the surveyors had named Jericho, on the western side of the Jordan. After leaving the station at Jericho it proceeded over level country or black-soil downs until it reached 367 miles, at the junction of the tracks from Blackall, Salterne, and Barcardine. That was on the western side of the Alice River, which it crossed several miles to the east, and was marked out as the best site for a station. At that point the line would be about sixty-five miles from Blackall, about eleven miles to the north of Barcardine, and eight and a-half miles south of Salterne, and it was about the same distance from Aramac as from Blackall. The whole line was very easy, and would, according to the engineer's opinion, be constructed within the estimate of £3,000 a mile. He thought he need say very little upon this subject. The whole question of the railways being pushed out west from the point to which the line was running in 1879 had been discussed freely then; and as, probably, some hon. members might raise a discussion, he should reserve himself until he heard what they had to say against the extension of this line, and would simply content himself in the meantime by moving—

1. That the House approves of the Plans, Sections, and Book of Reference of the Extension of the Central Railway from 260 miles to 367 miles, 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.

The HON. S. W. GRIFFITH: Is this extension due west?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In a straight line due west.

Mr. DE SATGE said he thought, when the hon. Minister for Works found time to expound the Government policy at Cooktown and at Warwick, it must be a matter of regret that he was not able to find his way to the terminus that he had just mentioned at Barcardine; because in any step now taken to form what must be an enormous settlement, comparatively to the resources of the community, at a point such as the one adopted, there must be naturally a considerable detraction from the settlement that had already taken place in other portions of the colony. They had heard from the Minister for Works that the station at Barcardine would be some sixty miles from Blackall and about the same distance from Aramac. The House must be aware, or probably might not be aware, that a considerable amount of settlement had taken place at Blackall, and a very consider-

able amount had taken place also at Aramac. The population of Aramac must be about 500, and that of Blackall about 700; and the land thrown open at either of those places for selection was considerable, and settlement had commenced in a *bonâ fide* manner. The line now proposed was one that might have been discussed before; but he doubted very much whether two years ago, or even one year ago, they were in a position to decide, or anyone else was in a position to decide, as to where the line should go to be of most service in promoting the general interests of the district in opening up settlement and becoming a paying railway. He should not—in fact, he could not—move any amendment upon the proposed line, because in all probability it would defeat the object of the line altogether and jeopardise very important interests. But what he should ask was that the Government should make some inquiries as to whether the proposal made to them a few nights ago of a deviation of the main line to Aramac would not meet the end they all had in view—that of the promotion of settlement. There were on that line two townships besides Aramac that would be benefited by this change. He did not see that the Central line would suffer in any way in regard to traffic. He would touch now upon a question which might be raised with perfect safety, and which it was very important that the House should decide sooner or later—that was the question of the amount of traffic that was to be covered by the Central line. The original idea of their railway policy was that of two trunk lines—the Central line and the line to Roma. Since then the House had recognised a third trunk line—that which they had just passed, from Townsville to Charters Towers and Hughenden. That line bid fair to interfere very considerably with the country that had otherwise been drained by the Central Railway. It was a very important piece of Government policy to consider how far the line from Townsville to Hughenden was going to interfere with the traffic that Rockhampton, a much older settlement, should be naturally entitled to. The port of Townsville had been recognised by the House, and especially by the Attorney-General during his small electioneering campaign, as a bad port. It was notoriously a bad port, and he believed that scarcely anyone could be got to defend it as a good port. Bowen had been held out as an infinitely better port than Townsville; and the Attorney-General, with what justice he could not say, stated, on the occasion referred to, that a railway should be made from Bowen *via* Haughton's Gap to tap the line. He believed that was the programme then announced, and it was a matter of very serious import to the whole House, and especially to the Northern and Central members, as to the amount of traffic to be drained by the construction of the Hughenden line. They had got as far as Hughenden, and were getting as far as Barcardine; and he said, in view of the settlement of the country, fair notice should be given to settlers, and those who proposed to settle in the Mitchell district, where the terminus was to be. They knew very well that, after the announcement of the Minister for Works that evening, the Barcardine terminus would be immediately recognised as a matter of the very greatest importance. Those who had already set up in Aramac or Blackall would turn their thoughts immediately to the settlement of the prospective terminus at Barcardine, which would certainly be an immense place, comparatively speaking; and they would have settlement completely revolutionised. It was not in his power to deviate the line, or to use any influence in doing so, he presumed, to either Blackall or Aramac; but Barcardine would now be a rising place, to the extinction—

as they had only a limited population—of Blackall and Aramac; and he considered that this was a matter which should be well weighed by the House. The Commissioner for Railways said, in his report, that he considered that the western slopes had been already tapped by the railway on the western side of the range. In fact, they would be in ample time now, if the matter were taken fully under consideration, to alter that line so as to keep pace with the settlement that had already taken place in that district. The whole question of railway extension in that district was a very important one in view of the settlement of the country. From the 260-mile peg to the 360-mile peg was very different to the land that the other portion of the Central line had gone through. The so-called desert had been proved to be very fair agricultural land; crops of grain had been grown with great success upon it, and a great portion of that land through which a deviation to Aramac would run was most of it suitable for settlement, so far as country of that character could be made so. The errors already made on the Central line he alluded to the other day. There could be nothing more patent than that the branch line to Clermont was a huge blunder. Had inspection been insisted upon to establish the importance of that line, he did not think that any popular outcry would have ever overlooked the fact that the object they had in view would have been more met by the Central line passing through Peak Downs than by following the route adopted. What had been the effect of the construction of that branch-line? The other day he was told by several storekeepers in the place, who had been connected with Clermont since its origin, that that railway would be the last blow they would receive to their success. The railway would serve hardly any purpose at all. If they grew any produce—which they had now hopes of doing, there being a large increase by every year's returns—the only chance the people would have of disposing of it was by sending it on to the Mitchell and other districts that required it. Now, the railway would bring them into competition with a cheaper grown produce from the coast districts, and was also likely to destroy their interests by doing away with the carrying industry. The railway to Clermont, he made bold to state, would serve no purpose whatever that could be of any importance to that community. He was told, and on very good authority, that it would do away with nearly all carriage from Clermont to the outside stations, and was absolutely against the interests of settlement there. They had a lesson before them in the Clermont railway, and they might very well take that lesson into profitable consideration before passing these plans and determining that the terminus of the line, for some time, should be at a point where no settlement had taken place. There was no water there; no provision had been made for water in the district to this day, except that made by private enterprise, and stock travelling between Aramac and Blackall were totally dependent on that supply. The whole country was one large, unwatered plain. The subject was one of very great importance to his constituents, and the subject of the Central line was equally important to every member representing the Central district. He trusted they would express themselves on this subject. Taking into consideration the amount of settlement likely to take place, it was of importance that they should protect those who had already borne the burden of settlement, and decide whether they should foster settlement between these two important townships.

The HON. G. THORN said that he did not intend to oppose the motion for the further extension of the Central line, and was glad to see that the Government were carrying out
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the policy of their predecessors. He regretted, however, that they were not carrying out that policy as expeditiously in some places as in others. Take, for instance, the Southern trunk line. In the year 1876 or 1877, if he recollected rightly, he got a preliminary and parliamentary survey made of that line as far as Mitchell Downs; and not only that, but he got a permanent survey made of that Western extension. He could see no reason, therefore, why tenders should not be called in the next *Government Gazette* for this extension. The Government had promised when they got the money voted, that the trunk lines and branch lines should go on simultaneously. They had carried out that policy so far as the Northern trunk lines were concerned, and he hoped in Saturday next, or Saturday week's, *Gazette*, to see tenders called for this trunk line extension from Roma to Mitchell. As he had said before, there was not the least excuse for the Government not calling for tenders for this line. He must say that he did not agree with the last speaker with regard to the branch line to Clermont. He (Mr. Thorn) was a strong advocate for that line, and believed it would be one of the best paying lines in the colony. He also thought the Government ought to give another branch line in the southern part of the colony; they ought to have gone in for a branch, say from Miles or Yeulba, or from Roma to St. George, and thence by Cunnamulla, Eulo, to Thargomindah. This would have secured not only the southern trade, which rightly belonged to them, and which was going to New South Wales, but they would also have got a large portion of the trade of New South Wales. He regretted to see that the Government were not alive to the interests of the southern portion of the colony. He looked upon this branch more as a trunk line which would enable us to secure a large portion of the trade which was now finding its way down the Murray. He did expect to see this session that the Government would take action with respect to the promise given by the hon. the Attorney-General, that there should be a branch line from Bowen to Houghton's Gap. That line had been promised over and over again, and he believed that it was due to the promise of the hon. the Attorney-General that it would be made that that hon. gentleman was elected without opposition. He wanted to know why this line was not down? It ought to be on the paper, as the district was an important one, and he hoped they should before long have a railway in that far-famed sugaropolis Mackay. He understood also that there was to be a railway from Cooktown to the Palmer. He hoped they would come down with this extension, and that when the proper time came the hon. members representing that district would be able to give a good account of their stewardship. They had heard nothing in the moving of these plans before the House about the transcontinental scheme or the land-grant scheme from Roma. He understood that before the session closed there would be certain proposals made by the Government for a line from Roma to Government Guins, and thence to Port Darwin. They heard nothing about this. He understood that the line as far as the South Australian border would be made by Queensland, and that to Port Darwin by the South Australian Government. He would point out to the House that if they sanctioned this scheme it would be the death-blow to Moreton Bay, because all the produce of the district would not come here, but go to Port Darwin, or some other port in South Australia. He hoped the representatives of the metropolis would never consent to see the interests of the southern part of the colony destroyed. If

this railway were to be constructed, not only the produce but the people would go by that route, as it would be a very short one to England, and would save time and money, as well as insurance, because they would not have to encounter the intricate navigation of an eastern coast. He hoped, therefore, that the Government would not, either in this or any other session, come down with such a proposal which would destroy the interests of the southern part of the colony. He had no hesitation in saying that if the line was extended to Point Parker it would destroy the port of Rockhampton also, because all the produce would go there instead of to Rockhampton. He fancied he could hear the South Australian people chuckling over such a scheme. He hoped they would not commit such folly, and that the gentlemen who were, he hoped, not being made fools of by the Government—some of them belonging to the old country, and some to southern colonies—

The SPEAKER: I must tell the hon. member that his remarks are irrelevant to the question before the House.

Mr. THORN said he was speaking about railway extension generally. The House had not received sufficient information on the proposal submitted to it, and he hoped the Government would supply more to hon. members. He believed that railways were to be made much more cheaply now than in the old days of the colony; and he hoped the Government would not make fools of the gentlemen to whom he had referred, but would tell them to depart and we would make our own railways. He could not dissent from this proposal, but he hoped before the session closed to see a proposal for the branch line from Bowen to the Charters Towers line, which had been promised by the Attorney-General on behalf of the Government, and that the House would assent to the plans when they were submitted.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he thought the House was entitled to some more information from the Government in respect to these motions. In the year 1879, the Government proposed to the House to vote a sum of money for the extension of the three lines from Brisbane, Rockhampton, and Townsville. At that time the Government gave the House and the country to understand that it was intended to push forward all these three railway extensions concurrently from Roma, Retreat, and Charters Towers. He was sure it would never have been tolerated by the House at that time that only one or two should be carried out. He thought the House and the country ought to know the manner in which at the present time the Government were carrying out their promises, and the way in which they were acting with respect to them. On last Wednesday the House authorised the extension of the Northern line for 158 miles. Money had been voted for its extension for 130 miles, and they were now asked to authorise the extension of the Central line for a distance which, added to the extension authorised in 1879, made 170 miles beyond Retreat Creek. So that, in respect to the Northern and Central lines the House was asked to authorise plans for an increase of thirty and forty miles respectively, beyond the places for the extension to which money had been voted. On the Southern and Western line an extension of sixty miles had been authorised in 1879, and since then nothing further had been done. He had given notice that he intended to ask the Minister for Works to-morrow, when he intended to call for tenders for this extension. And what about the surveys beyond Mitchell. They found that, while in respect to the Central and Northern line the Government obtained the sanction of

Parliament for a greater length than that for which money had been voted, in the Southern line they had only got the sanction for an extension of sixty miles out of 130; and, as far as hon. members knew, they had taken no steps whatever to carry out that extension. He trusted that hon. members in the House would see that fair play would be given to all parts of the colony. Hon. members on this side of the House were perfectly willing to give fair play to the Northern parts of the colony; and all they asked was that hon. members on the other side of the House would see that the Southern portion of the colony was not neglected. He hoped the Southern members would insist upon this. So far as they knew, no surveys had been made for the extension of the Southern line, and he thought the House was entitled to know something about it, because it affected the whole national policy of the country, and they were entitled, he thought, to know the steps the Government intended to take in order to carry out their promises. The hon. the Minister for Works had not told them, in moving that motion, how it was proposed to raise the additional money that would be required to cover the distance beyond that for which money had already been voted. It might possibly be that a surplus would supply it, but they had not been told so. In his opinion, it would be preferable when the Government proposed the construction of lines of railway to give the House some information as to where the money was to be obtained. They had given the House no information whatever in this case; hon. members only knew that they had voted £390,000. They were entitled to know where the money for this additional forty miles of line was to come from. It was information usually given, and it ought to be given; and another piece of information which ought to be given in respect to this matter was as to the probable point of intersection of the line which the Government were supposed to be contemplating—the transcontinental line, so-called—with this line. Was this point, for an extension to which they were now asked to sanction the proposal under consideration, to the westward or the eastward of that point? He thought they were entitled to some information, as it was not a mere matter of a local line, but was part of a great national scheme. They were entitled to know what the whole of that national scheme was before they were asked to sanction what was an important part of it.

The PREMIER said with respect to the information asked for by the hon. member, there was one point on which the hon. the Minister for Works could not give the information, and which he (Mr. McIlwraith) did not see how the hon. member could expect, and that was the probable point of juncture with the transcontinental line. The Government had not the surveys of the transcontinental line yet, and were not in a position to state where the point of juncture would be. That would come before the House at the proper time, but it had nothing to do with this proposal. Then as to the directions in which the lines were taken. They had all been surveyed exactly in accordance with the expressed desire of Parliament. As to the other point raised by the hon. gentleman, it was exactly the same as the one raised on Wednesday, and completely answered. The Government had no intention of pushing any line to the exclusion of others in different parts of the country. Not the slightest disposition had even been shown by the Ministry to favour the North at the expense of the South.

