

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Council**

**TUESDAY, 5 AUGUST 1884**

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**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.***Tuesday, 5 August, 1884.*

Insanity Bill.—Native Labourers Protection Bill.—Federal Council of Australasia.—Message from the Governor—assent to Bills.—Federal Council of Australasia.—Population and Rates of Divisions.—Brisbane Valley Branch Railway.—Railway from Stanthorpe to the Border.—Wharf Line—Cooktown Railway.—Registrar of Titles Bill—third reading.—Public Officers Fees Bill—third reading.—Succession Act Declaratory Bill—committee.

The PRESIDENT took the chair at 4 o'clock.

**INSANITY BILL.**

The PRESIDENT announced that he had received a message from the Legislative Assembly forwarding a Bill to amend the law relating to the Insane.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Hon. C. S. Mein), the Bill was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

**NATIVE LABOURERS PROTECTION BILL.**

The PRESIDENT announced that he had received a message from the Legislative Assembly forwarding a Bill to prevent the improper employment of aboriginal natives of Australia and New Guinea on ships in Queensland waters.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the Bill was read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

**FEDERAL COUNCIL OF AUSTRALASIA.**

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, in moving—

That a humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that Her Majesty may be graciously pleased to cause a measure to be submitted to the Imperial Parliament for the purpose of constituting a Federal Council of Australasia, upon the basis of a draft Bill adopted by the Convention held in Sydney in the months of November and December, 1883—

said that when it was publicly announced that the Government of Sir Thomas McIlwraith had taken formal possession of New Guinea, nobody—not even Sir Thomas McIlwraith himself—could have foreseen that the result would have been so momentous as it had been shown to be by the experience of the past few months. He must confess that, whilst admiring the courage of the late Premier, to a certain extent he had shared the opinions of those who at the time thought his action somewhat precipitate; but it was now almost universally admitted by politicians of all shades of opinion that, viewed by the light of subsequent events, the action of that gentleman was such as to entitle him to the grateful recognition of all patriotic Australians. The chord he then struck vibrated not only throughout Queensland, but resounded to the centre of the British Empire, and attracted the attention and enlisted the sympathies of statesmen in other European dominions. Prominent public men in Australia had at times expressed the hope that at no distant date the colonies would be federated, but their expressions of opinion had been received with a large amount of coolness from the bulk of public men, and the most sanguine could have scarcely expected that his aspirations would have been realised within at least a generation. To-day, however, they found that Australians were united in their desire to bring about the consolidation of the whole of the colonies; and public men in Great Britain, belonging to the party which had been considered for many years past in favour of disintegration rather than cohesion, were bound together to bring about the federation of all parts of the Empire. It was not

necessary that he should advert at any length to the circumstances which led to the meeting of the Convention which assembled in Sydney in November and December last, nor to the constitution of that assembly. It would be conceded on all sides that, though the Convention might have benefited very materially by the advice and assistance of such men as Sir Henry Parkes, Sir John Robertson, and the late Premier of Queensland, it was, nevertheless, a fairly representative assembly, and performed its important work in an eminently satisfactory manner. That House last session, by a unanimous vote, expressed its approval of the greater portion of the resolutions at which that Convention arrived, and to-day he asked its further approbation of what he believed they were all agreed was its greatest work. He knew that hon. gentlemen had generally come to a conclusion already on the point, and it was not necessary for him to seek arguments to convince them of the desirability of adopting his resolution; in fact, he felt some difficulty in addressing the House, because he was satisfied that any remarks of his would be simply a waste of words. The matter was no longer, he might say, within the range of conviction; it was one of pure sentiment, and for that reason he felt that he was not competent to deal with it at any length. Hon. gentlemen would remember that, after the Convention had unanimously resolved that in the interests of the Australasia it was undesirable that any of the islands in the Southern Pacific should be attached to any foreign State, emphatic protests had been made against the deportation of relapsed French criminals to those islands or to New Caledonia, and the following resolution was unanimously passed:—

‘That this Convention, recognising that the time has not yet arrived at which a complete Federal Union of the Australasian Colonies can be attained, but considering that there are many matters of general interest with respect to which united action would be advantageous, adopts the accompanying draft Bill for the constitution of a Federal Council, as defining the matters upon which in its opinion such united action is both desirable and practicable at the present time, and as embodying the provisions best adapted to secure that object, so far as it is now capable of attainment.’

It would be observed that the resolution started with the assumption that the time had not arrived at which a complete federal union of the Australasian Colonies could be attained. Some persons felt disappointed at that conclusion, but he thought that reflection must satisfy the most earnest advocate of federation that, owing to the present varying circumstances of the colonies, and the material differences of their laws with regard to internal policy—particularly matters relating to finance—it would be impracticable at the present moment to bring about federation as complete as that which existed in the Dominion of Canada. It must take time to rub off the angularities and prejudices of public men in Australia; they must be contented, for the present at all events, with securing a unity of sentiment on the points on which they were not likely to be at variance, and which did not interfere with legislative action in regard to matters of domestic arrangement. He would not weary the House with matters of detail in moving the resolution, but as some misconception existed on the part of some persons outside, as well as in the Legislature possibly, with regard to the scope and constitution of the Council, he might be pardoned if he referred briefly to some material points of the proposed Bill. By turning to the 30th clause hon. gentlemen would find that the measure would not become operative in any colony, though it might pass the Imperial Parliament, unless the colony by legislative enactment declared it to be in force, and unless four separate colonies combined in expressing their desire to

come under the provisions of the statute. It would therefore be seen that, whatever conclusion they arrived at, they would be taking only one step towards the attainment of their desire. The constitution of the Council had given rise to a little discussion. It would be seen that it was to consist of representatives from each colony subject to the Act; and those representatives amounted to two where the colony had self-government, and one only where the colony was a Crown colony. It must be conceded that the Convention had practically adopted the rule laid down with regard to the election of the senate of the United States of America, and that it acted wisely in doing so. The Council would not deal with matters of internal management, but with matters of general interest to all the Australian colonies. That principle was a sound one and could not be improved upon. After the representatives had been elected it was necessary that they should meet somewhere, and the Bill provided that they should meet first at the city of Hobart. The Council would determine the place of subsequent meetings, which were not to be held less frequently than once in every two years. There were two classes of subjects in regard to which the Council was to be invested with legislative authority. By the 15th clause it would be observed that it was to have absolute legislative authority over seven different classes of matters: Firstly, the relations of Australasia with the islands of the Pacific; secondly, prevention of the influx of criminals; thirdly, fisheries in Australasian waters beyond territorial limits; fourthly, the service of civil process of the courts of any colony within Her Majesty's possessions in Australasia out of the jurisdiction of the colony in which it is issued; fifthly, the enforcement of judgments of courts of law of any colony beyond the limits of the colony; sixthly, the enforcement of criminal process beyond the limits of the colony in which it is issued, and the extradition of offenders (including deserters of wives and children, and deserters from the Imperial or Colonial naval or military forces); and, seventhly, the custody of offenders on board of ships belonging to Her Majesty's Colonial Governments beyond territorial limits. Those questions, although to a certain extent relating to domestic matters, chiefly concerned matters outside the jurisdiction, as it were, of the separate colonies. The jurisdiction of the law courts extended only three miles beyond the shores of the colony, and outside of that limit the Government had practically no control over its subjects. It would therefore be agreed that, though Imperial legislation had enabled them to a certain extent to attain the objects aimed at by the 15th clause, yet it would be much more satisfactory to have a universal scheme under which legislation could be effected by the colonies themselves. In regard to the relations of Australasia with the islands of the Pacific, there could be only one opinion as to the advisableness of having authority in those matters. Queensland especially was concerned in that question, for her ships were constantly trading to the Pacific Islands, and she had no control over them after they went three miles from shore. For protective purposes, the Imperial Government had found it necessary to pass Acts such as the Extradition Act, and the Kidnapping Act, so as to have control over the ships belonging to the Australian colonies trading among the islands. With regard to the prevention of the influx of criminals, they might pass any law—a Bill had already been introduced in another place dealing with the matter—but it was much more desirable that there should be a comprehensive and uniform measure dealing with the subject. The

question of the fisheries was one in which Queensland was peculiarly interested. Large numbers of vessels were engaged in the *bêche-de-mer* and pearl fisheries, and when they got beyond the limit of three miles they were beyond the control of the law of Queensland. With regard to the service of process of the courts he might say that at present it was very cumbersome.

#### MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR— ASSENT TO BILLS.

The PRESIDENT read messages from the Governor conveying His Excellency's assent, on behalf of Her Majesty, to a Bill to continue the operation of the Marsupials Destruction Act of 1881, and a Bill to amend the United Municipalities Act of 1881.