Mr. McLEAN said he could not understand the reply given by the Premier to his hon. friend

as to the probable junction with the transcontinental line. The Government had plans, and on them the probable route was, no doubt, marked. Surely they could form some idea as to where the junction would take place. If the Government proposed it, it was for the Government to form that idea, and to give it to the House. He did not think his hon. friend had been answered by the Premier at all. He was confident that the Premier knew perfectly well within a few miles where that probable junction would take place, but it might suit the Government at the present time to give an evasive answer. With respect to the reply given by the Minister for Works on Wednesday evening, he would ask what information had the hon. gentleman given with respect to the Southern line? "That it was to go to Mitchell" was all the information that they got. Hon. members wanted to know the intention of the Government with reference to the extension of 130 miles beyond Roma, for which money had been voted; but all the information they could elicit was that they might keep their minds easy, as it was the intention of the Government to make the line to Mitchell, some sixty miles. Hon. members now wanted to know what was going to be done about the other seventy miles. Had the Minister for Works given, at an early hour in the evening the other day, the information which he condescended to give later on, he would have saved the time of the House and the warm feeling which the discussion aroused, and would also have expedited public business. The general impression was that the Government were favouring the North as against the South; and, though they denied having done so, anyone who looked at a map of Queensland would see that the Central line was being carried 160 miles further west than the Southern and Western. The fact that the population in the South was so much more dense than in other parts of the colony ought to be taken into consideration, because where the people were the traffic would be. It was not a question of West, North, or South, but a question of where there was traffic to make the railway a paying speculation; and as the great bulk of the population of the colony was in the South, it would be quite safe to carry the main trunk lines out concurrently to equal distances. Even then, the railways would be pushed forward equally fast in the North, although there was a great proportion of the population in the southern portion of the colony. He had no objection to the extension of the Northern railways, because he held that all places should be accommodated with railway communication as far as circumstances would allow; but it was not a fair argument to say that the railways were carried out equal distances, when it was apparent that the point to which the House was asked to sanction the extension of the Central Railway was 160 to 200 miles further west than the Southern and Western had reached. He should like also to ask the Minister for Works whether it was true—as he was credibly informed—that the whole of the sleepers for use on the Charters Towers and Hughenden extension were to be shipped from the port of Brisbane. Hon. members had been told that the railway was to be constructed at a low figure; but, if that was a sample of the way the work was to be done, it was probable that the Government and the Government Engineers would be considerably mistaken. He hoped the Minister for Works would state whether the information he had received was correct.

Mr. ARCHER said he could, at all events, thoroughly agree with the hon. member when he said that railways should be constructed where there was sufficient traffic to guarantee a return on the money expended. It was very remarkable,

however, that the hon. member should object that the Central line went further to the westward than the Southern and Western, although it was shorter in length. That was simply an objection to the formation of Australia. The fact that the coast trended to the north-west—and that, therefore, a line from Rockhampton reached the central country sooner than a line from a more southern part—was an advantage to Rockhampton, resulting, not from the favour of Government, but from the formation of the country, which no Government could alter. With respect to population, he admitted that the population in the south of the colony was more dense; but it was not necessary to go to the tables of population to estimate whether a particular railway would pay, while hon. members had the traffic returns to guide them. If the hon. member would refer to those returns he would find that there was no comparison between the two lines as regarded traffic returns; and he (Mr. Archer) believed that if the Central Railway had not been extended at all the receipts would have been nearly the same, as it was not the extra mileage which had increased them. The returns for the Central line during the first half of this year showed an increase of £15,000 over the same period of last year; whilst those of the Southern and Western—which had been extended much further—were actually less than they were at this time last year. Although the population to the westward of Rockhampton was not dense, the production of the country was so enormous that he believed the Central line would not only be able to pay for itself next year, but that by-and-by the profits would be sufficient to furnish a subsidy for the building of other railways in the colony. That was not an exaggeration, but was based on the returns which were accessible to all hon. members. That being the case, and the hon. member having admitted that railways should be constructed where there was traffic to make them pay, the hon. member should certainly support the Central line in preference to any other in the colony. He was, however, very far from saying that the Southern and Western line should not have fair play, and he should be sorry to think that in a country like this, where the Government carried out all public works, the people who paid a large proportion of the taxes should not have a corresponding advantage. The southern portion of the colony, having a more dense population, must of necessity contribute a larger amount of revenue from land sales and other sources, and, therefore, it ought to have preference in all matters of this kind; and he insisted that it had received that preference. Not only had the main trunk line been greatly extended to the westward, but innumerable branch lines had been, or were proposed to be, constructed in the South. As the Minister for Works had pointed out, the branch lines in the South made up together a length as great as, or greater than, all the Central Railway put together. Even the extension from Toowoomba to Stanthorpe was not a direct line.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: That's a national line.

Mr. ARCHER said they were all national, being paid for by the people; but the extension to which he referred was not a main line as regarded extension due west. There was also the Sandgate line and many other branches which had been, or were to be, approved of. He did not say that there was any injustice in connection with the making of those lines, but he maintained that the people of Southern Queensland had very little to complain of, especially since the Minister for Works had said that the Western extension from Roma would go on shortly. That

line, it appeared, had been delayed simply on the question of route and in consequence of the action taken by several gentlemen in the South, apparently with the object of stopping the Central line. He presumed that was their intention, and he was very glad it did not succeed. There was nothing unfair in extending the Central Railway as far as the money already voted for the purpose would suffice; and he did not desire that any money voted for the extension of the Southern line should be applied to any purpose other than that for which it was voted.

Mr. MILES said the hon. member for Blackall appeared to labour under a misapprehension. No hon. member of the Opposition had offered the slightest opposition to the extension of the Central line, but the Opposition complained that the Minister for Works asked the House to approve of plans and sections for a greater distance than that for which money had been voted, and they were under the apprehension that a portion of the money voted for the Southern and Western line was to be appropriated to other lines. They now wanted an assurance from the Minister for Works that such would not be the case. He presumed the hon. member for Blackall did not desire that money voted for the Southern and Western Railway should be appropriated to the Central or Northern Railway.

Mr. ARCHER: I do not wish it.

Mr. MILES said the Opposition were not certain, but they believed that such was the intention of the Government. He had no objection whatever to the extension of the Central line, and he believed that the route, if not exactly the right track, was pretty near it. The hon. member for North Brisbane was not, he thought, so green as he professed to be. The hon. gentleman knew where the money for the extension of the Central line was to come from. The House had voted money for an extension of 130 miles beyond Roma, and the Minister for Works had pledged himself that tenders should be called for sixty miles. He could tell the House that the Minister for Works intended to appropriate the balance of the money voted to the extension of the other two lines.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Sir Arthur Palmer): No.

Mr. MILES said he was very glad to hear the Colonial Secretary say it was not so, but hon. members had before had experience of the same sort of thing. They knew how the Railway Reserves Fund had been appropriated. It would be very easy for the Government, with their enormous majority, to come down and ask the House to transfer the surplus money voted for the Roma line to the account of the other two lines. The House were asked to sanction the extension of the Southern line beyond the distance for which provision had been made, and they had a right to an assurance that the money already voted would be sufficient. He did not think it would be, notwithstanding the economical way of building railways which had been adopted—an economy which he feared might prove to be very costly in the future. Hon. members were told that tenders would be called for the 60-mile extension at some future time, but they had a right to know when the whole extension would be carried out, and he hoped the House would refuse to sanction the extension under discussion until they had an assurance that the Southern line would be extended at least to Mitchell. There could be no difficulty, because tenders had already been called for on a previous occasion. Hon. members on the Opposition side had been blamed for having prevented the tenders from being accepted, but he denied that they had done more than ask that a little time should be given so that Parliament might meet and consider how

the interest on the borrowed money was to be met. It, however, suited the Government to push on the Central line and let the Roma line remain where it was. He hoped the Minister for Works would give the House an assurance that the money voted for the 130-mile extension would be devoted to that purpose; but if the money were to be appropriated to any other purpose he would rather that it should be expended in the construction of branch lines.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he rose to say a few words about what appeared to be a great omission in the speeches of those who had spoken. He was much surprised that no hon. member had taken notice of some of the remarks which fell from the hon. member for Mitchell. In carrying on lines it was a very serious matter to see that places were not left on one side in which great interests had already been created, as had already been done in the case of one of the lines. Men who had gone out to towns in the interior, and had expended time, energy, and money in those places, might be nearly ruined in consequence of the direction which a line might take. This was such a serious matter that he could ask the Minister for Works to consider well the statement made by the hon. member for the Mitchell, that the proposed terminus of this line would be in the middle of a huge plain where there was no water. He was not himself acquainted with the place, but he was quite satisfied that the hon. member for Mitchell must know it, and that the hon. member would not make such a statement unless it were true. If that were a fact, he hoped the Minister would be careful not to take steps which, if once taken, could not be easily undone. A terminus which would probably become the centre of a great township should be on the bank of a creek where there was plenty of water. With regard to the remarks of the hon. member for Blackall, that the Stanthorpe Railway was a branch line, he would point out that that railway had never been advocated with the idea that it would pay. It was made simply to meet the New South Wales line, and was, therefore, a national line which could not be put to the credit of the Southern and Western line. It was part of a line which would, no doubt, be carried all over the colony in course of time; and in calculating the proportion of expenditure it should not be coupled with the Southern and Western line. Every part of the colony, as well as the South, had an interest in that line. His object in rising was to call the attention of the Minister for Works to the remarks made by the hon. member for Mitchell; and he hoped the hon. gentleman would be able to give a satisfactory reason why the route chosen should pass by two great centres of population like Aramac and Blackall, and some other townships in the same direction, which were rapidly growing.

Mr. MESTON said he was under the impression for some time that the money appropriated for the extension beyond Roma was to be employed in the construction of branch lines in the Southern district, but he was not so now. He was not prepared to admit that the North was receiving undue favour in the matter of railways, bearing in mind the extension of the Central line and the number of branch lines which were to be considered. Besides the line to Sandgate, there was the line to South Brisbane, the line from Toowoomba to Highfields, the Brisbane Valley line, and the line from Warwick to Killarney. It was quite true that the bulk of the population was in the southern parts, but he did not think that was any argument whatever against extending the Northern lines. True statesmanship lay in progressing the lines in all parts of the colony simultaneously, and not in

extending the lines in one part of the colony at the expense of other parts.

Mr. SCOTT said he had not been able to understand what the hon. member for Mitchell wanted. It was quite evident that no railway could go due west and touch both Aramac and Blackall. The hon. member said he did not see why both of these towns had been left out, and his arguments were most inconsistent. He had pointed out that the extension of the line to Clermont had almost ruined that place, and yet he wanted the line extended to Aramac or Blackall. If the line to Clermont had tended to ruin the interests of that place, it must be assumed that the same thing would happen if it were carried to Blackall or Aramac; and the hon. member's contention was decidedly inconsistent. The only possible way to meet the difficulty which the hon. member suggested was to divide the line, sending one branch line to Aramac and another to Blackall, but that he was sure was not the intention of the Government, nor would it be countenanced by this House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS wished to say a few words with regard to what had fallen from some hon. members. He wished to ask the hon. member for Mitchell how he knew that he (Mr. Macrossan) had propounded the Government policy at Cooktown. He never did so. The hon. member seemed to be in the habit of getting hold of facts which never existed at all; simply existed in his own imagination. How did the hon. member know that he (Mr. Macrossan) expounded the Government policy at Warwick, which he did not do? It would be much better if the hon. member, before addressing the House, would ascertain, either from him or some reliable person, whether such things were true, and thus become acquainted with the facts. It was not his (Mr. Macrossan's) place this evening, in proposing the adoption of plans and specifications for this extension, to go into the Government policy. It had nothing to do with the Government policy. Generally speaking, the adoption of plans and specifications was a mere formal matter. The policy of making the line had been debated and approved of before that. Then the survey was made, and the House adopted the plans and specifications. That course had been taken in this case. The hon. gentleman also objected to the due west line; yet the other evening he said the Central line had doubled its receipts within a little more than twelve months. Could that be taken as an argument against the extension of this Central line? It must be taken rather as an argument in favour of its extension in a westerly direction. No Government was responsible for the formation of the country, and the formation of the country determined the extension of this line in a westerly direction. Had the line been taken to Clermont, as the hon. gentleman seemed to think it should have been, it would have taken a different course altogether. It was said that the line would have been accepted by the townships, because they would have been benefited. But he had seen little townships that had been partly ruined by a line going through them. How the hon. gentleman had arrived at the conclusion that the extension of this line due west, midway between Aramac and Blackall, would ruin those two towns, he was at a loss to understand. Would the bringing of those two towns nearer railway communication than at present ruin them? If so, they had better stop railway communication altogether. The fact of the matter was that the hon. gentleman knew that the people of those two towns would not gain what they expected to gain by the railway, but they would not lose anything. Blackall would be brought within sixty-five miles of

Barcaldine; at present it was 165 miles. He did not think the hon. gentleman had said anything else which it was necessary for him to answer.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN was understood to ask about the want of water at the proposed terminus.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that that was a mere fallacy. They were not compelled to choose a place where there was a water supply; they could get water anywhere. Mr. Ballard had been providing dams along the Central line, and it certainly was not necessary to make a deviation because there was no water. Regarding the remarks of members on the Opposition benches, as to why the survey had been made, and why the survey of the Southern and Western line had not been proportionately long, he would remind hon. members that he made an explanation last Wednesday evening as to why the survey was not taken to Mitchell, and why the line had not yet been made to Mitchell; but he might point out something that had probably been overlooked. This line required only one staff to survey it. He had been surveying half-a-dozen branch lines in the South, and each of them took a separate staff. In the settled districts, and especially in the coast districts, it was much more difficult to survey a line than it was across the western plains. That was the reason why no more surveys had been made. As to the extension of forty miles beyond that voted by Parliament, he explained, in moving the plans and specifications for the line from Charters Towers to Hughenden, that he expected to make that additional length out of savings. He did not say that to-day, because he thought hon. members would understand that that was the case. Through being able to obtain rails at a much cheaper rate than the contract entered into for the 15,000 tons in the beginning of last year, it would make a difference of £400 per mile. In addition, there were the savings in the length of line to Retreat. There was still a balance of nearly £30,000 remaining on that, which could be applied to the making of this extension. Hon. members might rest assured that no portion of the Southern lines would be neglected while the Central and Northern lines were being extended. He thought he had answered all the objections taken to the adoption of these plans; if he had overlooked any, it was unwittingly. He did not intend to detain the House any longer, as there were four more lines still to pass.

Question put and passed.

SOUTH BRISBANE RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said, in rising to propose the motion standing in his name, that hon. members would recollect that this was one of those lines passed by the Assembly last year, but it met with a misfortune in another place, which he hoped it would not meet with this time. He trusted that the objections to the line in another place would now be withdrawn, as it had been brought to the water. The great objection to it previously was that it had not been brought to the water's edge; and it was imagined that the Government had not decided to what point the line should be taken. There was no such doubt in the minds of the Government at the time; it was simply through their not being able to have a survey carried out. The line was the same as was proposed last session from Oxley as far as Woollongabba. It left Woollongabba, and went along Stanley street to a point close to the Dry Dock, where there would be a railway station. At the Dry Dock it curved round on the river bank, and then on the river bank to nearly opposite Government House,

where there was a convenient place to have three lines of rails, and also for wharves. Of course, to make the line effective, wharves were necessary for the shipment of coal. The only additional cost which had been added to the line since last session was the length from Woollongabba to the river, a distance of ninety-two chains. This would cost over £6,000, owing to the necessity for making it substantial along the street, and also in making it on the tramway principle, so as not to interfere with the working traffic of the street. The rails would be sunk level with the street, and guarding rails would be placed along the side. The railway would be more substantial than an ordinary line. This distance of 92 chains would increase the cost by £6,800, and the total cost of the line would be £33,000. Hon. members must be aware that this branch line would be a great benefit to the Southern and Western line, as they would be able to bring coal from West Moreton down to South Brisbane. It would be nearly as good as that from Brisbane to Ipswich; the only difference would be at the crossing at Oxley Creek, where, instead of a high-level bridge, there would be a low-level bridge erected. He believed that a low-level bridge was quite as suitable as a high-level bridge, though at the period of floods it would be submerged. The line followed very near to that originally surveyed by Mr. Fitzgibbon many years ago, to bring the line from Ipswich to Brisbane. It followed that survey for a considerable part of the distance, and when it left that it mostly went along the main road, which had been utilised as far as possible, so as to reduce the cost of the line.

MR. GRIFFITH: What is the steepest gradient?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS said the ruling gradient was 1 in 50, but there were short pieces of 1 in 30 of what were called compensating gradients. The bridge over Oxley Creek was estimated to cost about £2,000, and the whole line £33,000, or about £5,000 per mile.

MR. GRIFFITH: Where is the money to come from?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Premier explained last session where the money was to come from; and if any question were now raised he would, no doubt, make the same announcement, which was received by the House last session as satisfactory. Considering the growth of the coal trade, the South Brisbane branch line was a necessity, and there would be very little difficulty about finding the money. And the line would be useful, not only for the coal trade, but for heavy produce generally. He therefore moved—

1. That the House approves of the Plans, Sections, and Book of Reference of the Branch Line to South Brisbane, 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.

MR. McLEAN said he was not in the House when the explanation was given by the Premier last session as to where the money was to come from for the construction of this line, and would have liked to have heard an explanation from the Minister for Works to-day.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Do you never read *Hansard*?

MR. McLEAN said this House approved of the plans, sections, and book of reference in September last year; unfortunately they were thrown out by the Upper House, so that this line was looked upon as one that should be undertaken. Judging from the utterances of the Premier in reply to a deputation that waited on him at the

Treasury, and to his more public utterances at the opening of the Maryborough and Gympie Railway, the House might have expected that, before entering on any new extension, the Government should give some satisfactory explanation with reference to their future railway policy. The deputation that waited on the Premier at that time were told that the credit of the colony was exhausted, that there was no use going to the London money market asking for money for the purpose of building railways, and they would have to be built on a principle different from that hitherto adopted in this colony. This was a railway yet to be built, but he (Mr. McLean) did not know personally where the money was to come from for its construction. It would be necessary to get that information. He noticed that the Government had made a certain advance on the plans since last session. Last year the terminus was to be at Woollongabba; but now it was a little nearer the town, and in the most awkward situation that could have been selected in the whole of South Brisbane. In fact, when he first looked at the plans, the idea passed through his mind that the Government wished them to be blocked. The ground where the station was to be was a block of very limited area, situated at the junction of Vulture and Stanley streets. There would be just about room for a double line of railway between the footpath and the portion excavated, and if there was to be any more excavation, what would be left for station accommodation? That was a point the Government ought to have taken into their serious consideration. The present site might be suitable for simply taking coal to the river bank; but if the line was to be anything more than a mineral line—if it was meant for passengers—the present site would not be found suitable for a station. Other lines might, in time, junction with this line; and if such were the case, the site now chosen for the station would be found altogether inadequate for the requirements. Everyone who knew anything about the locality knew that there was no accommodation there for a passenger station. As a site for wharves for the shipment for coal, the terminus was about the worst that could be chosen on the Brisbane River, because they could not go far down from the Dry Dock before coming to the perpendicular cliff of rock opposite Government House. It appeared, as he said before, to be the intention of the Government to block this railway. He would ask the Minister for Works if it was the intention of the Government that passenger trains should run on the line, or that it should be simply a mineral line. The only justification that had been urged for its construction was that it would greatly relieve the north side of the mineral traffic. That was a very important matter, and one in which he coincided with the Government. They should give every facility for the shipment of coal, but the terminus and wharves indicated were in the wrong place altogether. It would have been better to have the terminus at Woollongabba, and run a branch further down the river for the shipment of coal. He hoped the Minister for Works would give some information about the site for the terminus, and tell the House why the Government chose such an awkward place for building wharves for the shipment of coal. The line appeared to be never intended for passenger traffic or an extensive goods traffic, because there was no accommodation for either.

MR. MILES said he also should like to know where the money was to come from for the construction of the line. His object in rising was to assure the Government that there would be no objection on the part of the Opposition to the line, but they should like to know how it was to be paid for. This particular line was passed last

session, and he was not aware that there was any objection made in that House; but it was thrown out in another place—fortunately, he thought, because the terminus was then to be at Woollongabba, while now the line was to come alongside the river. Therefore, he believed that the delay would prove of great advantage. He did not agree with the remarks of the hon. member (Mr. McLean), who considered anything not connected with the Logan was not the right thing; but the terminus of the Southern and Western Railway ought to have been in South Brisbane, and not in North Brisbane at all, and the country would then have been saved a tremendous outlay. He was rather surprised at the hon. member for Logan asking whether the line was to carry passenger traffic; that question was altogether unnecessary. The Minister for Works, with all his iniquities, would find sufficient accommodation for passenger and other traffic if the railway were built. They had a right to ask the Government where they were going to find the money for this line, and not let them bring in, by a side-wind, money appropriated for some other purpose. If the Government were to come down at the proper time and ask for the money for this line, he was sure there would be no objection to the vote on his side of the House, because he believed that in the first instance the South Brisbane side of the river ought to have been the terminus of the Southern and Western Railway. He believed that this line would give great facilities, and that there should also be a branch line from this lower down the river. If it could be shown that this further line was needed, he believed there would be very little trouble in getting the money for it.

Mr. MESTON said that he had always taken a very great interest in this South Brisbane line whenever it was before the House, and it appeared that on the 4th September, 1879, he moved—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole, to consider of an Address to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed on the Loan Estimates a sum of £50,000 for the construction of a line of railway from Oxley to South Brisbane."

And for the arguments he then brought forward he believed he was congratulated at the time by the Premier. It was rather interesting to notice the reduction that had been made in the cost of railway construction during the past eight or ten years. He found that several surveys had been made of this line, and several estimates given of the cost of its construction. The first was by Mr. Stanley, whose estimate was £9,902 per mile. Thorneloe Smith also prepared an estimate, and fixed a sum of £9,500 per mile. In 1870 another estimate fixed it at £7,200, with gradients of 1 in 60. There was also an estimate at £6,300 per mile with gradients of 1 in 50. In introducing the line at that time, he had stated that he did not see why the line should not be constructed for £5,000 per mile; and it was satisfactory to know that it was now estimated that it could be. It had been rejected by hon. members in another place because, he believed, the terminus was not known, and it was feared that it would be at some point lower down the river. He believed that the terminus should be where it was now fixed. He also gave information on the occasion he had referred to with respect to the amount of Government land that was available for frontage. He stated that the Government land had street frontage of 5,454 feet, and wharf frontage of 2,510 feet, giving a total of 7,964 feet. He estimated that this land would realise at the very least £6 per foot, and would thus bring in a sum of £47,784. He believed that this land formed the reason why the Premier did not then support the line, as the hon. gentleman

was under the impression that the coal in West Moreton was not sufficiently hard for export—in fact, that there was no coal whatever for export at West Moreton. The coal proprietors had now undertaken considerable extension of works, tramways and branch lines having been laid down. Altogether, there had been very considerable development of the coal-mines there, and the proprietors deserved facilities for conveyance of the mineral to deep water. No hon. member of the House could be more satisfied than he was at the decision to construct this line. He took it that it was one of the most essential lines that could be constructed. It would not only be a benefit for the coal trade, but would be useful for the export of all articles which required to go direct to the ships at deep water; it would, in fact, have the whole traffic. He agreed that the terminus of the Southern and Western line should originally have been in South Brisbane, and not in North Brisbane at all; but now it was useless to discuss that. They had to deal with the South Brisbane line, which he was quite satisfied, when once constructed, might safely be regarded as a national undertaking, and a great benefit to the southern portion of the colony.

Mr. NORTON said that whenever this line had been before the House he had always taken the opportunity of opposing it, and he could not say that on the present occasion he saw any reason for giving it his support. He had often heard it stated in the House that water carriage was cheaper than land carriage, and that therefore it was useless to run a line beside the river. Here they had already a railway running the same way as the river, and he certainly could not see why they should want to run a second line on the other side of the river. The amount of passenger traffic would certainly not be great enough to warrant it, and, so far as the export of coal was concerned, the one complaint he had always heard with respect to the site chosen for the terminus was that there was not deep water up to it. There were shoals shortly after passing the wharf; and, if this terminus was to be effectual, more dredging would be required in the river. If the object of the construction of this railway was to get a line to deep water to enable the mine-owners to get their coal direct to the ships, they were already in possession of a method which would be far better than adopting this line. The House had already agreed to, and the contract had been given for, the line to Sandgate, and from it a branch was to go to the racecourse. From there to the bank of the river was, he believed, a very short distance. He did not know the exact extent, but he believed it was very much less than from Oxley to South Brisbane. He did not intend to say much about the subject. He had said all he had to say against the line on previous occasions; and all that had to be said could be repeated in a very few words. It would not carry out the object which its promoters had in contemplation; and a better way to do it was to extend the line from the racecourse to the bank of the river. For these reasons he could not support the line.

Mr. GRIMES said he would like to know where the hon. member who had just sat down got his information from with regard to shoals. He (Mr. Grimes) had been led to understand pretty well that the deepest water was about the neighbourhood where the terminus of this line was actually proposed to be made. A small sand-bank had formed against a sunken barge, opposite the A.S.N. Company's wharf, but it did not hinder the traffic, and could easily be removed. He was rather surprised, however, to find that no explanation was given to the House of the very circuitous route that it was proposed to take the line. He believed he was correct in stating that this

railway line was to be brought fully a mile, or a mile and a quarter, further round than it need have been. He was not aware from his own knowledge of the land, and his knowledge of works of that kind, that there was any engineering difficulty in the way of bringing the line direct to South Brisbane. He was surprised that the Minister had not given them some information upon this point. If it was intended to take a branch line from this lower down the river, that might be an excuse for taking it in the proposed direction. But they could not tell from the plans now on the table why it should be taken a mile and a half from Woollongabba, and crossing once or twice one of the main roads and main arteries of traffic from South Brisbane. He thought the House ought to have information on this matter, and that they should be told what they were being asked to vote for. He did not intend to oppose the motion. He believed the line to be a measure of justice which it was only fair they should give to South Brisbane. No doubt it was there that the terminus of the Southern and Western line should have been in the first instance. It was, to say the least of it, a piece of bungling that it did not go there. He should like to hear the reason for taking the line in the direction proposed, and so far down as Woollongabba.

Mr. FRASER said that it would certainly be a matter of surprise to hon. members on the Opposition side of the House if this line had not met with some degree of opposition; but he was surprised at the basis of the opposition of the hon. member for Port Curtis (Mr. Norton). In the first place, it must be borne in mind that some of the most important sources of the supply of coal were at a distance from the river and from water carriage, which involved, first of all, railway carriage, and subsequent transshipment; and that by the proposed arrangement, some of the most valuable coal could be at once brought from the pit's mouth to the port of shipment. Again, the hon. member said that railway could not in this matter compete with water carriage. But it had been demonstrated over and over again that railway carriage could beat all water carriage. It only required that sufficient quantity should be supplied to enable the railways in Queensland to compete as successfully with water carriage as they did elsewhere. He could not agree with the objection to the proposed terminus on the ground that after passing the A.S.N. Company's wharf the river became shallow. It was the first time he had heard this, and on reference to Captain Bedwell's report he found that not only was it at the proposed coal wharf the deepest part of the river, but it was deep up to there. The hon. member thought that the deviation to the racecourse should be extended to Eagle Farm, and that a port for the shipment of coals should be formed there. He (Mr. Fraser) would like to know what it would take to make the water sufficiently deep to enable large vessels to go alongside a wharf in that locality. They knew that for a considerable distance beyond the shore at that part of the river there was shallow water. Beyond that, there was another insuperable objection to this idea—the necessity there would be of ballasting vessels at Brisbane to go down there for a cargo of coal. They knew very well that a vessel could not be removed from the wharf without ballast with any degree of safety; in fact, it would be impossible to do anything of the kind. The proposed line had this advantage: that it was central to all the wharves, whether in North or South Brisbane. As to the route by which the Government were determined to bring the railway to deep water, that was a question on which there might be some difference of opinion. At the same time, he was not

going to oppose the present arrangement, though he believed there was a more excellent and a cheaper way. As to the passenger station, he could see some degree of force in the argument of the hon. member for Logan with reference to the limited area provided for that purpose. It would be a better plan if the line were continued down nearer the bridge. There was an admirable site within a few yards of the south end of the bridge. This had been Government land, and would have answered every purpose, there being three or four full-sized allotments; but in consequence of Treasury pressure the land had been sold. He regretted exceedingly that the Government had disposed of the land, for, sooner or later, they would certainly be under the necessity of repurchasing these or other allotments at a very advanced price above what had been obtained for them. However, that was a matter for the future; at present he was prepared to accept the line as it was, upon the principle that "half-a-loaf was better than no bread," and that it might be arranged to suit the convenience of South Brisbane. He was rather surprised to hear the hon. member (Mr. McLean) suggest that it would not be a passenger line. They knew that, when such a convenience as would be afforded by this line was offered to the public, they fully availed themselves of it. He (Mr. Fraser) was assured that within a short time it would become as remunerative in respect to passenger traffic as the line on the north side of the river.