#### FEDERAL COUNCIL OF AUSTRALASIA.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, resuming, said: At present there was no uniformity with regard to the service of process in civil matters, and that subject was closely connected with the following one. Attempts had been made to enable a judgment given in one colony to be enforced in another without going through the trial of the action again; but owing to a decision given in another colony, the statute dealing with that matter had become inoperative. If a suitor obtained a judgment by legal process in one colony, he had to go through the same process in another colony; and it would be more satisfactory, where suitors were compelled to resort to litigation, if the expenses were made as light as possible, by providing that where a suitor obtained a judgment in one colony it should be recognised in the rest, and that where a defendant had been proved liable in one colony his liability should be extended to all the others. With regard to the enforcement of criminal process, Imperial legislation had stepped in to the assistance of the colonies; and, under the Extradition Act, by a cumbersome roundabout process, criminals who succeeded in escaping from the colony could be arrested in the southern colonies and brought back; but it was much more desirable that in all those matters the colonies should legislate for themselves, and have a provision under which a warrant issued by some competent authority in one colony would be observed by the police authorities in all the other colonies. With regard to the custody of offenders on ships belonging to Her Majesty's Government beyond territorial limits, that was a matter which arose out of, and was connected with, the previous provisions. As he had said before, they had no control over criminals beyond the limit of three miles from the shores of the colony, and unless there was comprehensive legislation on the subject, there would be no legal means by which they could retain such criminals in custody. It would be seen that the absolute legislative powers conferred on the Federal Council for dealing with those matters were somewhat limited; but provision was made for an extension of their authority by the subsequent clause, which enabled the colonies, whenever they thought proper, to delegate to the Federal Council power to legislate concerning matters relating to general defences, quarantine, patents of invention and discovery, copyright, bills of exchange and promissory notes, uniformity of weights and measures, recognition in other colonies of any marriage or divorce duly solemnised or decreed in any colony, naturalisation of aliens, status of corporations and joint stock companies in other colonies than that in which they had been constituted. With regard to defence they were now creating amongst themselves what he might call standing armies,

They were certainly establishing small naval forces; and in the event of being attacked, which, judging from the present aspect of affairs, was not unlikely, it was their duty to take steps for united action. There were already bodies of men being trained for purposes of defence, but there were no means by which the forces of the different colonies could be united under one head in time of danger. The present state of the law in regard to quarantine was eminently unsatisfactory. The passengers of the steamer "Rome" were compelled to go through quarantine in one colony recently, and on the ship's arrival at the adjoining colony, had to go through the same process. It would be much more satisfactory if there were terminal points on the east and on the north, at which ships arriving from the Northern Hemisphere could go through quarantine, and then get a clean bill of health from one colony to another. The state of the patent law had been described as disgraceful at present. A man who invented anything likely to be advantageous to the arts or manufactures was compelled to protect himself by patenting his invention in every one of the Australian colonies, even though he might have received letters of registration in Great Britain. Recognising the deficiency of the law in that respect, the present Government had introduced a measure dealing with the matter, and providing for reciprocity between the different colonies; but it would be far more satisfactory if by one legislative enactment, applicable to the whole of the Australias, the patents of one colony should have full force throughout the whole of the colonies. Then with regard to copyright, there were no means by which any author of a book, or a work, could protect the labour of his brains in these colonies; it was necessary for him to register his book or work of art in Stationers' Hall, in Great Britain, in order to get any protection whatever. There were other matters dealt with in the Bill which were not of so much moment, though they were all important in themselves. He did not intend to refer to all of them, but would just advert to one subject—namely, the status of joint-stock companies. At the present time, it was a moot question whether a company entitled to hold lands in one colony carried that privilege with it to another colony where it carried on business. The better opinion was that, although a corporation held land in New South Wales or Victoria, it could not hold land in Queensland without going through the expensive form of registration in this colony. He did not see why corporations should not have the same rights as individuals in that respect, and be able to carry their rights with them wherever they conducted business, so long as they conformed to the law. In addition to the matters he had mentioned, the Bill provided in the 16th clause that the Federal Council might practically occupy the position of arbitrator between any two or more of the colonies in any questions relating to those colonies or their relations with one another. And, by clause 29, it was provided that—

"The Council may make such representations or recommendations to Her Majesty as it may think fit with respect to any matters of general Australasian interest, or to the relations of Her Majesty's Possessions in Australasia with the possessions of foreign powers."

Under the existing state of affairs, the colonies were not in a position to take action and bring their united influence to bear on the Imperial Government in matters in which they were interested, except by means of a conference, such as that which was held last year in Sydney. It was true that of late years the colonies had been recognised to a much larger extent than formerly, as integral portions of the Empire, but in their present isolated con-

dition representations from the Agents-General did not always meet with that consideration which they were fairly entitled to receive. It had been felt—and he was sure all hon. members of that House felt—that if the colonies could speak with one voice on matters of general public interest, seeing how great and important a part they were of the Empire—their representations would be more likely to be received with respect and consideration. It was possible that it might be argued that that House would not go to the extent that would be desirable at the present moment, but he thought the most earnest advocates of federation must see that it was impossible at the present time to bring about that state of affairs, by which they could have federation, pure and simple. He was quite confident of this: that if they initiated the matter by having a Bill, of the description of the one now before the House, passed by the Imperial Parliament and adopted by the colonies, they might safely predict that they would be laying the foundations of a large and important Empire. The population of Australia now was greater than that of the United States at the time of the Declaration of Independence; and if it went on increasing at the same rate it had been doing, Australia would, before the end of the century, have as many inhabitants as there were in England at the time of the Revolution. He thought that, with their more genial climate and productive soil, there would be no arrogance in predicting that they would, before many years had elapsed, outrival the magnificent dominion of Canada; that the dominion of Australia—not perhaps within the memory of any hon. member then present, but certainly at a not very much later day—would expand—he would not say into a Greater Britain, but into a dominion which would realise the expectations of one of their earliest and, he still thought, greatest sons, and become a second Britannia in the Southern Hemisphere. He begged to move the resolution standing in his name.

The Hon. J. F. McDOUGALL said he did not rise for the purpose of offering any opposition to the motion—on the contrary, he intended to support it, and, in doing so, he must compliment the hon. gentleman who had introduced the question upon the very concise and lucid manner in which he had laid it before the House. He (Mr. McDougall) might say that, when the question was first agitated by the late Premier, he thought, in his simplicity—and, he would say, in his ignorance—that it was brought forward too soon, but since the matter had become ventilated he had come to the conclusion that it was the right step in the proper direction. Sir Thomas McIlwraith was, he believed, the means of bringing the subject of federation prominently before the ruling powers of the other colonies. It was quite unnecessary for him (Mr. McDougall) to follow the mover of the resolution in the track he had travelled, because the hon. gentleman had clearly pointed out the great future which they hoped was before the colony. He (Mr. McDougall) thought he might fairly pay a tribute of praise to the present Premier of Queensland for the able way in which he had represented the colony at the Inter-colonial Convention which met at Sydney. He trusted the motion before the House would be the first step towards what would lead to complete federation. He did not suppose the matter would be consummated in his day, but he hoped there were many hon. members present who would see the day when it would take place. In this Southern Hemisphere they were not to be guided by the same rules as prevailed in colder countries. Things that took fifty years to mature in other parts of the

world were brought to maturity here in one-fourth the time, and it was impossible to say what would take place in the next half-century. He would not detain the House any further, as he did not think he could throw any more light on the question. He had very great pleasure in supporting the motion.

The HON. W. GRAHAM said while he cordially agreed with all or nearly all that had fallen from the hon. the Postmaster-General, he must say that he thought it was a good thing that members on both sides of the House should express their opinion on such an important question, so as to show that that at least was not a party question, but had the unanimous approval of both sides of the House. There was no doubt that one of the causes which had made federation such a prominent subject at the present time was the action taken by Sir Thomas Mellwraith, in what, for want of a better term, had been called annexing New Guinea, which action had been handsomely acknowledged by the hon. the Postmaster-General. That action was the result of a fear entertained by all the Australian colonies that the adjacent islands—notably New Guinea—were about to be used for penal settlements, to which would be deported the worst class of criminals, who would not only be sent there with very little supervision, but would, in fact, be turned loose on the islands, so that it would be perfectly easy for them to make their way to the shores of Australia. Queensland, from her situation, would, it was thought, suffer most, and had in the past suffered more than any of the other colonies from the landing of escapees from New Caledonia; consequently, it was the duty of the late Premier to take prompt action, and he did so. That his action was slightly irregular was possible, and he (Mr. Graham) believed that no one was more fully aware of that than Sir Thomas Mellwraith himself—in fact, he saw by a late paper, which gave an account of a reception Sir Thomas had, at his native town of Ayr, that that gentleman said he was quite aware that it was irregular, but prompt measures were necessary and he took action accordingly. He (Mr. Graham) was at home at the time New Guinea was annexed, and could well remember how cordially the news was received in the old country. Hon. members all knew how it was received by the Colonial Governments. Possibly there was something of the appearance of the comic element in a colony, having a population of a little over 200,000 souls, annexing a country about as large as France and Great Britain together, but the result had shown that the action was a wise one. The head of the Colonial Office certainly rather snubbed the colonies in the first blush of the thing, but they were all aware that there were certain men in this world who, when anything had to be done, invariably made a start in the wrong direction, and, after finding out their mistake, retraced their steps and went the right way. He had not the honour or the pleasure of the acquaintance of Lord Derby, and had not had time to study his career, but thought it possible that he might be a man of that sort. The question of federation was not new; it had been spoken and written about years ago. He did not intend to refer to any of the arguments advanced by the mover of the motion in support of federation, except one—and that was, perhaps, the strongest reason urged in its favor—namely, that it was desirable that the colonies should unite for self-defence. It was certain that the people of Australia could more successfully defend themselves unitedly than if their separate defence forces were not acting together. Since the question of federation had been agitated, he had noticed a marked difference in the action of the various colonies—more

especially in the case of Victoria and New South Wales. The former was enthusiastic—perhaps a little too much so—while, on the other hand, the latter had been rather backward. It was reported that in New South Wales there was a considerable party in Parliament pledged to oppose federation, and there was also, he understood, a considerable section outside Parliament inimical to the scheme. They, in effect, said “We are doing very well; we are the champion colony; we do not want federation; there is nothing for us to gain by it, but possibly something to lose.” Victorians, however, had acted differently. They at once sympathised with Queenslanders, and heartily co-operated in the movement to bring about what they all desired. And here, he would say, that he thought it would be a fair thing to pay a tribute of respect to Lord Rosebery, who visited the colonies and made himself acquainted with their wants, and gathered such information as enabled him to form an opinion as to their future importance to the mother-country. His Lordship had done yeoman service for the colonies in the old country. He (Mr. Graham) did not know whether hon. gentlemen had noticed the fact, but he found that, as a general rule, there was more sympathy between Queenslanders and Victorians, than between Queenslanders and New South Welshmen. He always attributed the circumstance to the fact that there was a closer resemblance between the two former, who were more go ahead and more energetic than theirs slower, though, no doubt, highly respectable neighbours in New South Wales. He was sorry to observe that in certain quarters it had become the habit to allude to Victorians, who had brought to Queensland knowledge, energy, and capital—three things which had done a great deal towards the development of the resources of the western and northern parts of the colony—as Melbourne capitalists, interlopers, people who had come to rob them of their heritage, syndicates, etc. He thought that any sensible man would regard that as “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing,” and he trusted that in any legislation introduced into that House, the gentlemen to whom he had referred would receive a fair and reasonable—he would even say, generous—consideration. In his opinion, the hon. the Postmaster-General, and the Hon. Mr. McDougall, were a little too sanguine in their views as to the time when federation would be accomplished. He believed it would be a very long time before even a limited federation was brought about, as there were a number of things which would militate against its accomplishment, such as the natural jealousies of the colonies, and the difference that existed between New South Wales and Victoria on the tariff question. He thought it was extremely probable that before they realised federation they would see disintegration even in their own colony. If legislation affecting the inhabitants of the North was not conducted in some more prompt and practical way than it had been hitherto, he would not be surprised if the northern part of Queensland separated from the southern portion. He thought, also, from the geographical position of South Australia, with a territory running from the extreme south to the extreme north of Australia, in all probability it might be found necessary to make two colonies of that vast territory; and for years past Riverina had been agitating for separation from New South Wales. He was a thorough believer in federation, and if he should not live to see it, he hoped his children would. He was sure that federated Australia would be a dominion, state, kingdom, or nation—whatever it might be called—of which any man might be proud to be a citizen. Queensland might congratulate herself, should the council

be formed, that she would be able to send down from either party in politics men as able and statesmanlike as any they were likely to meet as the representatives or delegates from the other colonies. He begged to express his cordial approval of the motion brought forward by the Postmaster-General.

The Hon. A. C. GREGORY said he had much pleasure in supporting the motion before the House. He had for many years taken a great interest in federation—for the question was not one of yesterday, or of recent date—and he had long felt a desire that a commencement should be made. He had not been sanguine that such a thing would ever occur, except under some extreme pressure which might arise beyond the limits of the colonies. That pressure it appeared had arisen, as was shown by paragraphs *a* and *b* of the 15th clause of the proposed Bill. The relations of Australia with the islands of the Pacific, and the prevention of the influx of criminals, were no doubt highly important matters, because, unless they were better controlled, the position of the colonies would be seriously imperilled. The question of the influx of criminals alone was sufficient to justify the attempt to federate the colonies. He was extremely glad to find that in framing the Bill the Conference did not go so far as to involve themselves in difficult points, such as the tariff and other matters, which belonged more to individual colonies than to a federated dominion. The formation of a federal council would greatly facilitate many things that had hitherto very much troubled the successive governments of Australia. Quarantine was one of the matters which ought to be dealt with by the council. Then there was the question of defence, which would perhaps press itself on their attention suddenly and with little warning. Unless they were prepared, they would discover, when all was apparently secure, that they were totally unable to meet some expedition that might be sent against them. Connected with that question was a motion which would come on later in the evening for the establishment of complete railway communication from Queensland to New South Wales, and eventually to Victoria; and there was reason to hope that it would be further extended to South Australia. Under those conditions they would have the means of removing land forces from one colony to another with facility, and without risk of obstruction from any invading force along the coast. Some persons objected to the first place of meeting of the council; but he supposed the Convention had been guided in their selection of Hobart by the principle which obtained in America—the meeting was to be held in the place where it would be least influenced by local politics. He did not think it desirable to detain the House on a question on which they were all agreed, and he only hoped that the Federal Council of Australia would be as great a success as the first Federal Council established in America.

The Hon. K. I. O'DOHERTY said he had great pleasure, indeed, in supporting the motion; and the only dissatisfaction he felt was, that he must regard the Federal Council proposed by the Sydney Conference as a very lame and impotent recommendation. He only hoped that the Imperial authorities would take charge of the matter, as they did an almost similar recommendation from the meeting held in Quebec, which resulted in the federation of the Canadas; and insist on the colonies taking federation body and bones, instead of the shadow now recommended. It must be recollected, as the Hon. Mr. Gregory stated, that the agitation for federation was very

old in the colonies, and he felt great pride and gratification in saying that his friend and political foster-father, the Hon. Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, had identified himself in several ways with that agitation. In the year 1857, he succeeded, in the Parliament of Victoria, in forming a committee for the purpose of inquiring into the advantages of federation. That committee brought up a report in due time—an almost unanimous report. It stated that the other colonies had been invited to appoint delegates—two from each Lower House, and one from each Upper House. South Australia and Tasmania immediately proceeded to elect their delegates, and the Victorian Parliament also elected its delegates. Sir R. G. W. Herbert, the present Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, who was at that time laying the foundation of what was now Queensland, gave in his adhesion, and professed the greatest interest in the question. No doubt the conference would have taken place but for obstruction from a quarter from which it was least expected—the oldest colony of the group. Sir Charles Cowper, just coming into power at the time, did not believe that the time for federation had come. The cuckoo-cry they had heard so often—"It is premature"—was raised; and although the Legislative Council of New South Wales of that day appointed three of their most distinguished men—Sir James Martin, Sir Alfred Stephen, and the late Hon. Deas-Thompson—to endeavour to induce the Government to yield to the general feeling and appoint delegates, they could not persuade the Government to do so. The consequence was that the movement was postponed, as it was felt in Victoria that, unless the older colony moved in the matter, there would be no use in making the attempt. In the years 1860-2, attempts were made to revive the movement; but it was not till 1870 that another vigorous attempt was made. That was also at the instance of Mr. Duffy, who succeeded in obtaining the appointment of a Royal Commission, of which he was chairman. That commission brought up a report, which was probably one of the ablest State documents—certainly the ablest on the federation question—that had yet appeared; and in it he could clearly recognise the fine bold hand of Sir Charles Gavan Duffy. No one in Australia was better able than he to draw up a report of the kind. The first part he considered so able a *résumé* of the whole question of federation that he would venture to trespass on the patience of hon. members in quoting from the paper. The report said:—

"The two questions reported to the Commission have been carefully and separately considered.

"On the primary question of a Federal Union of the Australasian Colonies, apart from all considerations of the time and method of bringing such a union about, there was a unanimity of opinion. The indispensable condition of success for men or nations is that they should clearly understand what they want, and to what goal they are travelling, that life may not be wasted in doing and undoing; and as we are persuaded that the prosperity and security of these colonies would be effectually promoted by enabling them to act together as one people, under the authority of a Federal Compact, they cannot, we believe, too soon come to an understanding upon this fundamental point.

"The difference in strength and prestige between isolated communities having separate interests and a national confederation with a national policy has been illustrated in the history of almost every great State in the world, and conspicuously in the history of States of which we share the blood and traditions. The effects of such a confederation, when it is voluntary and equal, are felt throughout all the complicated relations of a nation's life, adding immensely to its material and moral strength. By its concentrated power, it exercises an increased gravitation in attracting population and commerce. It multiplies the national wealth by putting an end to jealous and wasteful competitions, and substituting the wise economy of power which teaches each district to apply itself to the industries in which it can attain the greatest success. It enlarges the home market,

which is the nursing mother of native manufactures. It forms larger designs, engages in larger enterprises, and by its increased resources and authority causes them to be more speedily accomplished. It obtains additional security for peace by increasing its means of defence, and by creating a nation it creates along with it a sentiment of nationality—a sentiment which has been one of the strongest and most beneficent motive powers in human affairs. The method indeed by which States have grown great is almost uniform in history; they gathered population and territory, and on these wings rose to material power; and with the sense of a common citizenship there speedily came like a soul to the inert body that public spirit by whose inspiration dangers are willingly faced and privations cheerfully borne in the sacred name of 'country.'"

That was about as eloquent a *résumé* as they could get of the advantages to be hoped for from the federation of the Australian colonies. However, that eloquence was thrown away. For a length of time the question of federation lay in abeyance—in fact, as one or two of the previous speakers had said, seemed almost to have been forgotten—until Sir Thomas Mcllwraith revived the spirit of the colonies by the bold action he took in planting the Imperial flag on the island of New Guinea. There was no doubt that that action had a great deal to do with the holding of the Conference in Sydney; and he (Hon. K. I. O'Doherty) believed that the spirit which had been aroused would not cease until they saw erected on this continent of Australasia a complete federal structure. The archipelago of islands lying around Australia might be called no man's land, and any great power might at any moment—possibly with hostile intention towards these colonies—take possession of them. The action of Sir Thomas Mcllwraith had the effect of showing the colonies the folly of allowing themselves to remain in the helpless condition in which they were, and of rousing a feeling which would not be satisfied until they saw organised a defensive power sufficient to meet any aggression that might take place. He (Hon. K. I. O'Doherty) was surprised to hear such a long-headed man as he believed the Hon. Mr. Graham to be, and other hon. gentlemen, making so little of what had been done as to suppose that they should cease to exist before federation would be accomplished. He certainly hoped to see it, and he was a much older man than many hon. members in that House. He had a firm conviction that it would not be twenty years, or ten years, before it would be brought about. He should have been very glad to have seen Sir Thomas Mcllwraith taking a leading part in the Convention which was held at Sydney, as to his mind the Conference seemed like performing the play of Hamlet with the chief character absent; and he was persuaded that the big statesmanship and force of character that characterised their late Premier would yet come in as a welcome aid in the working out of the federation scheme which was now being initiated. While saying this, he quite agreed with the Hon. Mr. McDougall that the colony had every reason to be satisfied in the highest degree with the way in which they were represented at the Convention by the present Premier. The Hon. S. W. Griffith deserved the highest praise for the ability and dignity he displayed on that occasion. He sincerely hoped that nothing would prevent Sir Thomas Mcllwraith and the Hon. S. W. Griffith working together for the accomplishment of the object they had in view—the establishment of an Australian Dominion with as little delay as possible. The objection that the proposal was premature was an old objection which was gradually being removed. Hon. members would probably be surprised—as he had been surprised in reading up on this question within the past few weeks—to learn that a wonderful similarity existed between the circumstances that attended the