Mr. FOOTE said this was a line he felt very much interested in, and he thought it should have been constructed six or seven years ago. No doubt it would have been, if the Government could have passed the line through Parliament. When this line was before them some three or four years ago, the interest in the House was so divided that it was impossible for the Government to carry their proposal or to fix upon any terminus. Now, he was glad that the Government had determined to carry the line to the bank of the river. He looked upon the line as a necessity, and thought that the money about to be expended upon it was not in proportion to the amount that had been spent on railways within a short distance of the metropolis of the colony. He was quite sure, from the traffic which was taking place on this end of the main line, that a second line would have to be laid; and he had no doubt that this branch line would be found very convenient as forming a part of that line. He did not look upon this line as one solely for the purpose of receiving or shipping minerals, but believed that all products coming from the North or South would be conveyed by it, and that it would be the source of very great convenience and benefit to the public generally. He was much pleased to support this motion, for, as he had stated on a previous occasion, he was prepared to vote for every section of railway that went to the river, and would not allow himself to know any party, believing, as he did, that it was necessary in order to develop the mineral resources of West Moreton. He was quite sure that, if the line had been constructed years ago, the population of West Moreton would be considerably larger than it was now; and he was sure, also, that instead of the mail steamers being supplied with coals from Sydney, they would be supplied from West Moreton. The line would be not only a great convenience, but would pay for the outlay involved in its construction, and it would also be the means of increasing the population of the places through which it passed, to a considerable extent. He was not going to fall out with the Government as to where they were going to get the money from, being quite satisfied that they knew where to get it. He

trusted that the proposal, if approved, would not be allowed to lie on the table of the House for months, but that they would have the pleasure of being invited to the opening of the line within that day twelve months.

Mr. WALSH said, when this motion was before the House on a previous occasion, he expressed his intention of supporting it on the ground that it was a line well calculated to develop the real interests of the district and to do good to the colony at large. No doubt, as had been stated, this line ought to have been carried out six or seven years ago, but there was then an influence at work which prevented any line coming to Brisbane. The terminus was kept at Ipswich, to the detriment of the colony as well as Brisbane, for a great number of years. With that they had now nothing to do; the damage had been done; the colony had paid for it. This line he considered a very important one indeed. They saw, a short time ago, that complaints were made of the British-India steamers sending to Sydney for their coals; but he took it that, after the completion of this line, the coalfields of West Moreton would be more extensively worked, and that these steamers would coal at Brisbane. That was a matter of the greatest importance to the district as well as to the whole of the colony, for by supplying these vessels with coal, besides other advantages, they would get the advantage of the freights it took to bring coals from Newcastle here. He took it that the Government had made every inquiry as to the proper terminus for the line, though, no doubt, it would be hard to please everybody, especially to satisfy all local interests; also, that the Government would make proper provision for passenger traffic as well as for the shipment of coal. The Government had, of course, properly studied the question, which differed from others of a like nature, inasmuch as the line was within an easy distance from the city; therefore, the surroundings could be easily taken into consideration—as, no doubt, they had been—by the Government in selecting a site for the terminus which would meet with local and general interests. With regard to the complaint of the hon. member for South Brisbane (Mr. Fraser)—that the land sold by the Government would have answered well for the terminus—he thought the Government might take to themselves credit for getting a high price—a price that ought to be considered satisfactory, at any rate. If they repurchased, he believed the land could be got for little more than was obtained for it. It was a well-known fact that the Government persisted in obtaining a good price, and withdrew the land twice from sale until a satisfactory price was secured.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That was the Queen-street land.

Mr. WALSH said the same thing might be said for the South Brisbane land. If it had not brought the reserved price—and the reserved price was thought to be very high—the land would have been withdrawn; and the Government were thought at the time to have been very fortunate in obtaining the price they did. He should give the motion his cordial support, believing that the line would be a profitable one.

Mr. DICKSON said that he also intended to give his vote for the construction of the proposed line of railway, not only because it would develop the coal industry, which they ought to encourage by every possible legislative means, but also because he had very grave doubts whether, after what occurred last year, the Government really wished to see the line made. Every hon. member who desired to see parliamentary business properly conducted must protest against the form in which they were called upon to give assent to the

measure for which approval was now asked. They were called upon to approve of plans, sections, and books of reference of a railway for which not a single penny of money had yet been provided, and not only that, but before even the Financial Statement had been made. It would be contended by all hon. members who regarded the subject apart from mere local considerations that they ought first to learn from the Colonial Treasurer the financial condition of the country; and, if the Government were really in earnest about the construction of the line, there should have been a loan estimate attached to the Estimates-in-Chief, which had been circulated during the last fortnight, embodying a sufficient vote for the construction of it. It would be remembered that last session a precisely similar objection was taken. During the debate that took place on that occasion the Premier said he thought—

“The Government would not be going far out of their way if, with the approval of the House, they were authorised to spend £23,000 on the experiment of a coal line on the cheap principle described by his hon. colleague. They had the money in their possession, and he would give plain intimation that if the House authorised him to do so he would spend the money if he could find it. The ordinary plan was first for the Treasurer to ask for a loan, and a year afterwards to ask for the approval of plans. He did not see why that should be always so—why the process should not sometimes be reversed.”

That statement raised considerable discussion, because the money the Government had in hand from loan votes was not a parliamentary appropriation for the construction of that railway, but for the construction of other lines of railway which had not been expended; and the then hon. member for Toowoomba (Mr. Davenport) moved an amendment adding the following proviso to the motion before the House:—

“Provided always that this House has provided the funds necessary for its construction.”

In the course of the debate that followed, the Premier promised that if the plans were approved of the loan estimate would in due course make its appearance. On its being ruled that the resolution could not be put with the proviso attached to it, the amendment was withdrawn. The Speaker said that—

“Before putting the question he wished to point out that if the amendment was passed the House would agree to approve of the plans, sections, and books of reference of a railway from Oxley to South Brisbane, provided that the House found the necessary funds for the construction of the line. He did not think such an approval was the one that was required by the Act, and that it would not be proper to invite the Council to concur in a condition that had a proviso attached such as that of the amendment. It would be better, probably, for the member for Toowoomba to accept the assurance of the Premier, and that the approval of the plans should be transmitted by message in the usual form.”

And the Premier, who followed, said—

“He held the same view. He did not think the provision was at all necessary. He could only inform the House that until he had received the formal sanction of the House for the finding of the money nothing would be done.”

That debate took place after the Financial Statement had been made, and when the country was in a position to know what the financial proposals of the Government were. The House was now called upon at a comparatively early period of the session to vote for a line of railway for which not a penny had been provided, and that, too, before the financial condition of the country was made known. They were thus reversing, and disadvantageously reversing, the order of things that had previously prevailed here; and hon. members on both sides, if they could get rid of the apprehension that by giving expression to that view they were not prejudicing the fate of the line, would concur

with him in the opinion he had expressed. His hon. friends on the Opposition side of the House were glad to have the railway at any price; and indeed he could not blame them, for it was impossible to have much confidence in the Administration with regard to the construction of the line, for if the Government desired to see that it was a paying line, and one that would tend to develop the coal industry and extend settlement, they would have selected a very much different route for it to have taken. No doubt the Government had introduced the line, as they did last session, with a view to fulfil the expectations of hon. members who represented local constituencies, so as to induce them to give them their support. It would have been more dignified on the part of the Government, and the proposal would have been received by the Opposition much more satisfactorily, if, before introducing it, they had followed the constitutional procedure of making known the financial condition of the country, and accompanying their Estimates-in-Chief, as he had before said, with a loan vote embodying a sufficient vote to provide for the construction of the line. He should give his support to the line as it was, although not with such perfect satisfaction as he would have given it had the route been different, and if the Government had funds in hands sufficient for its immediate construction. He was justified in putting that view of the case, because the Premier, in reply to deputations that had waited upon him since last session, had led the public to understand that the Government were opposed to the construction of a single mile of railway for which parliamentary provision had not been made, and that he would decline to recommend the House to discuss any such railway until the transcontinental railway, on the land-grant system, had been put before the country and ratified or otherwise. He should like to know why such a remarkable change had come over the Premier's mind, since he so decidedly snubbed the deputation that waited upon him, introduced by his hon. friend (Mr. McLean), about a line of railway to the Logan, Beenleigh, and the southern border. That deputation received a point-blank denial, and were told that the Government would not recommend to the House the construction of any further railways than those which had already been approved until the land-grant system had been debated. He trusted his remarks would not be taken as meant to delay the construction of the line; at the same time, he felt bound to protest against the way in which it had been submitted for the approval of the House, unless the Premier went on the principle alluded to by him last week, of diverting from the construction of the Western Railway extension a portion of the £390,000 which was now lying in the Treasury for that extension, and with a portion of which the Colonial Treasurer might, perhaps, feel justified in proceeding with the South Brisbane line. If such were the case, it was a financial mistake, and one which he hardly thought, after the debate of last session, the hon. gentleman would be willing to make. If the Government were sincere in the matter, they first know that, with the strong support they would command from both sides of the House for this South Brisbane line, the resolution could be brought forward and passed at any time, and no necessity had been shown why it should take precedence of the delivery by the Colonial Treasurer of his Financial Statement for the year now entered upon.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman (Mr. Dickson) had just told the House parenthetically that he himself did not believe in the plans, sections, and book of reference of the proposed railway. What was the special object they had

to deal with at the present time? What was the motion made by the Minister for Works? It was that the House approves of those plans and sections and book of reference, and the only question that came before them was whether better plans and sections for the railway could be made; but the hon. member ran away from the question into all sorts of different matters—such as the financial business of the country, and the way in which, as he alleged, a deputation which waited on him four weeks ago had been snubbed by him—and only referred parenthetically to the character of the line for which approval was asked. If the hon. member had to contribute any information to the House at all on the subject, he ought to have confined himself to that one point—namely, was it the best line they could make between these two points—between Oxley and South Brisbane. As to his having snubbed the deputation, he would like to know when he had ever snubbed a deputation. He remembered the deputation introduced to him by the hon. member for Logan, some short time ago, but he certainly treated it respectfully, and at the close of the interview the hon. member for South Brisbane, who was present, actually moved a vote of thanks to him for his courtesy, which was carried unanimously. He had noticed, however, in one of the newspapers—whose statements, however, he did not always believe—that, after leaving him, the deputation went to the Town Hall and reversed their resolution, and passed something quite opposite; but he scarcely believed that was the case. They had now listened to a lecture from the late Colonial Treasurer as to how they ought to manage the finances of the country, and he had told them that this railway ought not to have been brought forward for approval until after the Financial Statement was made. Had he (Mr. McIlwraith) waited until after that Statement was made, the hon. member (Mr. Dickson) would have told the House that he ought to have brought the motion forward before making it. The hon. member had done it so often. It was one of his stock subjects. The matter before the House was perfectly plain. They asked the approval of the House for certain plans and sections, the most part of which were submitted to the House last year, and received its approval, when a distinct promise was made by him that they would bring the plans and sections forward again at the earliest possible period. They were now redeeming that promise. A great deal had been made about the Government with reference to the ordinary process of doing these things, and as to their first getting a loan before asking for the approval of the House; but the reason was quite plain. It was the best way that they could get the business through at that time, and the reasons were fully given and appreciated. Hon. members appeared very much exercised as to how he was going to find the money for the line; well, he was going to borrow it. How could he get it otherwise? Did the hon. member (Mr. Dickson) think that he was going to present it to the colony? He would bring in a Loan Bill, of course, at the earliest possible time, and when he got the money he would construct the railway—possibly sooner.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he did not rise to say anything about the line to South Brisbane. He approved entirely of the construction of that line, although he believed that the route selected by the Government was not the best. That, however, was a matter of which the responsibility must rest with the Government; but he rose to call attention to the somewhat remarkable explanation that they had had from the Premier. The hon. member for Enoggera (Mr. Dickson) asked where the money was to come from, and called attention to the fact that no

money had yet been voted for this line. The Premier, in answer, spoke of everything except that subject, and to that he devoted only two or three words at the end of his speech. He said that the money had to come out of loan; that a Loan Bill would be introduced, and that the railway would be constructed as soon as the money was voted, and perhaps sooner. Well, they had been told by the Government in various places in the colony of late that our borrowing powers were exhausted—that they could raise no more money by loan at present; so that it appeared that they had in the concluding words of the Premier's speech a suggestion of a new policy—a new policy of borrowing. He (Mr. Griffith) was one of those who contended that the borrowing powers of the colony were not exhausted, provided they acted prudently and wisely, and made proper provision for raising necessary revenue to pay the interest on money borrowed; but it seemed to him to be strange that so great a change of the Government policy should be announced in what he might call this casual manner. He did not propose to say much about the question of a new Loan Bill—it would be time enough to discuss that when the Government brought it in—but the proposal to make a railway or to expend any money “when the money is voted or sooner,” was one that deserved attention. The right of the Government to expend money that had not been voted by Parliament was a right that had never yet been asserted, and it remained for the present Government to assert that right; but let him remind them that the practice of expending money before it had been authorised by Parliament had been severely criticised in various colonies. In the Colony of Western Australia, within the last twelve months, it was asserted that the Government had expended money without its being previously sanctioned by the Legislature, and the conduct of the Governor for authorising such expenditure was brought under the notice of the House of Commons not many months since. In the Colony of New South Wales, when Lord Belmore was Governor, exception was taken to his conduct in allowing the Government to expend money on the authority of the Executive Council which had not been voted by Parliament. A long correspondence took place between the Governor and the Secretary of State, and the result was that the Governor was in effect censured for his conduct in allowing his Ministers to take such action. The importance of the provision of the law requiring the authority of Parliament to be given before money was expended was, on that occasion, very strongly insisted upon. It was the duty of members who respected the principles of constitutional government to call attention to any proposed deviation from those principles. At the present time they had in effect the Premier's words—“I have the money, and I will spend it.” The fact that he had the money was no authority whatever to spend it. If the Premier had said plainly, as he said last year, “We do not propose to expend the money until its expenditure has been authorised,” he would be understood; but he said in effect that he would spend the money when he liked; that he had it, and would spend it. Although he (Mr. Griffith) desired to see this railway made, he preferred that it should never be made than that such important principles of constitutional government should be violated. He thought the inference he had drawn could be fairly drawn from the Premier's speech, and that he was right in calling attention to it, and saying that it should not go unchallenged that the Government could spend money before its expenditure had been sanctioned by Parliament.

The PREMIER said he knew he was out of order in speaking twice, but the hon. leader of the Opposition had quite misunderstood what he said. He did not think anything he said justified the hon. gentleman's remarks. He (Mr. Mellwraith) intimated that, of course, the Government would ask in a loan estimate the sanction of the House to the expenditure of the money required for the construction of this line, and that as soon as that was done, and probably sooner, the Government would expend it. He did not want to go into an argument to show how this was done. It had been the practice of the House ever since he had been a member of it. They had never waited until they borrowed the exact money voted by Parliament, but if they had any unexpended money from loans they kept the loan in hand until they wanted money; and, having got the sanction of Parliament for the expenditure, he considered that he would be perfectly authorised to expend it.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he did not intend to comment upon authorised expenditure, but upon what he understood the Premier to say—that he would spend money before the expenditure was authorised by the House.

The PREMIER said that his words were that as soon as they obtained the money they would spend it, and possibly sooner. It had been the practice of the House ever since he had been a member.