federation of the United States, and of Canada, and of the proposed federation at the present moment of the Australian colonies. Singularly enough, the territory of each was about the same extent. The area of the United States at the time of federation was 3,095,000 square miles, Canada 3,470,000 square miles, and the area of the proposed Australasian dominion was 3,136,000 square miles. The population of the United States at the conclusion of the great war in 1790 was 3,172,000 white men, and there were some 80,000 or 90,000 blackfellows; but he would not speak of those for fear of offending the susceptibilities of those gentlemen who thought the niggers would stop the progress of Queensland, although they had not stopped the progress of America. The population of the seven States of Canada in 1861, when the foundation of the Canadian Dominion was laid at Quebec, was 3,244,000, and the population of the seven States of Australasia at the present time was about 3,200,000. Ninety years ago 3,000,000 men started federal government in America, and what had been the result? Why, that the population, according to the statistics of a year or two ago, had reached 50,000,000, and the revenue of the country now amounted to the enormous sum of £80,000,000, which was only £10,000,000 less than the revenue of Great Britain. And hon. members would find, if they investigated the matter, that that revenue was increasing year after year; a surplus of 100,000,000 dollars was expected next year. That progress in revenue appeared the more extraordinary when they recollected that it continued in spite of the curtailment of the commerce of the country. During the great American war, it would be remembered that Great Britain absolutely swept the seas of merchant marine vessels, and America had never recovered from the blow. Nearly the whole of the commerce of the world was carried in British vessels, and scarcely anywhere would they see American vessels carrying American produce. On this subject he would read them an extract from the Hon. John Hamilton Gray's "Federation, or the Political and Parliamentary History of Canada":—

"The Americans attribute this diminution and loss (in their shipping) to the conduct of the British Government during the civil war, and demand a corresponding compensation; but many of their ablest politicians and statesmen contend that, owing to the great extent and internal resources of the United States, the loss or diminution of its foreign trade is not of so much consequence as it would be to other countries differently situated; that the duties of excise alone had, during the year 1869-70, paid off 100,000,000 dollars of the national debt, and would, in a few years, wipe it off altogether (assuming that there was no increase from unexpected causes), and then that the United States would be strong and prosperous as a nation, even though she had not a merchant ship upon the seas, and no foreign carrying trade whatever. They urge that, as the United States embrace within their territories both the temperate and tropical regions, they have within themselves all those productions which, with other countries not so situated, constitute objects of exchange; and as they have coal and iron in abundance, a population equal to that of Great Britain, and the best cotton in the world, they can, whenever other avocations do not pay them better, enter into competition with Great Britain in the manufacture of those fabrics of which she claims pre-eminently to be the workshop, and as her immense continent fills up with people she will have a market without competition, and under her own exclusive control, quite as large as all Europe, or even India, can afford to Great Britain.

A few pages further on he read—

"The following observations from a leading American statesman, and one of the most eminent statisticians of the United States, whose opinion is of marked weight in that country, tend strongly to confirm the views before expressed. He writes:—

"The internal and coastwise trade of our country greatly exceeds our foreign trade, and consequently we feel the loss of our tonnage in foreign trade much less than it would be felt by other countries. That our

prosperity depended more upon our internal resources and exchanges than it did upon the carrying trade; that our revenues from the excise on tobacco and liquors would this year meet the interest on our whole debt, and suffice to pay the principal before the close of the century; that by the aid of our internal revenues we had last year paid 100,000,000 dollars of our debt."

He might point out that those words were written in the year 1871—

"and that when English politicians assumed that our power was crippled by the loss of a quarter of our tonnage, they fell into a serious error, because they did not appreciate the magnitude of our internal resources. England measures the resources of nations by their exports and their imports, and tonnage engaged in foreign trade. We adopt a different standard. We have less ships and less exports and imports in foreign trade than England. Our commerce is chiefly coastwise and continental; but—while the entries and clearances of shipping in the British Isles are less than 40,000,000 of tons—annually exceed 87,000,000 of tons. Our inland movement, by railways and canals, is still larger. The inland traffic, by railway and canal, of the single State of New York, this year, exceeds 14,000,000 of tons. By my estimate, the agricultural productions of the United States annually exceed 3,600,000,000 dollars; their minerals and manufacture will reach 2,800,000,000 dollars; their exports and imports will reach 1,200,000,000 dollars; their growth in wealth annually, 1,500,000,000 dollars; their annual growth in population, 1,200,000. If our country has less shipping, it has built 56,000 miles of railways—more railways than all Europe has constructed. Last year our country raised 4,200,000 bales of cotton; 1,200,000,000 bushels of corn; 500,000,000 bushels of other breadstuffs; 200,000,000 gallons of petroleum. It sustains, also, more than 100,000,000 of cattle, sheep, and swine. As respects our commercial policy, our country has since the war repealed more than 300,000,000 dollars taxes and duties, without materially reducing its net revenue. It struck off last year 24,000,000 dollars of duties and 56,000,000 dollars of taxes, and can, I think, this winter, spare 80,000,000 dollars more, and still reduce its debt rapidly. Should we do so, the nation in eight years more—should a crisis occur—would be able to raise, by taxes, duties, and loans, twice the amount it did raise in 1865—in which year we drew from our people, in taxes and duties, 530,000,000 dollars, and by home loans, 500,000,000 dollars more. We are now increasing our shipments to England more rapidly than ever before, and can spare her manufactures more easily than she can dispense with the food and raw material we furnish."

"However much, therefore, English political economists may question the soundness of the trade theories of the United States, it is plain that until her great continent becomes as densely peopled as the British Isles, she need not trouble herself much about the discussion. In the presence of such a power, seventy years hence, should England rashly throw away Canada, British commerce may bow its head."

He thought he would just read those extracts to show what those 3,000,000 men—ninety years ago—by adopting the principle of federation had been able to accomplish. Australia and New Zealand were as capable of competing with the United States as one country was capable of competing with another; but did it occur to any hon. member that if they went on in the present isolated manner they would have the least chance of doing so? Those matters were of such absorbing interest that he ventured to trespass on the patience of hon. members. He would ask them to go with him as far as Canada, where the present state of things was of greater importance to Queensland than the condition of America. How did Canada get along under a federal flag? He did not think any country, especially any young country, with the exception of the United States, showed more striking evidences of material progress than Canada. The Canadian Dominion, which started only sixteen years ago, then had 3,000,000 people, just as Australia had, and a little larger territory. By the latest returns, the annual revenue of the Dominion for the year 1882 amounted to £11,500,000, whilst her debt amounted to £41,000,000. In the same year, the defence force amounted to 45,000 men belonging to the active militia;

and in addition to that, a force of 653,000 men belonging to the reserve militia; altogether, a force of 700,000 men for purposes of defence. He would direct special attention to two facts—the amount of money borrowed for public works, which was chiefly devoted to the improvement of the State, and also to the power organised to defend that property. Let hon. gentlemen compare the state of Canada with the condition of the Australian colonies at the present moment. The revenue of the Australian colonies for the year 1882 amounted to £21,000,000, an amount nearly double that of Canada; and the public debt amounted at the same time to £100,000,000. Well might Sir Charles Gavan Duffy say, in one of his federal speeches, "Gold has not yet lost its attraction in the world." Neither had the ancient spirit which led Pizarro and his gallants to the golden regions of Spanish America ceased to exist. The people in Australia lived in a fool's paradise—they were content, whilst amassing wealth at an enormous rate, to fold their arms and leave themselves to the mercy of Providence for protection. He might quote the Hon. Mr. Mein, one of the leading authorities on military matters, to show the present state of the defence force. He was proud himself of having been elected to the medical charge of that force, but he need scarcely tell hon. gentlemen that there had not been the slightest necessity for his services, and he hoped there would not be any necessity for a long time to come. But he put it as a sort of problem for their solution—If the Canadian Dominion, represented by forty-one millions of money, required 700,000 men to protect that territory and property from aggression, what force was required by the Australian colonies who had property represented by a hundred millions? It was his opinion that the colonies, in self-defence, ought to take instant measures, so far as they could, to organise a defence force equivalent to their enormous responsibilities; and the Postmaster-General had shown how impossible it was that any force could be properly organised except under a federal Government. Many people would rather live in a fool's paradise, and imagine that in their isolated condition there was not the slightest fear of invasion until the majority of them sought the dust; but he entirely disagreed with that opinion. If Great Britain at present really commanded the seas in the same sense in which she did in the time of the immortal Nelson, he could understand people feeling pretty secure. They all knew that since the days of Nelson steam had been invented, and applied as the great motive power in nautical warfare. Jack Tar, with his nautical skill and daring, gained all the grand victories for Great Britain in the last century and the commencement of the present; but where was Jack Tar to-day—with all his daring? Nowhere. It was the heavy cannon and armoured ships that commanded the sea. They should bear in mind that of late it had been a source of great complaint in Great Britain that the French Government had already a navy nearly if not quite equal to that of Great Britain, and they knew that all the great powers were going on the same tack—Russia, Germany, and even Italy, were increasing their big flotillas of armed vessels, and who could say that to-morrow a combination might not take place between two of those great powers? Was it a wise thing to wait till an event of that kind occurred? It was quite on the cards that some fine morning they might wake up and find some of those armour-plated vessels on the coast of Queensland, and there would be nothing to oppose them. God forbid they should ever see it, but he believed in being prepared for every eventuality, and he thought

he had shown in the facts he had laid before the House—interesting facts as to what had been done in Canada and as to the results of federation in America—he hoped he had shown quite sufficient to influence, in some slight degree, the minds of hon. members in favour of real downright *bona fide* federation on the basis of federal government established with such enormous benefit in the Canadian Dominion. He believed in it, and he trusted he might have said something to induce hon. gentlemen to agree with him. He might also remind hon. members that the statesmen of Great Britain were themselves not encouraging the colonies in their blind confidence; they had been for years pressing federation on them. They had sent their best engineers to instruct the colonies in regard to their defences. They were rapidly laying the foundation for a federation of the Empire, and he repeated it was high time that Australia roused itself in the matter. He would conclude in the words of an able writer on federation, and state that by federation alone—or, as he termed it, home rule throughout the Empire in the most enlarged sense—could that vexed problem which threatened Imperial progress be effectually solved—the problem of how to transmute jealous dependencies into cordial allies, which, though retaining the golden link of the Crown, should in all respects evince an unbought and unforced loyalty, an allegiance without restraint, co-operation without coercion, bonds without bondage, the only fitting guerdon that freemen should care to have or be willing to yield.

The HON. W. D. BOX said that on so important a question he could not sit still without giving expression to his opinion. To his mind the question, which had arisen most unexpectedly out of the action of Sir Thomas McLlwraith in annexing New Guinea, was one of very great importance. He remembered that, when only a boy, Victoria and Queensland were both separated from New South Wales. Since he had been in Queensland, the separation of the North from the South had been spoken about; but he hoped he would never live to see that effected. His feeling was and always had been in favour of federation, for from federation they would gather strength and be able to avoid those dangers which had been pointed out by the Hon. Dr. O'Doherty. His only fear was of a European war making them federate. Union was strength, and the only hope of protecting their homes and their interests was in federation. He was sure that there was no subject which had arisen in that Parliament so likely to meet with general approval in that House, and to secure the approval of the people throughout the length and breadth of the colony, as that which was then under consideration. He must say that they were indebted to the hon. gentleman who had moved the resolution, for the information he had given to the House on the question, and he hoped that the agitation in Queensland would go on until federation had become an accomplished fact. There was the utmost consternation expressed at the action of Sir Thomas McLlwraith in annexing New Guinea, but that had led to the meeting of the representatives of the other Colonial Governments, and had raised the colony of Queensland in the eyes of the world. It had been stated that their native country might not remain queen of the seas. Their hope that it would remain so was in a federal Australasia, and in the knowledge that they were growing in importance and that the desire for federation would attract the attention of the leading statesmen in England. The proposed Federal Bill had his entire sympathy, and he was sure every member in the House would accept it with thankfulness.

Question put and passed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL laid on the table of the House the following draft Address to Her Majesty the Queen, which was read by the CLERK :—

"MOST GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN,

"MAY IT PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,—

"We, Your Majesty's loyal and dutiful subjects, the members of the Legislative Council of Queensland in Parliament assembled, humbly approach Your Majesty with a renewed assurance of our affection and loyalty towards Your Majesty's person and Government.

"We have had under our consideration the Draft Bill for the constitution of a Federal Council of Australasia, adopted by the Convention of Representatives of the Governments of Your Majesty's Australasian Colonies held at Sydney in the months of November and December, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-three; and we humbly pray that Your Majesty may be graciously pleased to cause a measure to be submitted to the Parliament of the United Kingdom, for the purpose of constituting a Federal Council upon the basis indicated by such Draft Bill.

"We confidently trust that the constitution of such a Council will conduce to the continued and increasing prosperity of Your Majesty's dominions in Australasia; and it is our earnest prayer that Your Majesty may long be spared to rule over us and all other Your Majesty's loyal subjects throughout the Empire."

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the Address as read was adopted.

#### POPULATION AND RATES OF DIVISIONS.

On the motion of the HON. W. FORREST, was resolved—

That there be laid upon the table of this House, a Return giving the following information :—

1. The names of divisions or portions of divisions which, having been under the Divisional Boards Act of 1879, have either become separate municipalities or joined a municipality.
2. The population respectively of such divisions or portions of divisions.
3. The amount of rates collected respectively by such divisions or portions of divisions each year; also the separate subsidies granted to or claimed by same.

#### BRISBANE VALLEY BRANCH RAILWAY.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, in moving—

That the Report of the Select Committee on the proposed extension, Section 2 of the Brisbane Valley Branch Railway, be now adopted—

said the railway referred to in the report was an extension of a line authorised by that House in the year 1880, and was the completion of that line to the terminus contemplated by the Legislature of that year. In 1880 Parliament approved of the plans, specification, and books of reference of twenty-five miles of a branch railway towards Mount Esk. Only nineteen miles of the line then authorised had been constructed. It had been found that a more practicable and easy route could be got from the nineteen-mile post to Mount Esk than was originally contemplated, and the extra six miles had therefore been abandoned. He did not think it would be necessary for him to advocate at all the desirability of constructing the line, as Parliament was already committed to it. There was evidence before the Committee to the effect that the line would not prove remunerative unless the proposed extension was carried out. It would not only pass through a large and valuable agricultural district, but when it reached Mount Esk would tap more valuable country; and there was every prospect that the line would be an advantage to the settlers in the district, and remunerative to the State.

The HON. W. H. WALSH said they were going to commit themselves to a further railway expenditure on the very meagre information given them, and the very meagre plans which had been laid on the table of the House. At the time that House was

asked to assent to the line in question, the Government of the day gave that Chamber very little information, and had to withdraw the plans for a time; and subsequently, when the plans were passed, hon. members received so little information that he was sure they must feel they had not done their duty to the country when they sanctioned the construction of the line. The Government of the day were warned then that they did not know what they were doing in rushing into the expenditure involved by the construction of that line, and he was afraid the present Government were doing the same thing. He had been informed by engineers competent to express an opinion that the line to Harrisville was a positive disgrace, and one gentleman had told him that the section now under consideration would be even worse than that to Harrisville. He did not blame the present Government for the line which had been already constructed, but he did blame them for not giving hon. members sufficient data. He would take that opportunity of reminding the House that, when the Harrisville line was brought forward, he showed from the evidence given that the line was not being constructed in the proper route or in the proper way. He had warned hon. members of that House that that line was a fiasco from beginning to end; that they were virtually throwing away the people's money on a political project of the Government of the day. And had it not turned out so? Who of them who had been guilty of participating in the construction of the Harrisville line, or acquiesced in the expenditure upon it, did not blush for its construction? Had he not seen horses and vehicles racing it, and their owners jeering and laughing at the passengers and engineers on that line? Had he not seen passengers get out and walk alongside of the train on it, and had he not seen an engine with a single carriage unable to get along it? He did not hesitate to say the line they were asked to continue the construction of was even worse than that, though he could not speak of it from experience. He should like to point out to hon. gentlemen the few words of caution he administered to them so long ago as 1882. The Postmaster-General had moved, amongst other plans and specifications, that the Kilkivan branch line should be adopted. He pointed out at that time—in words no stronger than he should have to repeat now—what they were asked to do. He said then :—

"It must be borne in mind that that was the only line in which he was personally interested, and which would put a considerable amount of money into his pocket."

It was one of a batch of political railways, and he singled it out as one which he knew was a disgraceful piece of political expenditure. He said :—

"That House in their wisdom had determined that, before giving their sanction to any particular railway, the plans, sections, and books of reference should be investigated by a committee of that House, and that Standing Order had been a blessing to the country. Although it did not produce all the advantages he expected, still it had been a blessing, by opening the eyes of the people to the object of railway construction, and the mere dribbles of evidence they got were quite sufficient to justify him in the remarks he was making. In the present instance apparently the onus was thrown upon that Chamber of sanctioning the construction of the line to Kilkivan; and where was the evidence to justify the expenditure of something like £16,000, £180,000, or probably £200,000, which that railway would involve?"

He would ask, where was the evidence they had now to justify them in continuing the construction of that line? There were a few cattle stations and a few small farms, which had produced nothing this year and would not produce anything in seasons similar to that they had lately gone through, if they had a dozen railways. Nothing

they had heard and nothing they knew of the country could justify them in expending the general revenue or the loan expenditure of the colony on such a line as that, unless for political reasons. He continued, in speaking on the Kilkivan line :—

"Be it understood that the officer above all others in the Public Service, next to the Minister for Works, upon whom the onus of recommending the construction of the line should rest, was the Commissioner for Railways."

He then went on to show that that Commissioner knew nothing about the line; and when Mr. Smith, the Engineer-in-Chief, was examined, he also was compelled to say that he knew nothing about it. Mr. Smith, on that occasion, was asked if he had been over the ground, and his answer was that he had been over a portion of the proposed line, but not over the whole of it.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he would like to know what bearing that had on the question before the House. The hon. member was speaking of the Kilkivan line, while they were dealing with the Mount Esk line.