Mr. GRIFFITH: I did not understand you so.

Mr. REA said the hon. member for Enoggera had been blamed for having the impertinence to make inquiries with regard to the financial proposals of the Premier; but he (Mr. Rea) wanted to show that hon. gentleman that it was not from the Opposition side of the House alone that those statements had been thought to be necessary, because he could quote to him the opinions of a very strong benchman of his own, taken from the leading article of a paper of which he (the Premier) would not deny the influence—the *Courier* of Friday last, the 26th of August. Here were a few of that gentleman's opinions as to what the Treasurer ought to have done and what he ought to do now. He would not take up the time of the House by reading the whole, but would simply read what was therein said with regard to the Treasurer's conduct:—

“Undoubtedly, no constitutional Opposition would consent to adopt railway plans and sections before the Financial Statement had been made, unless a case of greater urgency were shown than was on Wednesday alleged to exist.”

That was not from the Opposition side of the House. The next was—

“It may be urged that the Ministerial supporters ought to have demanded information on these points, but from their position the delay is probably natural and unavoidable, as the direct consequence of irregular warfare. Moreover, they profess confidence in the Government. But no such consideration can be assumed to influence Opposition members.”

Therefore the necessity was thrown upon them, and they were blamed for not examining the projects of the Ministry sufficiently to gain information.

“They (the Opposition), by usage, have not only the right, but are in duty bound to distrust the Government of the day, and to ascertain at the earliest possible time what is to be its financial policy.”

And had they not done that, or as much as that? In fact, they were blamed for not doing so; and yet just now the hon. Treasurer taunted the hon. member for Enoggera with officiousness in making the inquiries he did.

“Business of such importance as the adoption of railway plans and sections is allowed to go on before the people's representatives have been informed how the

public engagements are to be met, how the constantly augmenting interest charge is to be provided for, and whether any revision of the public burdens is in contemplation."

That was not from the Opposition side of the House. The next statement on the same topic was this:—

"The Estimates do not disclose the Treasurer's intentions. The delivery of the Budget is the most important event of the session, and there is no excuse for delaying it a week longer than is absolutely necessary."

That was not from the Opposition side of the House. Finally—

"The country would have supported them (the Opposition) even in obstructive measures, if the information was improperly withheld."

What more could have been said from this side of the House? Had they ever said half as much with regard to the conduct of the Ministry; more especially when they had again and again heard the hon. Colonial Secretary say that he and his compeers would conduct the business of the country as they thought proper? After the quotations he had just read, hon. members on his side of the House could not be taunted with being officious in making these inquiries. He might further tell the coal-owners that they need not thank the Ministry at all for that railway. They had come to see that the new freezing works down the river could not be successfully carried on in seasons like this, when there was no grass for sheep to subsist upon in transit; and, therefore, the railway was necessary for the successful carrying on of that trade. There was no grass, and, if this meat export trade was to be successful, they saw the necessity of getting this railway constructed as soon as they could. He hoped they should hear no more taunts from the Treasurer to that side of the House for asking unnecessary questions about where money was to come from.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that, as representing a constituency that had as much interest in this railway to South Brisbane as any other, and one that the railway would benefit more than any other, he thought he was right in making some remarks with reference to it. He was quite at one with the Ministry when they recommended to the country that this line should be made. He therefore approved of the plans and sections, but, at the same time, he thought that the hon. gentleman might have reached the terminus by a more direct route. He had no doubt, however, that the Minister for Works had good reasons for taking the route that particular way, more especially if they intended at some future time to carry it further. In that case, it might ultimately be the best route of all. His constituents were very anxious to see that line made; in fact, long before he entered the House at all, he had been agitating in the Ipswich district for the construction of this line; and, of course, he was not going to offer any frivolous objections to the making of the line, even if it did not meet his views or the views of his constituents in every respect. It would affect his district very much—indeed, perhaps more than South Brisbane itself—and it would do more good to the colony than perhaps any other line that had been constructed. It would offer an outlet for the carrying of their produce to market that the district never had before. Some members of the House were of opinion that they had not sufficient coal in that district to keep the railway going by itself. He did not say they had, but they had other things besides coal; and he believed that the coal would go a long way indeed to make the line a payable one. Indeed, he believed it would be a fairly remunerative one; and, looking at it in that way, he was sure the people of the district would congratulate the Minister for Works and the

Ministry for bringing before the country and carrying into execution this short line of railway.

Mr. SIMPSON said he had every intention of supporting this line of railway, but he almost began to think now that he should vote against it. When the hon. member for Ipswich said he was at one with the Ministry, he (Mr. Simpson) thought that something must be going wrong, and that it was time for him to look about him and begin to criticise this line, in order to see whether he should support it or not. He had quite made up his mind upon this subject before the hon. member spoke, but he must confess he was rather doubtful about it now.

Mr. DE POIX-TYREL said he had no idea of opposing this railway; but he should first of all like to have an expression of opinion upon it from the other member for South Brisbane (Mr. Kingsford). One hon. member for South Brisbane (Mr. Fraser) had practically told them that the matter amounted to a question of having half-a-loaf or no bread. He had not made up his mind as to what way he should vote upon this matter, if it came to a vote—which he did not think it would, from the general expression of opinion they had had. He should like to hear an expression of opinion from the second hon. member for South Brisbane, and if he was of the same opinion as the member who had already spoken, he (Mr. De Poix-Tyrel) should be prepared to support the motion.

Mr. KINGSFORD said that, as the hon. member (Mr. De Poix-Tyrel) had referred to him, he might be allowed to say that he thought his opinion was pretty well known. To give his opinion now would be only repeating what he had said before; would be only repeating a set of truisms. He was sure also that the unanimity of opinion shown by hon. members to-night—which was, by the way, a rare exception—rendered it unnecessary for him to say a word about it. It had evidently at last commended itself to the common sense of hon. members on the Opposition side of the House, and that was to him a source of gratification. It was quite unnecessary for him to say anything more upon the subject.

Mr. FRANCIS said he had no intention of speaking to this motion until the hon. member for Dalby got up to speak, but he had very much pleasure in rising to support the resolution before the House. He believed, as his colleague (Mr. Macfarlane) had said, that Ipswich and West Moreton would benefit, perhaps, more by the line under consideration than any other town or district in the colony. When they had the railway, those who could might bring down sheep, bullocks, and wool; and the miner might bring any amount of tin and copper, so long as they could send down their coal. He believed that the Minister for Works could not have presented a motion before the House that would be more likely to please the constituency he (Mr. Francis) represented than the one now under discussion. Not only Ipswich, but the whole of West Moreton, would be very pleased to see a line open from Oxley to South Brisbane; and he believed it mattered very little to them where the money for its construction came from: that was a matter for the consideration of the Treasurer. He could make a very long speech upon this motion, but as he was quite sure the resolution would be carried, whether he spoke or not, or whether he voted for or against it, he would say no more at present.

Question put and passed.

RAILWAY FROM TOOWOOMBA TO HIGHFIELDS.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that when this Toowoomba to Highfields line, *via*

Meringandan, was before the House last session, he was compelled in the interests of the country to withdraw it, with the intention of having fresh surveys made, and in the hope that he would be able to reduce the cost of the line. Fresh surveys had been made since, but he was extremely sorry to say that the cost of the line had not been reduced very much. He believed that he could have reduced the cost of the line considerably by taking it from a point on the top of the range near Harlaxton, but that would have had the effect of taking the line a considerable distance away from agricultural settlement. Therefore the old line had been followed from Toowoomba for a distance of $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles, and then it left the main line near Gowrie Creek. After crossing this creek it rose some 160 feet in about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles, where it crossed the watershed between Gowrie and Meringandan Creeks; thence it followed down the right-hand bank of the latter to a point opposite the Meringandan school-house, and thence direct through the heart of the Meringandan settlement. It would be chiefly an agricultural and timber line; and the ruling gradients would be 1 in 50, though there were a few of 1 in 30, supposing the loads to be going down to Toowoomba. Hon. members must recollect that in leaving Toowoomba they descended until they began to leave the main line, when they began to ascend the Range again; so that they were going up the Range, as it were, twice from Brisbane to Highfields: that was, going up first on the Brisbane side of the Range, and up again on the Toowoomba side, though, of course, not so high. The height was a few hundred feet in a distance of two miles. The line was, therefore, rather stiff, but the stiff gradients of 1 in 30 were all with the load going down the line to Toowoomba. There were a great many bridges and culverts to be constructed, and these would, together with the stiffness of some of the gradients, bring the cost to £4,300 a mile, which was rather higher even than the cost of the main lines. The cost of the line to Highfields was £49,000, or at the rate of £4,313 per mile. Last year, when he withdrew this proposal, the cost estimated was £4,429 a mile; so that there was only a difference of about £112 or £113 a mile. He believed most hon. members were aware that he intended to lay the way with 60-lb. rails, and by using some of the rails from the Main Range, where a heavier section of rails was about to be laid, he had no doubt he would be able to bring down the cost to about £3,700 or £3,600. This was taking the value of these rails to be £3 10s. per ton, the price which he could get for them, good or bad, in Sydney; and allowing that to be their value, he would save £500 or £600 per mile.

Mr. GRIFFITH: What is the whole length?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: 11½ miles. He might explain to hon. members that on the section to Crow's Nest the gradients would be so favourable that the cost would be reduced to about £3,000 per mile. When twelve miles of this line to Crow's Nest was voted in 1879 the cost was estimated at £2,500 per mile. He might also mention that he was, to a certain extent, tied down to this route, because the word "Meringandan" was inserted in the resolution that was adopted by the House. He might have got over that difficulty by skirting Meringandan, but he believed he had taken the best route by taking the line right through the heart of the agricultural country.

Mr. DE SATGE said he believed this to be a problematical line. In the last line they had before them—that of South Brisbane—there was a very distinct produce laid down for carrying upon the line, which showed that they would derive some direct profit from it; but, with

regard to the line under discussion, the Minister for Works had not told them anything, except that it was to be an agricultural line, and probably a timber line; and that the money that this line would require, together with future expenses, would be £4,300 per mile. His idea of branch lines was that if they could take the place of ordinary metal roads, at something like the price of £2,500 per mile, they might be justified in making them; but at the rate of £4,300 per mile he did not think this was a line that the Minister for Works could properly bring forward. He considered that this line would be one of those lines that would bring their own curse on our railway system; and thought the House ought to pause on this question, as this was a log-rolling line. The hon. the Minister for Works called it a timber line, and he thought he had proved that it was no idle title. They discovered, on coming to this line, that the agricultural produce, so far as they could learn from the returns, was most precarious. He would say that this line would do away with any profits they might receive from the Southern and Western line; and if they had such lines as this they would find that they would have very great difficulty in making headway at all with their railway system. If this resolution came to a division, and if he found other hon. members opposing it, he should also oppose it as being one decidedly inimical to the interests of the country.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he could not agree with the remarks of the hon. member for Mitchell. In the motions which he had made to the House this session, he (Mr. De Satgé) had been unsuccessful in impressing his ideas on the House. Where the hon. gentleman had got his ideas about this railway to Crow's Nest, and the agricultural district of Highfields, he (Mr. Perkins) did not know. It appeared that the hon. member had been in many parts, and had been active in attending many things—to his sheep, to his vast interests out west, and he could also go and take a peep at the Crow's Nest and find out the resources of that place. The hon. member might get up and say there would be no traffic on that line, and that the Minister for Works had given no statistics to show why it should be constructed; but he (Mr. Perkins) could tell the hon. member—and he was talking of a place he was well acquainted with—that if that railway did not pay, or if it was an error to make that railway, that every other railway, outside of the trunk lines, that was on the schedule at the present time would be in a similar position. For his own part, having looked into the matter on different occasions, he would truthfully say he believed that there was more traffic—more genuine traffic—on that road at the present time than on any other road off the main roads that he knew of. It had surprised him from time to time when he had been on these roads, and he had been also surprised at the unascertained wealth that would be opened out. When the line was carried on to Crow's Nest it would be a great benefit to the whole colony, and he could inform the House that this was a district that had been very much neglected. In the olden times, twenty or twenty-two years ago, when the Downs were almost unoccupied, and when an agricultural reserve was wanted, instead of the people who wanted to embark in the business of farming using the Downs land, by some contrivance or other what was called an agricultural reserve was proclaimed up to Highfields; and, although the dense forests presented great difficulties, many settlers overcame those difficulties, and country land was very much improved. The land was excellent—it would now grow anything—in addition to which there was valuable timber growing upon it also to be taken into account. At the present time there

was a vast number of teams engaged, on the road from Crow's Nest to Toowoomba, in the carriage of timber and other produce, and it was not an unusual thing to see as many as fifty waggons in a day on their way to Toowoomba. In the face of that, he was surprised to hear the hon. member for Mitchell—who had so much information upon other subjects, and who might be so useful a member of that House—get up and make the statements which he had made, and which he had no reason to make—namely, that this was a log-rolling line. The hon. gentleman, he believed, wanted to make it appear that he was looking after the affairs of the colony; but it appeared to him (Mr. Perkins) that he must have something in his eye more remote even than the transcontinental railway, and he felt that it had some bearing on the hon. member's motion. The hon. member could not see matters as others saw them. He (Mr. Perkins) thought the hon. member never had the enterprise to enter into the forests of this district, as his pursuits and occupations were in another direction at that time, and this timber traffic was not then in existence, so that the hon. gentleman was a stranger to it; and he (Mr. Perkins) would invite him, when he went up to the Downs, to take a look at the Crow's Nest, as there was not much difficulty in going there, and he could satisfy himself that this was a truly legitimate undertaking. The line would have his hearty support, because he believed that settlement would follow hard and fast in its wake, and that immense forests of trees would become accessible, and that before another decade there would be a large population. The subject had already been discussed in the House, and he thought the matter would have been considered a foregone conclusion. He now left it to the good sense of hon. members whether they would agree with the railway or not.

Mr. McLEAN said he had no intention of insinuating that the hon. member for Mitchell had anything in his eye for the future, but he could not agree as to this being a problematical line. He believed the Government were justified in making this line, if any line could be justifiable, and he quite agreed with the Minister for Lands that it would be a paying line. It was some five years since the question had been first discussed, the proposal having been first made by the Liberal Government. He knew the difficulties that settlers had to contend with through bad roads between Toowoomba, Highfields, and Crow's Nest were very great, and that a large timber trade was now being carried on which would be increased if railway facilities were provided. He was quite at one with the Government, and would give the line his hearty support, believing that the construction of this line would do justice to a very deserving class of the community, who had struggled long against adverse circumstances in connection with road communication, and that the Government were warranted in constructing it on the grounds that it would be a paying line.