The HON. W. H. WALSH said the hon. Postmaster-General must know very well that what he was saying was relative to the question. He was saying that he had warned that House against sanctioning the construction of a railway two years ago, which the engineer who was called as a witness could not say anything in favour of, and the Minister in charge of the motion could say nothing in favour of it, and he said now that the very people to whom that line was in 1882 intended as a political boon now saw the non-necessity of it, the absolute absurdity of it; and they were now, he believed, prepared to petition Parliament to discontinue its construction. Did not the Postmaster-General see the moral he was drawing? If the hon. gentleman had read the papers during the last few months he would have seen that it was used as a political cry, and the promise had to be made at elections that a stop should be put to such a course of expenditure as that on the Kilkivan line. That was what he told that Chamber two years ago, but his warning was not heeded, and if he lived for two years longer he would have to repeat the same thing about that very line which they were called upon to continue perpetrating. What traffic was there to justify the making of that railway? There were a few small farms and a few small cattle holdings; there were no sheep farms and no mines, which alone, he believed, justified the construction of a railway. He did not believe an agricultural population or a pastoral population would justify the construction of a railway; but if they had a city at one end and a mining population at the other they would have some justification for the construction of a line, as they would have traffic in the carriage of material to the mines and in the produce of the mines. But for the sake of such traffic as that to be got on the Brisbane River, as that going to Harrisville, or from Maryborough to Kilkivan, nothing could justify them in acquiescing, at any rate silently, in the adoption of any such lines. The Brisbane Valley branch had been open for some time, and he asked what was the advantage taken of it by the inhabitants? What income had it produced, what good had it done, and what trade had it developed? Were they to construct such lines to bring down a few cattle or a few tons of lucerne? He would refer to some of the evidence taken upon the proposed line. He did not know whether hon. gentlemen had read the report upon it brought up by the committee. He must confess that, after perusing it himself, and trying to get some information from it, he had come to the conclusion that it was about one of

the most unsatisfactory terminations to a committee he had ever seen. The report was as follows:—

"Your Committee, having examined the Acting Commissioner for Railways and the Inspecting Surveyor of Southern Railways, find that the proposed extension is necessary for the purpose of completing the branch railway to Mount Esk, which was approved by the Legislature in 1880; that its length will be twenty-two miles twenty-three chains and seventy-five links; that its estimated cost will be £3,000 per mile, exclusive of compensation for resumed land"—

Hon. gentlemen would bear in mind the report said "exclusive"—

"and that the construction of the line will be conducive to the public benefit by bringing within reach of railway communication a large and important agricultural district."

He denied that it would do it, and he denied that there was any district there which could be included in the category of "a large and important agricultural district."

"Your Committee, therefore, recommend that the proposed extension be approved by the Legislative Council."

What evidence had they got to justify all that? Would hon. members look at the evidence? They had not even the advantage of having the working plans before them. The chairman asked:—"What is the position with regard to the working plans?" And the answer was:—"They are being prepared, but they are not quite ready, we hope to be able to call for tenders shortly." What nonsense it was to ask them to adopt a line with such evidence! The witness was further asked:—

"What districts will be tapped by this railway when complete? Mount Brisbane Homestead Area, Stanley and Northbrook."

"In fact, the whole bank of the Upper Brisbane? Yes."

"Is there much agricultural industry in those districts? Well, as far as we can gather, there is. The land is pretty nearly all settled on."

Hon. members knew the localities described, and could one of them say that a population would be settled there or that there was a population settled there now which would justify the expenditure of £60,000, £70,000, or perhaps £100,000 more upon that line? Hon. gentlemen he hoped would observe that the answers were put in the questions. At question 18, for instance, the chairman asked: "And there is a fair amount of timber?" And the answer was: "There will be a timber traffic." Question 19 was: "What was the original amount voted for the construction of this line—£105,000?" And there was no answer whatever to the question. The witness was asked: "How much of that has been expended?" And the answer was: "The estimated total expenditure to complete the first section is £75,000." There was a very proper question put by the Hon. Mr. Gregory, and he was only sorry to see that when the hon. gentleman did not receive a satisfactory answer to the question, he did not wash his hands of the affair. The Hon. Mr. Gregory asked: "Where is the line intended eventually to go—have you any information to give us?" And the answer to that question was: "I cannot give you any information on that point." They were asked to carry a line, started for political reasons, into space—nobody knew where. Then the chairman, anxious to instruct his witness, said:—

"However, if it is intended to carry out the line to Nanango, this is a step in that direction—a very material step? Yes; I think so."

"The terminus of this extension will be about sixty miles from Nanango? I think about sixty miles."

"You might give the committee some information, Mr. Curnow, with regard to the tenure of the land that the railway goes through? Yes. We shall resume about 200 acres of land, 135 of which is private property, through which the line passes; 72 acres of Crown land; and about 1½ acre road."

"What is the width of the country resumed? The width of the line is 1 chain; the steepest grade is 1 in 50; and the sharpest curve is 5 chains."

"1 in 50 is the ruling grade of main lines? This is the ruling grade."

They were told they should resume about 200 acres of land, which at 10s. an acre showed that they were to resume about £100 worth of land. That was all the information obtained by the Committee on that day. In the evidence taken on the second day, at question 41, they found Mr. Phillips, the able engineer, was asked: "What class of country does it go through: does it open up good country? Yes. Not so much the country it goes through as the country beyond, which we must make a line to get to." So that hon. members would see they were not asked to make a line through good country, but towards good country, which would necessitate the making of another extension in order to tap it. Then again, they had two more leading questions: "We are safe in assuming that this line will be of valuable service to the agricultural district? Yes." "There is a good deal of timber industry in the district, is there not? Yes; especially beyond that section." Would hon. gentlemen notice that from the way the questions were put, the poor Government officer was left no alternative but to say "yes" or "no"? If hon. gentlemen would read for themselves the rest of the evidence they would see that no sufficient information was given to justify them in floundering on the construction of such railways. He believed the construction of the first portion of the line was the greatest piece of engineering blundering yet committed. If hon. members would look at the time-table of the Harrisville line they would see that from eight to ten miles an hour was something like the speed attained on that line, and for that they had to pay an enormous sum of money. He believed, from what he had heard, that about nine miles an hour was the greatest speed at which the railway authorities felt justified in going on that line. They had no promise that there was to be any improvement in the construction of the proposed extension, but were simply asked to adopt it, because imperfect plans and specifications were laid before them. There was what purported to be a "Book of Reference," which he had no doubt, if analysed, would be found to be open to some criticism. He repeated that they were now called upon to go into a railway extension which was totally unnecessary, and that utterly regardless of the warnings given them on the occasion of the previous vote, and in the face of the fact that the correctness of those warnings had been maintained by the extension of that Brisbane Valley line, and by any of those lines in fact, which the late Premier of the colony properly described as political lines. Before they agreed to a farthing of expenditure on such a line, they should see that some very different system was adopted by the Government, by the representatives of the people, and by that Chamber, to show whether there was any justification whatever for those lines. They should see that they were laid down in a proper way and should know whether that economical or quasi economical style of constructing them was not really the most extravagant for the country. Whenever he heard of cheap railways, he knew that they were being asked to throw away money. There could be no such thing as a cheap railway to be of any advantage to the colony. Nothing, however, that he could say would alter the determination of the Government; they were bound to carry out their promises to the people. They were pestered day after day by deputations with regard to petty railways. He noticed that the

Minister for Works had had to deal with no less than three deputations to-day—one with regard to a railway in the direction of Enoggera, and another with regard to a railway in the Bulimba district. He noticed also that the evening paper did not report the proceedings of the third deputation, because, he supposed, it was so disgusted with the conduct of the Government. Pressure was brought to bear on the members of the Assembly; they in turn brought pressure to bear on the Government; and the Government brought pressure to bear on that House. They were burdening the country with hundreds of miles of railway that were not wanted, but were made twenty or thirty years in anticipation of the requirements of the country. But, as he said before, it was no use voting against the motion—he knew it would be carried; he could only say that those political railways began badly and ended badly, and the first punishment they would receive for sanctioning such lines would be that they would find themselves the possessors of two of the most infamously constructed lines of railway in the world.

The HON. A. C. GREGORY said that, as he was personally acquainted with the country over which the lines were carried, it might be as well for him to make a few remarks. The first nineteen miles of railway went through second-class country; then came a difficult piece of country, after which they came to the rich flats on the Lockyer, which were equal to any agricultural country in the Moreton district; and which were not in the hands of squatters, but of small holders. When the railway got as far as Esk it reached the commencement of the Upper Brisbane Valley, where there were pine scrubs and much agricultural land. Pine timber was getting scarce, and the railway would develop considerable traffic in it. He did not think the line could be carried with advantage beyond Esk to Nanango, because the ascent was too steep; but it would be a great advantage to the Esk district, because people there had no other means of sending their produce to market. That was the only part of the Moreton district in which there had this season been sufficient rain for the crops; and a large quantity of stock from the Darling Downs had been sent to the Upper Brisbane Valley for feed. But he need not go into that part of the question. Nineteen miles of the line had already been constructed, and it was far better to utilise that which had been already done, and carry the line to the commencement of the good country. The ruling grade was 1 in 50, and the sharpest curves five chains. Some excessive curves and gradients, of which he did not approve, had been adopted on the Harrisville line, and on the completed part of the Upper Brisbane line. However, they could not do better than complete the work begun, and not throw away money already expended.