Mr. MILES said he believed the claims of this line were equal or superior to those of any other branch line. In addition to the immense trade in timber between Crow's Nest and Toowoomba which would be facilitated, there was a closely-settled country to be provided with means of communication; and he had much pleasure in supporting the proposal. He should, however, like to ask the Minister for Works where he was going to find the money? He noticed that the amount voted was £30,000 for twelve miles at £2,500 per mile; but as the hon. gentleman stated that the line would cost £4,500 per mile, hon. members had a right to know where the balance was to come from. There was,

he believed, something like £8,000 to which the line was entitled; and perhaps the Minister for Works would be able to effect some other savings to make up the deficiency. Believing that the line ought to be constructed, he should give it his hearty support.

Question put and passed.

BRISBANE VALLEY RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that this line, like the last, had been passed by the Assembly last session, and withdrawn, he believed, by the Postmaster-General when before the Upper Chamber. To anticipate any remarks from the hon. member for Mitchell, who appeared to be under the impression that branch lines should be more cheaply constructed than main lines, he might mention that such was not the rule, as the main lines at present under construction went through country which was comparative easy and free from engineering difficulties; and the branch lines, with one or two exceptions, were therefore more costly than the main lines. There were also other reasons why the branch lines should be more costly—they usually went through occupied country, and many things had to be provided which upon the main lines could be dispensed with. The main lines, going through land unoccupied for agricultural settlement, necessitated fewer road diversions, fewer public road level crossings, no occupation crossings, very little fencing, and no gate-houses. Altogether there was a difference in the cost of from £300 to £700 per mile—a very considerable item in the cost of a line. In the case of the line under discussion the difference was £524 per mile; in that of the Oxley line it was £657. He hoped the hon. member for Mitchell, in any remarks he might make, would not again forget those circumstances. This line started from the main line about two miles from Ipswich, at a point 25 miles 6½ chains from Brisbane; it then crossed Ironpot and other creeks, and, after traversing about ten miles of broken ground, it struck good country and continued through it to the point of termination. During its course it skirted the Brisbane River, which considerably enhanced the cost of constructing the line. As the line had to cross a great many creeks, gullies, and deep ravines communicating with the river, the culverts required were almost innumerable, and this had tended to make the cost of construction much greater than it would otherwise have been. The earthworks, also, were not very easy; they would run into 4,000 yards per mile, whereas the average on main lines was under 1,000 yards per mile. That made a very considerable difference. A number of named creeks—including Ironpot and Sandy Creeks—had to be crossed, and there were also many other creeks which necessitated an even larger amount of timber-work—one requiring a bridge of fifteen openings, of twenty feet each, to span it. The total length of the line was twenty-five miles, and it stopped within three miles of the Belleview Head Station, and within seventeen miles of the township of Esk. The policy of making this line had been thoroughly discussed and was understood by every hon. member, except, perhaps, the hon. member for Mitchell. If, however, that hon. member felt deeply interested in the subject of branch lines, he could inform himself of all particulars concerning this line by reading the *Hansard* report of former discussions. The cost of the line would be £95,463, being at the rate of £3,818 per mile—that was to say, less than was proposed last year, when the approval of ten miles was asked for. The sum of £100,000 and odd had been voted for the line, and it was proposed now to make twenty-five miles out of the forty-two miles. The ruling gradient was 1 in 50, but for a few short lengths the gradient was 1 in

30; these latter were, however, compensating gradients, which would not interfere with the working, and they had been introduced in order to lessen the cost as much as possible. The minimum curve was a five-chain radius, but there were very few so short, and these had been made, in connection with the gradients, to reduce the cost as far as possible. He therefore moved—

1. That the House approves of the Plans, Sections, and Book of Reference of the Brisbane Valley Branch Line, 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.

Mr. GRIFFITH very much regretted that this line was to be made at a price above that mentioned by the Minister for Works in 1879. The money was then voted at the rate of £2,500 per mile. He (Mr. Griffith) understood that the Government were going to try to make the line for that price. He, for one, thought the line could be made for that. The construction of branch lines in the same expensive manner as main lines was really a discouragement to branch lines, and would tend to prevent them from being constructed. At one time the Minister for Works thought they should be constructed on a much lighter scale.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Never.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he knew the Minister for Works would contradict what he said. It was not the first time he had done so, and it was not the first time he (Mr. Griffith) had corrected him. When this matter was before the House last year the hon. gentleman had contradicted him, and he then quoted from a speech he made on the 26th August, 1879. The hon. gentleman then said—

"These branch lines would, of course, be made on a different system to the one hitherto followed. The rails, in the first place, would be much lighter; 30-lb. rails to the yard would be used instead of 44-lb. as at present, and that would make a considerable difference in the cost per mile. The other ironwork for the permanent way would be equally cheap and lighter in proportion to the rails, and the expensive stations that they had been in the habit of building would be dispensed with to a great extent."

He thought it was to be regretted that the Government had not carried out the intention they had in 1879 of making the line cheaply. It seemed absurd to spend under £3,000 per mile on main lines and then spend a larger sum on branch lines. He was satisfied that this line could be made for less. There was no difficulty in the country, and if the Minister for Works would set to work he would be able to make the line cheaper. Of course it would not be as good, but it would be good enough. He had devoted some attention to the subject when Minister for Works, and he was satisfied that if the Minister for Works would consider the subject, and show himself really in earnest, he would find that a much greater length of line could be constructed for the money that had been voted.

Mr. SIMPSON said that when they were discussing the Northern line the other night he expressed his intention of opposing some of these branch lines; and as the extension now before the House was one of those he intended to vote against, he would give his reason for so doing. He knew the country through which the line was going, and he did not know where the traffic was at present. There was no cultivation along the line, nor was there any timber traffic, and he did not see how the line was to pay. He should like to hear a little about how the line was going to pay, before he voted for it. Ipswich had got its branch line; Brisbane had got its branch line; and he should like to see whether all the branch lines were going to

pay before they went in for any more. No figures had been given to show how this line was going to pay, and he should vote against it.

Mr. DE SATGE said that during the last few weeks he had made some inquiries as to the probability of the line to Fassifern paying in the slightest degree. The source of his information was a gentleman deeply interested in the progress of the Fassifern line. He (Mr. De Satgé) asked him to strain his mind as much as he possibly could into telling him the amount of possibility there was of that line paying. He said there was no possibility or probability of it paying. For a line from Brisbane Valley to Mount Esk, constructed at that rate per mile—£100,000 for forty-two miles—there was not the remotest probability of its paying. There was not even timber to carry it on. It was one of those lines on which the policy of the Government had had to give way to the exigencies of a majority. It ought to be refused, and they ought not to increase the enormous debt of the colony for a line which there was not the least probability would pay. If there was any opposition to the line he should vote against it.

Mr. THORN said that he believed the Fassifern line when extended to Fassifern would pay handsomely, and would be one of the best branch lines in the colony. So with regard to the Brisbane Valley line; it would be the best paying of all the branch lines. He would ask the hon. member (Mr. De Satgé) whether, when he assisted to vote money for telegraph lines and postal services, he asked if they would pay? When the line from Maryborough to Gympie was proposed it was declared that it would never pay; yet it was paying handsomely. He was a great advocate for it, and knew well it would pay. With regard to the Mount Perry line—the paternity of which should be placed on the shoulders of the Premier—he had no doubt after a time it would also yield a fair return. He hoped the House would assent to this Brisbane Valley line, because it would be the best paying of the branch lines in the southern part of the colony. There were excellent lots of timber near it. There was as much timber above Esk as would be found in the Wide Bay district—miles of pine, and cedar, and the banyan tree—and he would also point out that he believed settlement would greatly increase. Such was the case with regard to the Fassifern Scrub. The other day there were only twenty settlers in that scrub; now there were about 600. Settlement would go on in the Brisbane Valley in the same way when farmers had the means of getting their produce to market.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he had not intended to say anything with regard to this line, as the arguments used in favour of it were the same as those which had been submitted last year; but a new light had been thrown on the matter. It was said that there was no timber. Now, he had always been under the impression that it was the best timber land in the colony. In one place alone, on the other side of the Esk, there was some of the finest cedar in the colony, and the agricultural land also was good. The farm of Mr. McConnell alone would supply all Brisbane with hay, corn, and chaff. He had been told by two gentlemen living on this line that they would be prepared to give the Government 4 per cent. on their outlay for the use of the line—an offer that would not be made for any other line the Government had. On both sides of the Valley there was any quantity of land fit for agriculture. For the want of facilities of carriage, people had been prevented from purchasing the land there. They knew very well from whom the hon. member for Mitchell got his information about the Fassifern line. It was

from a squatter about the Fassifern, who did not want the line to go within twenty miles of his place; but it would go there in spite of him. He agreed with the hon. member for Northern Downs that the line was too short to do much good; but if it were carried to Fassifern Scrub he had no hesitation in saying that it would pay as well as any line. It was mere nonsense for the hon. member for Dalby to tell the House that he had been along the Upper Brisbane and knew the country, when he knew nothing at all about it. He did not suppose the hon. member had been in the district three times in his life, because if he had he would have known of the scrubs, and timber, and beautiful land about Mount Brisbane, where there was land as fine as any in the colony. Better land could not be seen than in the district twenty miles round Mount Brisbane and about Cressbrook; and there was good land all along the Brisbane Valley up to Kilcoy. He wished the hon. member (Mr. Simpson) would make himself acquainted with the Valley of the Brisbane, and not detain the House with his unsupported assertions.

Mr. WELD-BLUNDELL said the hon. member for Northern Downs had made an excellent speech in favour of a line of railway not now before the House—the Fassifern line. He (Mr. Weld-Blundell) was sorry he had not had an opportunity of seeing the country through which some of these branch lines passed, but, so far as he could ascertain from the statements made by other hon. members, this line would pass for the most part through scrub. He had heard a great deal about good timber, very rich soil, and other things, but not a single word had been said about population. The hon. member for Northern Downs spoke of 600 people being settled in a scrub where a few years ago there were only a few people; but how were they to make the railway pay? It was all very well to talk of good timber and rich soil; but if a large export of timber took place, in a few years there would be none left, and how would the population prosper, and how would the railway be made to pay? It would not pay to cut down timber and cart it ten miles to a railway to be carried another ten miles. Unless the line had very much more in its favour than the possession of rich timbers, there was not sufficient to warrant them in expending money on its construction. As to there being rich lands in the district—so there were in heaps of other places. What reason was there for constructing numerous lines in the South, where no attempt was made to show that there was any population, when there were any amount of rich lands further north just as well fitted for railway construction? If these lines could be constructed for £2,000 or £2,500 a mile, as they had reason to anticipate, there might be something in favour of their construction; but if they were to cost £4,000 a mile he did not see that they were warranted in voting for their construction. For his part he should distinctly oppose this line, unless some attempt were made to show that there was a considerable population already settled in the district.

Mr. PERSSE said the hon. member for Clermont must have been talking about his own electorate, and not about other electorates, when he said there was no settlement on the Fassifern line. There was more settlement on the Fassifern line than there was ever likely to be in Clermont. Then the hon. member asked what were the people to do when the timber was removed? Why, when the land was cleared, they would commence cultivation. He was sorry he was not in the House when the hon. member for Mitchell spoke. That hon. member and the hon. member for Clermont seemed to run in couples to hunt down anything which was for the benefit

of Brisbane, though for what reason he (Mr. Persse) did not know. They said it was unfair for these railways to be made; but as soon as there was sufficient population in the North, other hon. members would be quite willing to help them in getting railways to assist people in getting their produce to market. He was surprised to hear the arguments used against this Brisbane Valley branch line. He applauded the Government more and more for every branch line they brought before the House, because it showed they were anxious to settle an agricultural population on the land. No one could be more anxious than he to see these branch lines made; at the same time, they ought not to ignore the people in other districts who were cultivating and making the best they could of their land, which they could not possibly make pay properly until they had railway communication. He should be glad if no greater argument could be raised against the Brisbane Valley line than against the Fassifern line. The arguments used against this line would not hold water. One hon. member said there was no settlement; but he had not been within a cooey of the Brisbane Valley and never went beyond his own electorate, but took everything he heard for granted. It had been said that as soon as the timber was taken away there would be no use for the line; but as soon as the timber was cleared off the line would pay handsomely, because the valuable scrub lands of the district would support thousands of people, whose produce would be carried by the railway; and the sooner the line was made the better it would be for the district and for the colony generally.

Mr. FOOTE said the hon. member for Clermont, in referring to the Fassifern line, said there was nothing but scrub.

Mr. WELD-BLUNDELL: I did not say that.

Mr. FOOTE understood the hon. member to say so. The hon. member for Mitchell compared the Fassifern line with the Brisbane Valley branch, and he (Mr. Foote) understood the hon. member for Clermont to ask what traffic there would be, with no timber and very little settlement. The hon. member for Northern Downs asserted that very great settlement had taken place in the Rosewood Scrub, and showed that by taking the line to Fassifern there would be a considerable amount of traffic. Then he understood the hon. member for Clermont to ask what traffic there would be where there was only scrub. He would refer the hon. member to the Rosewood Scrub. If he would take up the returns of goods and merchandise passing to and from the Rosewood Scrub during the past twelve months, he would find that there was considerable traffic, and that the Minister for Works and Commissioner for Railways found, to their perplexity, that they could scarcely find trucks to carry the produce of that and other agricultural districts. A mere scrub was comparatively valueless till the bone and sinew of the settlers were put into it. It was after the land was cleared that the ground brought forth its produce. There was a vast population in the Rosewood and various other agricultural districts. The first station marked on the map of this line was Pine Mountain. The first thing that came from that place was pine timber. When the timber was cleared off, settlement took place, and now it was one of the best corn-producing districts in the colony. He knew this country well right along the line, and he believed the Government had acted wisely in altering the route so as to go through rich flats, and skirting the Tarampa district, which had been known for forty or fifty years to be one of the best agricultural and grass-producing districts in the colony; and the same might be said of the Valley right up. He did

not say that every inch, or every acre, or every 100 acres, was really good land; but the district was first-class, and as far as prospect went he did not see why this line should not pay as well as any branch line. The hon. members for Mitchell and Clermont both wanted pastoral land. This was a first-class grazing district. It used to be very good for sheep, but now a great portion of it was grazed by cattle. If this land were taken up after the manner which many legislators desired—namely, by small graziers who would combine agriculture with grazing—no doubt 200 per cent. more would be produced from the same country than by the grazing system alone. One of the reasons set forth by the hon. member for Mitchell, when speaking of some of that country for which he wanted a railway, was that it was one of the best grazing districts in the colony. He (Mr. Foote) believed that was one of the best things that could be said of a piece of country. If it was a good grazing district they might be sure they could grow anything in it.