The HON. J. C. FOOTE said he regretted that the Hon. Mr. Walsh was not better informed with reference to Harrisville and the Brisbane Valley. There might have been some defects in the construction of the line; but perhaps that was to be expected under the circumstances. He knew that the Minister for Works once hesitated very much in the matter, believing that there would not be sufficient produce to justify its construction. Perhaps that was the reason why more pains were not taken in the work. But the Minister for Works was mistaken. Last year, at the stock-taking of his (Mr. Foote's) firm, they found that they had sent by rail nearly 200,000 bushels of maize, and most of it came from the Harrisville and Brisbane Valley direction. A great deal of produce was raised in those localities through which the rail-

ways went, and the quantity was increasing every day, while the farmers' returns were very satisfactory. The Harrisville line was paying very well already, and both lines would pay better if the Government would erect stages for timber and sheds for storing produce. That remark applied more particularly to the Brisbane Valley line. The country over which the line would go was not so bad after all, and could be utilised with profit for grazing if it were not fit for agriculture. It was thought by some that there would not be sufficient traffic. To make a railway anywhere in Queensland was to populate the country; in fact, nothing opened up the country like railways, and he had no hesitation in saying that money was economically expended which was spent on railway construction. If they lived till that time twelve months, the Hon. Mr. Walsh would, he believed, find that no railway yet built in the colony paid better than the line under consideration would pay.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he was really at a loss to understand why the Hon. Mr. Walsh had got up and entertained the House with his very discursive speech. If the hon. gentleman would tax his memory, he would recollect that there was no stronger opponent to the mode of constructing the Harrisville line than himself (Hon. Mr. Mein). He stated in committee and in that House that they were acting unwisely in adopting a ruling gradient of one in thirty; but because the Harrisville section had been improperly constructed, it did not follow that the line to Mount Esk would also be improperly constructed. He was particularly careful to ask the witnesses whether the gradient was the same as on the Mount Esk line. In questions 34 and 35, he elicited the information that "the stiffest grade is 1 in 50, and the sharpest curve is 5 chains," and that "1 in 50 is the ruling grade." Mr. Phillips, in reply to a question, showed that the greatest care had been taken by the Government officials to secure the best possible route. Here was a question and answer which would give some information to hon. gentlemen:—

"40. What object did you wish to attain in making those trial surveys? There had been two distinct routes tried—the present one shown on the Parliamentary plans and one that went round by the bank of the Brisbane River. This was a route advocated by Mr. McConnell, of Cressbrook, on the ground that it would open up better country, and be more serviceable generally; but the result of the survey was not satisfactory. The line would have been a very costly one to build, on account of the number of flats to cross *via* the Upper Brisbane. Then, the amount of settlement it would go through is very trifling. After all, the greatest divergence between it and the line adopted is only about five miles, so that I consider either of the routes would meet the convenience of the inhabitants of the district. The route shown on the Parliamentary plans is the cheapest we could get."

Several other questions were asked, bearing on the same point, but it was not necessary for him to trouble the House with them. He did not think, with the evidence before the House, that it could be said the information was meagre. When the Killarney line was before the House, a large amount of evidence was taken before a select committee, and when the report was brought up there was a very long discussion upon it. It showed what he conceived to be a job, and with the Hon. Mr. Walsh's assistance he endeavoured to prevent that job. The Mount Esk line was then brought forward; the Hon. Mr. Walsh made no opposition to it, and the resolution was carried with acclamation.

Question put and passed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, in moving—

1. That this House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed Extension, section 2, of the Brisbane Valley Branch Railway, a

received from the Legislative Assembly by Message dated 14th July.

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

—said he would only supplement the observations he made on the previous motion, by saying that the plans and book of reference of the railway were, in all respects, in accordance with those adopted with regard to all railways that came before the House; and just as full information was given in them as in reference to other railways.

The HON. W. H. WALSH said he wished to say one word by way of explanation. The statement that was made by the Hon. Mr. Gregory, to the effect that the action he (Mr. Walsh) took on a former occasion was a benefit to himself, was unjustifiable. He (Mr. Walsh) was perfectly incapable of doing anything of the kind. He supposed the hon. gentleman alluded to the Burrum Railway; but he (Mr. Walsh) had denounced that railway, and denounced it still, as a railway that Parliament should not have made. He trusted the hon. gentleman, when he again charged him, either by insinuation or directly, with doing anything to benefit himself, would have greater justification for doing so than he had had on that occasion. He thanked the Postmaster-General for the compliment he paid him (Mr. Walsh) in stating that he gave assistance in what he (the Postmaster-General) denounced as a great job on one of those railways. He (Mr. Walsh) did not blame the present Government for the way in which the first part of the line was built; and he had no doubt they would see that the new section was properly constructed. He simply stated that he believed the line was not necessary; it was begun as a political job, and he was afraid it was to be continued as a political necessity.

Question put and passed.

#### RAILWAY FROM STANTHORPE TO THE BORDER.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, in moving—

That the report of the Select Committee on the proposed Southern Railway Extension from Stanthorpe to the Border be now adopted—

said that that at all events was a railway to which his hon. friend Mr. Walsh would not object on the ground that it was a political line; and he (the Postmaster-General) thought it would meet with his cordial approval. The extension referred to in the report was the completion of the railway from the metropolis to the Southern border of the colony. The evidence taken before the committee showed that the only possible route of communication between Stanthorpe—the present terminus of the line—and the border had been adopted. Unfortunately, it traversed very difficult country; but the expense would be trifling, taking into consideration the probable profitable results that would accrue to the colony. The distance was only 25 miles. Hon. members would see from the report that the junction would be made at a point agreed upon by the engineers of New South Wales and Queensland. Over two years must elapse before the railway could be completed, and it was anticipated that by that time the New South Wales railway would have reached the same point. He did not think it necessary to say anything in support of the report. If any explanation was wanted, he would give it in reply.

The HON. W. H. WALSH said he trusted that motion would not be allowed to pass either without some observations being made. He had read the statements made before the select committee, and could not help thinking that there was a great deal yet to know before they agreed

1884—D

to the construction of that line. As a *sine qua non*, the Government should be able to assure the House that they had come to some agreement with the New South Wales Government.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The evidence shows that!

The HON. Mr. WALSH said he could see nothing to point to that in the evidence. He saw that two engineers, not clothed with official authority, met somewhere—promiscuously, he believed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: An undesigned coincidence!

The HON. Mr. WALSH said that was a most remarkable term to be received as evidence in connection with the construction of a line of railway, and in connection with an agreement between two Governments. It appeared that the chief engineers of the two colonies met by an undesigned coincidence, and after that they had this diplomatic letter from the Premier of New South Wales:—

“Colonial Secretary's Office,

“Sydney, 30th May, 1883.

“SIR,—Referring to a letter of the 14th November last, addressed by the Secretary for Public Works of Queensland to the Secretary for Public Works of this colony, with reference to the junction of the railways of the two colonies, I have the honour to inform you that it appears that a railway surveyor from each colony met by arrangement, and decided that the best place for the junction of the two railways would be at a point twelve miles from Tenterfield *via* the Ballandean Road, and indicated by a stake on the border marked thus:—25m over 0.594 and a BM marked broad-arrow over QL over Ry over BM over 76, and that no circumstances have occurred since the date of survey to necessitate a change in the proposed point of junction.

“I have, &c.,

“ALEX. STUART.

“The Honourable the Colonial Secretary of Queensland, Brisbane.”

Now was that an agreement? Had they any proof that the survey of the New South Wales line had really been made to the border? Had they taken any evidence at all to show that the Queensland line was going in the direction of the New South Wales Railway? One part of the evidence struck him as being very impolitic, and that was where one of the witnesses stated that the avowed object of the proposed line was to tap the trade of New South Wales. He could not conceive of anything more unwise than to publish, in an official report, a statement of that kind. How much better it would have been if they had stated it was simply for the purpose of facilitating the intercourse between the two colonies, instead of coming down as they did, and stating that they were going to construct the line for the avowed object of robbing their neighbours of the border trade; that was not only unwise but unjustifiable. Another thing he took exception to, and he believed he was justified in speaking about it, was the cost of the line. The report said—

“Your Committee, having examined the Acting Commissioner for Railways and the Inspecting Surveyor of Southern Railways, find that the proposed Extension is necessary for the purpose of connecting the railway lines of this colony and New South Wales; that its length will be 25 miles 13 chains and 5½ links; that it traverses the only practicable route between Stanthorpe and the point of junction mutually fixed by the railway authorities of the two colonies; and that its estimated cost will be about £5,000 per mile, exclusive of compensation for resumed land, which is not likely to be great. Your Committee, therefore, recommend that the proposed extension be approved by the Legislative Council.”

He could tell hon. gentlemen from his knowledge of the country that that line would cost nearer £10,000 per mile than £5,000. He had told them the same thing when they were asked to grant the line from Warwick to Stanthorpe. How much did that line exceed what

they were told it would cost? Hon. members knew; and the line they were at present asked to grant would cost them proportionately more than it was estimated to cost. He said they were being lured into those things by insufficient information, and they were continually justifying that want of sufficient information by accepting the evidence given to them. He was perfectly sure the Government would act wisely and prudently as diplomatists and neighbours—they would be acting for the benefit of the colony at large—if they refused to show their hands and give their concurrence to that line until they had some definite understanding from New South Wales that they would reciprocate with them as far as possible. They had got a vague intimation from the Premier of New South Wales that the New South Wales line would be carried to a certain point, but on the other hand, New South Wales had got their assurance that their design was to take the line to a particular point. He maintained that the evidence before them was not sufficient, and that they should not sanction the construction of the line until the Government could assure them that they had come to a definite understanding with New South Wales that their line would be constructed as rapidly as the Queensland line, and that the railways should meet.