Mr. MESTON said the only objection made was to the point from which the line started. The line ought to have started from Walloon, or the centre of the Rosewood Scrub, where there was a thickly populated country from the start. Whether that was a sufficient objection to stop the construction of the line was a question. He was glad this line was thrown out in another Chamber last session, because it gave the Minister for Works a chance to have other surveys made. The allusion made by the hon. member for Mitchell to the Fassifern line was rather unhappy. The information he acquired was altogether unreliable. Of all the lines undertaken in the colony the Fassifern line was one of the most justifiable, because it ran through one of the most important agricultural and thickly populated districts in the colony. The hon. member for Clermont wanted to know what the settlers would do in the scrub. They would produce from £60,000 to £120,000 worth of produce annually, and thus add so much to the wealth of the country. That was what the 600 settlers in the scrub were doing at the present time; and the settlers in the Rosewood Scrub were sending so much produce to market as to cause perplexity to the Railway authorities, as the hon. member for Bundamba said. He thoroughly endorsed the remarks of the hon. member for Stanley, to the effect that the line would pass through an extent of valuable country, finely timbered. But timber itself was not sufficient justification for the construction of a railway; because, no matter how much wealth of timber there might be, that was only a temporary cause of traffic. But, apart from the timber, this line would pass through very valuable agricultural land, the whole of which would be taken up when practical facilities were given for the settlers to get their produce to market. At the present time they could not do this, and they were so far from a market that the cost of getting produce to Ipswich monopolised the profit they would otherwise get. He took it that this line was one which would pay well, and that it would be a valuable branch line very advantageous to the settlers in the district.

Question put and passed.

WARWICK TO KILLARNEY RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved—

1. That the House approves of the Plans, Sections, and Book of Reference of the Branch Line, Warwick to Killarney, 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.

He said that this was not the first time this line had been before the House, although it had not 1881—2 D

been agreed to on the previous occasion. It would pass through a rich agricultural district—the richest, perhaps, in the whole colony. For the first twelve or thirteen miles of the line of route it was thickly settled with an agricultural population, and the other portion of the land, making up the 27½ miles of line, was, though not so thickly settled, equally as good land, a good deal of it being Crown land still available. Hon. members might, perhaps, form some idea of the value of this land when he told them that many men were farming portions of it in the immediate neighbourhood of the proposed line as tenants, paying at the rate of 10s. per year per acre to the owners of the land. This fact would give hon. members some conception of the value of the land through which it was proposed that this line should run. He believed that the line would be of immense value to the district, and that it would not only be the means of increasing the number of acres already under cultivation on the farms that were in occupation, but it would also be the means of selling thousands of acres of Crown land which were now partly unsaleable on account of the difficulty which settlers had in getting their produce to market. He himself had gone over this country, and had met farmers who had 800 to 1,000 bushels of wheat in their barns, which they were unable to get to market on account of the bad roads; so that the policy of constructing the line for their relief could scarcely be doubted. He was of the same opinion as the hon. member for North Brisbane—that it was a great pity that these branch lines could not be constructed more cheaply. But the fault was in the nature of the country. They could only make lines in accordance with the nature of the country, and if the country was a difficult one the line going through it must be an expensive one, whether it was a main or a branch line. But if the hon. member would only consider the question of the weight of rails, he would find that it made very little difference to the cost of the line. The difference between the 30-lb. and 40-lb. rail was only about £160 per mile. The 30-lb. rail meant less capacity for traffic. There could be no question about it. If the hon. member would simply go to the Bundaberg line, for which he was responsible, he would be ashamed of what the 30-lb. rails were. They were simply strong fencing wire. Then the 35-lb. rails, on the Maryborough line, were a disgrace to a line which promised to be one of the best paying lines in the colony, and one which would carry the heaviest amount of traffic. If the hon. gentleman had possessed confidence in that line, instead of making the rails 35-lb. ones he would have increased them to 50-lb. He (Mr. Macrossan) was very glad that he was able to countermand the making of the Bundaberg line throughout with the 30-lb rails, as it would have been a great blunder to put them on the heavy country which the second section of that line went through. As for the Townsville line, the rails intended for that were equally as bad. If he was not mistaken, the hon. gentleman had intended to make this line with 24-lb. rails.

Mr. GRIFFITH: No; we never went under 30.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he knew that 30-lb. rails were ordered, but he believed the original intention was to have 24-lb. rails. Fortunately, he was able to prevent the order being carried out. The cheapness of construction, it must be evident, was in quite another direction to a reduction in the weight of the rail.

Mr. GRIFFITH: That is only a small item, I suppose.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS was glad the hon. gentleman thought so. The saving in

cost of construction must be in the survey of the line. It was there the cost was made up. A good survey might reduce the cost of a line, but when they had a country which was undulating—river after river followed by little bits of hill—no amount of careful survey could make the line cheap. The difficulties had to be overcome, and that was the case with these branch lines they were making under the Range—the cause of the high rate of cost being the nature of the country. In no case of this kind would they be able to make a line cheaply. This line was $27\frac{1}{2}$ miles in length, and he was extremely sorry to say that the cost would be more than £2,500 per mile. The cost would be £3,310 per mile, or a total of £90,000 for the $27\frac{1}{2}$ miles. But there was one little item which was added to that which they were not in the habit of charging to the railways, but which he thought should be so charged—the cost of carriage of material. That had been added in this case, and increased the cost by £80 per mile. The earthworks on this line were not so heavy as on those they had just passed, but the timber-work was greater, the bridges being a considerable item in the cost. The earthworks were nearly 4,000 cubic yards per mile. They followed the main road for a distance altogether of six miles, and it was the being able to do so that in any way reduced the cost of the line to what it was. Hon. members must also recollect, in estimating the cost of this line and comparing it with the promise that the branch lines should be made cheaply, that a sum of £400 per mile had to be added to the cost—the increase in the cost of the rails since the promise was made. So that this line actually, if the same conditions existed now as in 1879, would cost at the rate of £2,900 per mile, or, taking off the £80 per mile which he had put on for the carriage of railway material, the net cost would be £2,800 per mile; so that it would not be in reality so very much in advance now of the estimate formerly made. The bridge-work alone on this short branch line amounted to £11,000, a very large item indeed on the length of 27 miles. He begged to move the resolution.

Mr. DE SATGE said that this was a line which the Government would do well to withdraw until the settlement of the land question on the Darling Downs had reached a further issue. He regretted the absence of the hon. member for Darling Downs, who would, no doubt, have had a good deal to say on this question.

Several HONOURABLE MEMBERS: He is here.

Mr. DE SATGE had not seen the hon. gentleman; but, as he was there, he would no doubt make his own explanation. There would be no doubt that a great portion of the land through which this railway would pass was not Crown land, but the property of a large estate-owner in that neighbourhood; and he would make bold to say that the line would improve the value of that estate beyond anything else, and that, therefore, if the Government ever intended to resume or to re-buy—as had been proposed in a motion to that effect before the House—any of the land on the Darling Downs, they had better postpone the making of this railway until that was effected, as the land would be very much increased in its value by the making of this line. He felt certain that, as soon as the owner of the land heard about this railway, he would add very largely to the value of the land tenanted in the way which had been quoted by the Minister. They came now—with this third branch line at a much increased cost of construction—to the destruction of that happy scheme they had originally heard about the branch lines. He could see that none were to be con-

structed under £3,300 or £3,500 per mile, and therefore the original idea had flown to the winds. He begged to point out that there was not only the cost of construction to be considered, but the cost of maintenance as well. The Minister for Works had pointed out the number of bridges and culverts that would be required on these lines under the Range. His (Mr. De Satge's) experience was sufficient to show him that floods, and general wear and tear of bridges and culverts, had, above all else, to be considered in the cost of these lines; and they should not saddle themselves with lines that would not pay for years to come, and which would require a higher rate of maintenance for keeping up than any other lines in the colony. He thought that was a serious objection to the branch lines generally of the colony, and he regretted very much to hear what had been said with regard to their cost—a statement which would be read throughout the colony with a very great deal of distress, arising from the enormous aggregation of the debt placed upon the people's shoulders by the construction of works which were certainly non-productive, and would not pay the cost of maintaining them. With regard to the matter of repurchasing these lands, that was a very serious question, and he hoped that the Minister for Works would have a few words to say with reference thereto. Was it not better not to push on this railway, but to wait until that matter was definitely settled? because, although the land was very rich, the railway would only benefit some 200 farmers, the great portion of whom were tenants. Would not the repurchase of these lands be the best thing to justify the construction of this line, which at present was perfectly unjustifiable? He thought it would be much better to consider the repurchase of the Canning Downs Estate, and if repurchased to make it almost prohibitive to get back that land.

Mr. HORWITZ said the hon. member had misunderstood the Minister for Works when he told them that an annual rental of 10s. per acre was being paid for land on the Canning Downs Estate to be traversed by this railway. He had not much to say in supporting the motion, except that the population of the country surrounding the proposed railway was very large, and likely to considerably increase if this line were constructed. The land was capable of growing wheat, maize, and other cereals, and was also well studded with valuable timber, the carriage of which would add greatly to the revenue of the railway.

Mr. MILES said it appeared that the hon. member for Mitchell had only one idea—that was, to advocate the construction of railways proposed by himself. He (Mr. Miles) had read a report of the hon. gentleman's speech to the people of Tambo, in which he told them his idea of what should be the railway policy of the country, and this included the three lines he had proposed. The hon. member, however, was candid enough to say that it was no good to advocate the lines, as he did not believe the House would adopt them. Since the hon. member had been in the House he had found fault with everything. Not a single line was proposed but the hon. member opposed because it did not come from himself. The hon. member now said it would be better not to construct this railway until the matter of repurchasing of the Canning Downs Estate was considered. Did he think that it would make twopence difference to the owners of that estate whether the railway was constructed now or some other time? It was hardly necessary for him (Mr. Miles) to comment upon the agricultural resources of the land; the glowing description

given by the Minister for Works and the Minister for Lands, on a previous occasion, exceeded anything he could say. It consisted of the finest agricultural country, capable of producing the most valuable timbers.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said the hon. member for Mitchell had a certain set speech for every branch railway that came before the House. It consisted of "too big a price," "non-productive," and "perfectly unjustifiable." Why this speech was made to apply to every branch railway he did not know, except it was done to support the hon. member's own railway proposals. The hon. member had made capital of the fact that the line would cost £3,500 per mile; but he should recollect that that was only the engineer's price, and that possibly it might be reduced to the extent of £500 by competition. He had also put forward the very able idea that it would be a very good thing to buy the Canning Downs Estate. The owner of Canning Downs was not a fool; he knew that if the railway was not made to-day it would be to-morrow, so that it made little or no difference as far as he was concerned. Did the hon. member for Mitchell not know that they could tax these lands according to their productiveness, as they ought to be? There was no necessity whatever for the Government to purchase this estate, and while he was in this House—and he hoped to live a year or two longer—he would oppose anything of the kind. Why not make large owners of rich lands pay a proper tax? That was his idea. He did not think there could be any difference of opinion about making this line. It could not be proved—in fact, it would be an absurd statement to say that this line would not pay. Whether it paid or not the railway would pass through a country impassable by any other means in wet weather. Some parts of the land was composed of cloggy black soil, over which one could not travel at a greater rate than a mile a day. He took this opportunity of saying one word with reference to the statement of the hon. member for Rosewood (Mr. Meston), who wished that the line should have gone through the middle of Rosewood Scrub. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) had in his possession a petition signed by 210 people agreeing with the route proposed by the Minister for Works. He did not care to bring the petition before the House, seeing that what was asked for was to be carried out, but he would be glad to show the hon. member for Rosewood the petition. He (Mr. O'Sullivan) should support this motion.

Mr. KATES said that it was not his intention to oppose the motion approving of the plans, sections, and book of reference of this line. The hon. member for Mitchell suggested that the Government should recover the Canning Downs Estate, and he (Mr. Kates) contended that the projected line from Warwick to Killarney would never pay until the Canning Downs Estate was repurchased. It was quite amusing to hear the hon. the Minister for Works say that there were thousands of acres of good agricultural land requiring settlement; for, as a matter of fact, there was not a piece to be obtained, unless the Minister meant the ridges and scrub land. There were no Crown lands available.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: What are you doing with your 14,000 acres?

Mr. KATES said that did not belong to the Crown; it belonged to him. The hon. member for Stanley (Mr. O'Sullivan) had suggested that the owners of the land should be taxed in accordance with the value of their estates. Would the hon. member propose to do violence to these people? They were willing to part with their property at a reasonable figure. He

thought it would be quite as well to accept the plan suggested by the hon. member for Mitchell, to withdraw the motion until the question of repurchasing these lands was settled; for, if the Canning Downs Estate were recovered, the settlement upon the land would probably be greater than at the present time. However, he would support the adoption of the plans and sections of this line; and had simply risen to protest against the statement made by the Minister for Works, that there were thousands of acres of land for settlement, when there was really no land available for selection. Unless they got closer settlement in that part of the country the line would never pay; but should the Government reserve those lands there was not a district in Queensland where settlement would be closer.

Mr. SIMPSON said that after the speeches they had just heard he felt quite at fault. One of the hon. members for Darling Downs (Mr. Kates) had told the House that without closer settlement the line would never pay; while his colleague (Mr. Miles) advocated it warmly, and was backed up by hon. members on both sides of the House with surprising equanimity. For himself, he was very doubtful if the line would pay. He did not think it would; but it was of no use saying anything against it, as the majority in its favour was likely to be so very large.

Mr. MESTON said he knew the ground very well over which the line would pass, and he believed it to be one of those branch lines which were indispensable to the success of agricultural districts. After heavy rain the rich alluvial black soil of that portion of the Darling Downs was rendered quite unfit for traffic. They were now endeavouring to attract population to the colony, and there was nothing like railways enabling settlers to transfer their produce to the markets to effect that purpose. If they could enable their Immigration Agent in England to say to the people, "We offer you cheap land and cheap railways for your passenger and goods traffic," that would be the most effective emigration speech that could possibly be made. Queensland had to compete in the old country with America for immigrants, and it was necessary to hold out special inducements to compensate for the increased distance and difficulties of colonisation; and the more railways they constructed the more immigration agencies they established; and railways of the kind proposed were justified in every possible sense. He would like to see railways running into all the agricultural districts in the colony, and hoped that this was only the beginning of a system of cheap railways which would gradually take the place of the main roads in the different agricultural districts of the colony.