The HON. A. C. GREGORY said in reference to what appeared to be one of the most important questions concerning the line, that was as to the probability of the New South Wales Government meeting their line at the point proposed, he might mention that it was the only place on the border accessible from the two sides. From the Queensland side it was possible to get access to two other points on the border besides the one which the proposed line would lead to, but those two points were inaccessible, or nearly so, from the New South Wales side; and the point which the proposed line led to was the one which gave the greatest facilities for access from Tenterfield. Whether the New South Wales Government agreed or did not agree, or had come to no conclusion whatever with regard to their line, they knew that they had entered into a contract for the construction of a line to Tenterfield. It was possible his hon. friend, Mr. Walsh, who knew the country, knew that there was a coach road from Tenterfield, but it went over very steep country. That would not be the road by which the New South Wales line would run, but by the smooth ridges which lay on the south side of Tenterfield. And there was a nice spot which no doubt the hon. gentleman would remember—the summit of the ridge—suitable for a township and as a place at which the two gauges should meet. As the New South Wales gauge was a broader gauge than that of the Queensland line, there would be a necessity for a change in the gauges at that spot. The spot on the border at which it was proposed the lines should meet was a large flat piece of ground admirably suited for such a purpose as an intercolonial railway station. Although there might be some difficulty in reaching the summit of the ridge, the country at that spot looked a great deal more level than Queen street, and practically it was more level than Queen street. It was on the edge of a large plateau or table land, and from that spot it gradually descended to Tenterfield Creek and Tenterfield. He had been about a week going through that country and had ascertained that was the only line that could possibly be taken through there at anything like a reasonable expense. The real expensive part of the line would be in running down the Severn from Stanthorpe, that was, between the middle part of the Severn and Nichol's Gap. That was the troublesome part of the line, as

it was excessively rocky, and the line there would necessarily be expensive. The estimate given for the probable cost of the line—£5,400 per mile—would, he thought, cover it. There would be only one large bridge at Quart-Pot Creek, and one at Accommodation Creek. There would be no other bridges of any importance on any other part of the line. There would be very few heavy cuttings, and though the cost might possibly exceed that amount, it would not do so by much. He thought the estimate a very fair one, as compared with the estimates respecting lines which were being constructed in other parts of the colony. Some persons he had heard speak of a line which would leave Stanthorpe, and go directly up the Range, and on to Tenterfield, by what was at present the coach road to Tenterfield. Coaches could get along that road very well; but it would be a matter of enormous expense to make a railway line along there. Besides, the New South Wales Government might not be prepared to go from twenty or thirty miles along the Queensland border, through very bad country, to accommodate Queensland. Queensland had certainly taken the best line to her border, and New South Wales would have the best line to the border from Tenterfield. It was the only convenient point to which they could get access to the border, and under those circumstances, whether they had formally agreed to go to that spot or not, they knew they would have to go there, and could not help themselves, and that was the best guarantee they could have that the lines would meet there. It was unnecessary for him to detain the House longer, except to say that he had been carefully over the country through which the line would pass. He had taken a whole week on one occasion, and had hunted up the line. He had afterwards been there for about a week with the Engineer-in-Chief and his surveyors, and went over the country again, and had examined the route proposed and the one previously suggested. He could therefore speak confidently, and he said that it was the only practicable line, and would, if constructed—although the route was in many places very rocky—be a very good one when it was finished.

The HON. A. J. THYNNE said he had listened with pleasure to the interesting speech of the Hon. Mr. Gregory, and during the course of that speech it had struck him very forcibly that his information had been given to them in the wrong way. He could not help agreeing with a great deal that had been said by the Hon. Mr. Walsh as to the meagreness of the evidence given before the committee. There were only forty-one questions asked in all, and very many of them were formal questions; and he considered it was impossible to comprise in that space the necessary information which hon. members of that House ought to have before them when dealing with the question of the construction of any railway, no matter how small or short it might be. If the information which the hon. gentleman had now given to the House were given to the committee, he was quite sure that the complaints of the Hon. Mr. Walsh, with respect to the meagreness of the evidence given before the committee, would not have been made. He was himself now quite satisfied with the line proposed to be made, and was quite convinced, on the explanation given by the Hon. Mr. Gregory, that it was the only feasible line open to them to adopt; at the same time, he must say that, in carrying out the rules of that House in reference to committees upon railways, the spirit of the investigation ought to be more attended to than the mere form, which in many respects they appeared to be degenerating into.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said he did not know what the hon. gentleman wanted. What possible further information could they have got in relation to the line? He would read a few questions he had put. He asked:—

"The survey of the proposed southern extension of the railway from Stanthorpe to the Border was conducted under your superintendence, I believe?—Yes.

"Can you give us any information as to the trial surveys and the route that was ultimately adopted? I believe it is very difficult country to go over, and that it is rather difficult to find a practicable route between the two points?—Yes, there is only one practicable route, and that is the one we have taken. I have explored the ground thoroughly myself, and I am satisfied it is the only route to take."

What other information could they have got than that? They did not want to get a long narrative from Mr. Phillips, detailing how many miles of country he had walked over, what particular kind of stone he had met with, and the particular creeks he had crossed, which had enabled him to arrive at the conclusion he had come to on the subject. They had examined an officer before the committee whose duty it was to investigate the matter, and he said he had thoroughly explored the ground himself, and had arrived at the conclusion that it was the only practicable route to take. The Hon. Mr. Gregory's information was both interesting and instructive, but he confessed that nothing which that hon. gentleman had said could give them any ultimate information differing from that they had before them in the evidence taken before the committee. The Hon. Mr. Gregory had related how, in his opinion, it would be impossible to find a better route, and he would ask, how was it possible for anyone who had not travelled over the country, by questions to the witnesses before the committee, to elicit the narrative which the Hon. Mr. Gregory had given them? And he would further ask what, having got the narrative, would be the result? Could they come to any other conclusion than that come to by Mr. Phillips? He said it was impossible, and he felt that the remarks made by the Hon. Mr. Thynne were extremely captious. With regard to the Hon. Mr. Walsh, he certainly was surprised when he protested against a public officer saying that the reason they were constructing the line was to rob their neighbours. Hon. gentlemen would look through the evidence in vain to find any such expression. The hon. gentleman was evidently referring to a remark dropped in some other place. Mr. Curnow was asked what the object of the railway was, and his reply was very distinct: "To connect with the New South Wales line and to get the border traffic." Was there anything wrong in that? He really could not help stating what he felt when he heard the Hon. Mr. Walsh getting up, time after time, and protesting against every possible thing. It reminded him very much of the old fable they read in childhood, about the boy who was continually calling out "Wolf, wolf!" There was no hon. gentleman with a keener perception, and no more able critic in that House, than the Hon. Mr. Walsh; but when he persistently condemned everything, and could find good in nobody, and good in nothing, his criticisms became valueless; and really when he might be useful and correct in his observations they were disinclined to place any reliance upon them, because they could not be sure that the hon. member was sincere.

Question put and passed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

1. That this House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed southern extension from Stanthorpe to the Border, as received from the Legislative Assembly by message of 15th July.

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

Question put and passed.

## WHARF LINE, COOKTOWN RAILWAY.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, in moving—

That the Report of the Select Committee on the Wharf Line, Cooktown Railway, be now adopted—

said he had not the slightest doubt he should be met by the objection from his hon. friend Mr. Walsh that the information supplied to the committee was meagre, and the country was asked to commit itself to an expenditure from which no adequate result would ensue. He was not responsible in any way for the authority to construct the line from Cooktown to Maytown. No doubt the gentlemen who were responsible for that measure believed, and still believed, it would be a very profitable undertaking. That was a matter he was not entirely in accord with; but as the work had been authorised, and was in course of construction, he thought it necessary that the proposed extension to deep water should be carried out. The distance was only fifty miles, and the line traversed country that belonged to the Crown, so that there would be few claims for compensation. The cost was under £3000; and the actual expenditure would be more than made up by the saving in carriage of material employed in the construction of the line to Maytown. That material would be landed on the wharf, and conveyed along the Government railway without any charge to the State, whilst if it were conveyed by drays the expenditure would be enormous. Further than that, when the line was used in future for import and export purposes, a large income would be derived from the traffic. He begged to move that the report be adopted.

The Hon. W. H. WALSH said the remarks of the Postmaster-General clearly showed that the report should not be accepted; and if the Hon. Mr. Gregory would support him, he would endeavour to throw it out. The expenditure was not large, but the reasons for that expenditure were so weak that he should like to see it not take place.

The Hon. A. C. GREGORY said the line was short, and perhaps that would account for the short speech of the Postmaster-General, and the brief objection of the Hon. Mr. Walsh, whose offer in regard to throwing out the motion he should not accept. There were certain lines about to be constructed inland from Cooktown, and the Government were anxious that the mistake committed in the South of making railways nearly to deep water should not be made in the North. He should support the motion.

Question put and passed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved—

1. That this House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the Wharf line, Cooktown Railway, as received from the Legislative Assembly by message of the 15th July.

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

Question put and passed.

## REGISTRAR OF TITLES BILL—THIRD READING.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be returned to the Legislative Assembly with message in the usual form.

## PUBLIC OFFICERS FEES BILL—THIRD READING.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be returned to the Legislative Assembly with message in the usual form.

SUCCESSION ACT DECLARATORY BILL  
—COMMITTEE.

On motion of the HON. P. MACPHERSON, the President left the chair, and the House went into Committee to consider the Bill in detail.

Preamble postponed.

On clause 1, as follows :—

“The provisions of the 7th section of the said first-mentioned Act are, and have always been, in force in the colony of the Queensland, so that if after the death of a father any of his children shall die, or shall have died intestate, without wife and children, in the lifetime of the mother, every brother and sister, and the representatives of them, shall have, and shall be deemed to have had, an equal share with her in the surplusage of the estate of such intestate.

The HON. P. MACPHERSON moved the addition of the following :—

Provided always that nothing herein contained shall invalidate or disturb the distribution of the estate of any intestate person heretofore made upon the assumption that the mother was entitled to the whole of the surplusage thereof.

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

Clause 2—“Short title”—put and passed.

Preamble put and passed.

On motion of the HON. P. MACPHERSON, the Chairman reported the Bill to the House with amendment.

The report was adopted, and the third reading of the Bill made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at nine minutes to 9 o'clock.