Mr. GRIFFITH said he wished to say a word about the cost of branch lines. The Minister for Works had referred to the course proposed to be adopted when he (Mr. Griffith) was Minister for Works, with respect to the weight of rails. On the Bundaberg line they adopted a 30-lb. rail, and it was intended also to adopt it on the Northern line, except on the heavier parts of the road. That decision was arrived at after a very full report from the Chief Engineer, which report was now in the Works Office, and could easily be referred to. That weight of rail appeared sufficient to the then Government. With respect to the Northern line, he was not sorry to see that their decision had been reversed, and that 40-lb. rails had been adopted instead, because that line would eventually be united with the other trunk lines of the colony. The question of weight of rail was only a very small incident in the cost of a line. The weight of rail, as pointed out by the Chief Engineer on that occasion, ought to correspond with the rest of

the line. If they intended to have a first-rate line, the rails ought to be first-rate also. If a cheaper line was intended, with lighter rolling-stock, a lower rate of speed, less earthworks, and lighter bridges, the rails should correspond. They understood that by adopting a lighter rail they were defining the kind of line they were going to make. It was said that the line now proposed would cost nearly £4,000 a mile. He (Mr. Griffith) believed that a railway could be made there for £2,000 a mile, and if that could be done it would be far more to the interest of the country. A 20-lb. rail would be quite sufficient. A 30-lb. rail appeared much smaller than a 40-lb. rail—much smaller in proportion than one would imagine, considering the difference in weight. He was satisfied that people would be contented with branch lines more like steam tramways. There was not much heavy traffic in agricultural districts, and steam tramways could be made for half the cost proposed by the Minister for Works—tramways like those running in Sydney, and Edinburgh, and in many other parts of the world. The engines were very light, and would be able to do all the traffic there would be likely to be for many years to come; and those lines, he was satisfied, could be made for not more than £2,000 a mile, the difficulties being the same as those on the line now under consideration. The previous Government contemplated making cheap branch lines, and he was extremely sorry that the present Government had lost the opportunity of doing so, for those lines would probably exhaust the list of experimental lines; and the other lines which were urgently demanded were lines on which there would be a heavier traffic, and on which the experiment he suggested could not be tried. He could not conceive a better opportunity for trying the experiment than on this line from Warwick to Killarney, where there would be no heavy traffic, and where such a line as he had referred to would be amply sufficient for the next ten years, and might be made at one-half the cost.

The PREMIER said the leader of the Opposition had been consistent to-night in advocating what he did last year, that the Government ought to make branch railways at a much lower cost than that mentioned by the Minister for Works; but he failed, as he failed last year, to give any reason why that should be so. The hon. gentleman had told them that some engineer-in-chief had reported to the previous Administration in favour of 30-lb. rails, not because a saving was to be effected on the rails alone, but because a saving in the cost of the rails was a sample of what was to be effected in every other part of the lines. He (the Premier) was satisfied that there was no engineer-in-chief, or any other engineer in the colony, who could possibly advocate any such thing. The hon. gentleman seemed to consider that light cuttings necessarily followed as part of the same system as light rails; but light cuttings meant heavy gradients, which, as a matter of course, meant heavy rails. If any engineer had ever advocated 30-lb. rails he was satisfied that he had repented of it long ago. One of the first things the present Government did when they came into office was to alter the weight of the rails from 30 lbs. to 40 lbs., and he believed that they did a good thing in so doing. Engineers in every part of the world bought the heaviest kind of rails they could obtain. There was no economy in putting down light rails, and the heavier the gradients the heavier the rails must be. The hon. gentleman gave them an idea of the kind of system he would like to see adopted here by suggesting that steam tramways should be erected like those in Sydney and in Edinburgh. From that remark he should imagine the hon. gentleman had never closely examined either of

them. The rail alone on the Sydney tramway, without any other expense, cost a great deal more than the most expensive of our branch lines; and on the Edinburgh tramway, the rail alone, without the necessary sleepers, had cost as much as some of our railways. The object of the Government had been to get their lines constructed as cheaply as possible, and the hon. gentleman seemed to forget that the cost of branch lines and lines in the West could not be properly compared. The reason why branch lines cost more than trunk lines per mile, was that they went through much more difficult country. If hon. members would look at the engineering on the Northern line and on a greater portion of the Southern line, they would see that for themselves. The greatest economy had been practised; there was the lowest amount of earthwork taken out; the lines were of the narrowest gauge; the bridges were of the cheapest kind, as also was the material. It would be utterly impossible to economise by introducing systems such as those of Sydney or Edinburgh, which cost three times as much in iron alone.

Mr. WALSH said the great argument against the railway appeared to be that the line would pass through lands the property of private persons, and which were not settled upon by an agricultural population. For his own part, he believed the Government would do wisely—although now was not the time to discuss the question—to consider the advisability of repurchasing a large portion of those lands that had passed from the Crown in a most foolish manner. The alienation of those lands had taken place, and the remedy ought to be employed as soon as possible. It was a pity to see such a large area on the Darling Downs which, while being bad grazing land, was at the same time splendid agricultural land, lying waste; and the time would shortly come, he felt sure, when the House would place a heavy tax on all private lands not fit for pastoral purposes—such as the Darling Downs lands. Improved lands should certainly not be taxed, but unimproved lands capable of being used for other purposes should be taxed heavily. The Minister for Works had told them that farms on some of the lands through which the railway would run were let at 10s. an acre. It appeared to him that they were allowing to come into existence here the same bad system as that which existed in Ireland at the present time, and the sooner they removed that growing evil the better it would be for the country and for themselves. It would be easy to introduce the remedy now. The land was not paying for pastoral purposes, and he felt sure that the owners would accept a fair price for it; and the Government would find no difficulty in getting purchasers for the lands after population could be easily settled upon it, and it would be possible to make a railway there profitable. The leader of the Opposition had said that tramways would do instead of railways, and referred to those in Sydney. He could assure the hon. gentleman, so far as he could make out, that the tramways in Sydney cost £10,000 a mile. How did that correspond with the hon. gentleman's ideas of cheapness? The line they were discussing now would cost £1,000 a mile, and yet the hon. gentleman wanted to build tramways to cost £10,000 a mile.

Mr. GRIFFITH: They would not cost that in the country.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Yes, they would.

Mr. WALSH said he believed that if this tramway system were investigated it would be found to be a perfect farce; it would not answer at all. If it was worth while making a railway,

it was worth while making a substantial one ; and he did not see any reason why the Government should not consider this in connection with the question. Lately, in New South Wales, a Bill was passed—entitled, he believed, “The Church Lands Acquisition Bill”—which gave the Government power to purchase any land they wanted at a fair valuation by compensating the owners of that land. That might be considered confiscation by some people, but the Bill was passed by a large majority, and the Government were now in a position to purchase at a fair valuation any land they required for railway extension or for any other purpose. If they wished to settle people on the land here they should be in a position to do the same thing, and he was sure if such a Bill were brought forward the House would pass it. In America they encouraged immigration. They sent home for immigrants, and when they arrived at their destination he understood that there was somebody ready to meet them and settle them on the land. They said, “Here is land for you ; we will assist you even to cultivate it.” But what did they do here ? They brought immigrants to a strange country, and landed them in one of our seaport towns, and they could then go where they liked. These people knew there was plenty of land, but they did not know where to go to look for it. In fact, under the present system a new chum was almost afraid to go off a main road. He maintained that if they had proper land laws, and studied the question properly, they ought to be in a position to bring out people of moderate means from the old country. There were plenty of them who were, no doubt, anxious to leave, for it was not a very enjoyable place to live in. If they had a proper immigration system, they ought to be in a position to bring out a lot of middle-men, and give them land at a small valuation—say 5s. or 2s. 6d. an acre—so long as they were not allowed to dispose of it for a term of years, but would settle on it *bonâ fide*. If they did that a number of people would come out here and would create traffic for our railways. He trusted the day was not very far distant when the Government would consider this question in all its bearings. At present they made railways and trusted to Providence for traffic, while at the same time they had not tested any means of settling people on the land to create a traffic for the lines. As this was a line through an agricultural district, and he had heard that it was one that in the immediate future had prospects of becoming profitable, he should certainly support it.

Mr. REA was understood to say that he would vote for this line, and one reason why he should do so was that it went through a large freehold estate. It was manifestly absurd that, when a line increased the value of property, the owner of it should not contribute towards the cost of the railway. No one could say that, if an estate were increased fourfold in value by a public railway going through it, it would not be just to put on a railway tax, so that some portion of the general taxation might be contributed by those who got the value of their property so much increased.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said hon. members seemed to be under the impression that this line went through Canning Downs Estate. That was a mistake. The line had been taken on the route it had been surveyed for the express purpose of avoiding the Canning Downs Estate. He could have taken the line to Killarney in about twelve or thirteen miles by going through Canning Downs, but he did not see the justice of making a line to benefit one man alone ; therefore he proposed to take the line through lands belonging to independent farmers. When he spoke about

land paying 10s. per annum per acre it was not land belonging to Canning Downs, but only in the neighbourhood of that run. As to what had fallen from the hon. member for Darling Downs, he was surprised that that hon. member did not oppose the motion altogether, after the remarks he had made. He supposed he would, if he thought he (Mr. Macrossan) would withdraw it. The hon. member said that there was no land there belonging to the Crown for sale ; he (Mr. Macrossan) said there was, and he had it on better authority than the hon. gentleman. He had it upon the authority of the farmers themselves, who had told him there were thousands of acres of the best land still unalienated within a reasonable distance of this very line. Let the hon. gentleman ascertain from the Lands Office whether there were not thousands of acres of land there still unalienated. It was very well for him to come there and tell the House, because he was the member for Darling Downs, that he (Mr. Macrossan) had made a mistake ; but if he had made a mistake, the Lands Office had made one, and the farmers had made a mistake also.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he should like to direct attention to the statement of the hon. member for Darling Downs (Mr. Kates). It would be much more creditable to that hon. member to oppose the line openly than to do as he had been doing. When he was on the Darling Downs amongst the farmers he was an advocate of this line ; and now that he was down here, and that he was satisfied that it would be carried, almost to a certainty, he wanted to become a growler, and draw a gloomy picture. He (Mr. Perkins) could only corroborate the statement made by the hon. Minister for Works, that there was a vast quantity of land in the district for sale, as the hon. member knew perfectly well. But the hon. member wanted to be on the safe side, so that by-and-bye, in case of anything happening, he would be able to say—“Well, I never did approve much of this line.” He had one story here, and he had another story at Warwick ; he could grind his organ just to agree with the audience he had before him. He (Mr. Perkins) only wished that his constituents in the neighbourhood, if there were any, should understand the tactics the hon. member had recourse to. He (Mr. Kates) was himself the owner of 14,000 acres of land secured by various contrivances, and had a great down upon the squatters and land-sharks. He (Mr. Perkins) happened to know the use he made of the 14,000 acres of land.

Mr. KATES : You know nothing at all about it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said he (Mr. Kates) certainly did not attempt to grow wheat upon it, or increase the traffic of the railway. He (Mr. Perkins) made these remarks just to let the hon. gentleman's constituents and the public know the value of his (Mr. Kates') observations with regard to this railway.

Mr. KATES, in explanation, said, with regard to the remark of the Minister for Lands that he had 14,000 acres of land, he had only to say that he had not got 14,000 acres, but what he had he had paid for. He had never dummed an inch of land in his life. But when the hon. member talked about organ-grinding here and in Warwick, he could assure the hon. gentleman that his (Mr. Kates') name stood better in Warwick than his (Mr. Perkins').

The SPEAKER : The hon. member is going beyond an explanation, and is therefore out of order, having spoken.

Mr. GARRICK said he hardly thought the tactics used by the hon. Minister for Works and the hon. Minister for Lands with regard to the

speech of the hon. member for Darling Downs were very fair. They were working a little electioneering dodge upon the country, and everyone should know what they were about. They were not depreciating the hon. member for Darling Downs, as the speeches of either of these hon. gentlemen would not be misunderstood one bit in the world on the Darling Downs. He (Mr. Garrick) was sure it was quite clear to hon. members that the hon. member (Mr. Kates) had not objected to this line. He simply differed from the Minister for Works upon some particulars given by him. There was not the slightest opposition to this line noticeable in the speech of the hon. member, and it was quite useless for the two Ministers mentioned to make the statements they had made.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He said it should be withdrawn.

Mr. KATES rose to say a word in explanation.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member has spoken.

Mr. DICKSON said he must say that, after the Minister for Works had replied, he was much surprised to hear the attack made by the Minister for Lands upon the hon. member for Darling Downs. When a Minister made his speech in reply, under ordinary circumstances, the conclusion of the debate might be looked for; but since the hon. Minister for Lands had chosen to attack the hon. member in this way when he (Mr. Kates) was precluded by the forms of the House from defending himself, he (Mr. Dickson) felt it to be his duty to rise and move the adjournment of the debate for the purpose of giving the hon. member an opportunity to make his explanation. He moved the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. KATES said he did not wish that it should go before his constituents that he had intended to oppose this line. His first words in speaking upon this subject were that he intended to support this line. He said, however, that if the Government should make up their minds to recover the large estates, it would be, perhaps, better to withdraw the motion, and take the line through the good country of the Canning Downs Estate. He was, however, far from wishing that the motion should be withdrawn; because, if that were done, they might never get a branch line at all.

Mr. DE SATGE said he wished to make an observation to the Minister for Works, who had misunderstood him entirely upon what he said with regard to the private property on this line. He was perfectly aware that the deviation had been made to benefit the freeholders, as far away from the Canning Downs Estate as possible. But still the land within a mile or two of the line was chiefly the property of that estate, and the line must increase the value of that property, as it must benefit the freeholders upon the line. The public estate still remaining there was very small—little more than nothing—and the estate of Canning Downs was overwhelming. This line would distinctly benefit that estate more than anything else, and they were therefore to pay a large sum of money to increase the value of the Canning Downs Estate.

Mr. REA said that the comment of the Minister for Works satisfied him that these plans and sections were very little known by the general members of the House. What had been said also suggested to his mind what was done in Melbourne when some public work was suggested, and that was that the project was illustrated on a map on a large scale, which was stuck up upon the wall of the House, so that any member could see at a glance the general direction of the

proposal of the Government. If that were done here, it would save a great deal of misconception. He would suggest to the members of the Government and the leader of the Opposition that some such plan as he had suggested should be adopted, in order that members who did not know the locality would be able to see at a glance where a line was going, and would thus enable them to know what they were talking about.

Motion for the adjournment of the debate, by leave, withdrawn.

Original question put and passed.

FIRE BRIGADES BILL.

The House having, in Committee, affirmed the desirability of introducing, in accordance with the message of his Excellency the Governor of date the 23rd August, a Bill for the better provision for the Extinction of Fires in municipalities and their suburbs in the Colony of Queensland, the report of the Committee was adopted; and, on the motion of the COLONIAL SECRETARY, the Bill was read a first time, ordered to be printed, and its second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

THOMAS RAILWAY BILL.

The House having, in Committee, affirmed the desirability of introducing, in accordance with the message of His Excellency the Governor of date the 23rd August, a Bill to authorise Lewis Thomas to construct a Branch Line of Railway connected with the Southern and Western Railway, the report of the Committee was adopted; and, on the motion of the PREMIER, the Bill was read a first time, ordered to be printed, and its second reading made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House adjourned at forty minutes past 9 o'clock until the usual hour next day.