

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 10 DECEMBER 1884

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 10 December, 1884.

Formal Motion.—Supply—resumption of committee.—
Adjournment.

The SPEAKER took the chair at half-past 7 o'clock.

FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to:—

By Mr. ARCHER (in the absence of the Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith)—

“That an address be presented to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be laid upon the table of the House, copy of all correspondence between the Government, His Excellency, and the Imperial Government, last year, on the subject of recruiting Kanakas in New Guinea and adjacent islands; and also all telegrams and letters on the same subject between the Colonial Secretary and the various ports.

SUPPLY—RESUMPTION OF
COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson), the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to further consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles), in moving that £7,590 be granted to defray the salaries of the office staff, Lines under Construction, Southern Division, said that there was an increase of £1,900 upon last year's estimate. Provision was made for eleven additional men, and the engineering draftsman had an increase of £50. There were three additional draftsmen, one additional junior draftsman at £100 a year, another at £80, and two others at £50. The vote was reduced by the sum of £400, the allowance to the Deputy Chief Engineer, being discontinued.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he pointed out the other night the great expense that was incurred in connection with the engineering staff, as compared with similar staffs in the southern colonies—for instance, New South Wales and South Australia. He was not going to find fault now; he thought he had said enough upon the previous occasion. He thought it was time that an alteration was made in the system of bringing down those Estimates. The present system of bringing them in, partly as Loan Estimates and partly as Revenue, had the effect of leading even the hon. gentleman in charge of the department astray the other night. In answer to him (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) the hon. gentleman imagined that the whole cost of the staff was £1,924, and he sung it out in the most triumphant manner, across the Chamber, forgetting that £7,590 was upon the Loan Estimates for the same purpose. There was no reason why the whole of the vote for the Engineer's staff should not be taken out of Revenue, as was done in all the other colonies, and it should be done here. There might have been some reason for it when the Engineer had charge of existing lines; but now that there was a distinction made between existing lines and lines under construction, there was not the slightest reason for it. Therefore, he hoped that next year the Minister would place the whole of the vote in one item; whether under Loan or under Revenue he did not care. But it should be all in one item, so that there could be no mistake made by any member of the Committee. Even the hon. gentleman himself had made a mistake in consequence of the present arrangement.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he would point out that the estimate was brought down in the usual way. Of course provision had been made for an additional number of men.

However, he would take note of what the hon. member had said, and before the Estimates were brought down again he would endeavour to alter them in that way.

Mr. ARCHER said the hon. member for Townsville had simply pointed out that the Minister for Works the other evening took credit to himself for having done something very much cheaper than the other colonies. It was of course for the Colonial Treasurer to say what was the best way of keeping the accounts; but he (Mr. Archer) thought it would be much better to keep them in one form instead of dividing them, and paying salaries part from General Revenue and part from Loan. The hon. gentleman might answer that he (Mr. Archer) did not do so when he was in office; but that was probably a mistake on his (Mr. Archer's) part. What he said now was that in the future they ought to be able to see at a glance what was the cost of administering everything. It was for the Treasurer to show that as clearly as possible; and to say whether it would not be better, by making them more intelligible, to enable them to see at a glance the expense of carrying on the departments.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he, to a certain extent, agreed with the remarks of the hon. gentleman. Undoubtedly it would be better if the salaries of the various officers could be shown in one lump sum; but he had hesitated to interfere with the Railway votes on account of it having been a long-continued practice to charge a portion of the salaries to the Loan vote because of the officers being engaged in certain works of construction. He thought they could hardly deal with the salary of the Chief Engineer without taking a much more extended view of the subject. There were several items charged to Loan, in connection with railways, which might be charged to Revenue; and, therefore, if they had to make a departure in the case of the Chief Engineer, he should be inclined to make a thorough departure in the matter of rolling-stock, and several other items which at present were conveniently charged to Loan for the purpose of relieving the revenue. He trusted the revenue would so improve that that change might be made; but he had hesitated to make a partial change if he could not do it thoroughly, and he was not disposed to give a promise in the matter until he had given the subject further consideration. On the broad principle, however, that all the salaries ought to be seen by hon. members in one sum he quite concurred, and he thought the schedule would assist in that object. He trusted they would be able to make the change; but further consideration of the Railway Department would be required before doing so.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the matter was open for discussion whether the votes should be under Revenue or under Loan. He thought that logically they should be under Loan. For instance, they took each branch line separate. There was the South Brisbane, the Logan, the Brisbane Valley, the Fassifern, and the Warwick to Killarney lines. Each of those was under Loan, because they were constructed out of Loan, and all the officers were working on the Loan Estimates. But their superiors, such as the Chief Engineer, were also working on the Loan Estimates; and there was no reason why the officers in charge of any particular district should be paid from Loan more than the Chief Engineer, more especially, as he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) had pointed out before, as the maintenance of the existing lines had been taken from under that officer. He used to spend a large amount of time on the existing lines; but now a separate department for that had been established. Therefore, there was no longer any

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necessity for the Chief Engineer to be paid one penny from the revenue unless other officers were paid from Revenue. He thought it would be better if they charged the whole votes to Loan for the construction of railways, each railway bearing its share proportionately the same as each railway bore its share proportionately for rolling-stock.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said, according to the argument of the hon. gentleman, the salary of the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers ought to be paid out of Loan. He did not quite agree with the hon. member when he said he should like to see all the salaries paid out of Loan. He trusted that the revenue would become sufficient to pay salaries, and that the loan would be legitimately applied to construction. However, before the next Estimates were prepared he would consult with the Minister for Works and see whether each salary could not be put in one sum.

Mr. ARCHER said he did not think it mattered very much whether the salaries were paid out of Loan or out of Revenue as long as they were shown in one sum, and hon. members could see exactly what was spent. He quite agreed that everything that was spent out of Loan should be charged to Loan. The expenditure on Harbours and Rivers was chiefly out of Loan; and therefore, why should not the salaries be charged to that account? He could not understand why, if a thing was paid for out of Loan, it should not be charged to it. They paid a certain sum of money for Harbours and Rivers out of Loan, and yet the salaries were paid out of Revenue. It was very remarkable, and he did not see why it should be done. The chief thing was to prevent mistakes, such, for instance, as the Minister for Works falling into an error in supposing he was doing a thing cheaply when that was not so. They ought to see in one page what was the actual expenditure. That really was for the benefit of the House and the country. At present they were paying the salaries for Harbours and Rivers in the South from Revenue. Why should salaries on the Northern and Central harbours and rivers be paid from Loan? Surely anyone could see that there ought to be one method of doing it, and that the expenditure ought not to be divided in that way?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that of course he did not want to dictate to the Minister for Works how the salaries should be paid; but he would just point to one inconsistency. They had already voted £350 for the Assistant Engineer of Harbours and Rivers at Mackay. Last night they had voted the Assistant Engineer for Harbours and Rivers, Townsville, £350 from Loan. Was there any logical necessity for one being paid from Loan and the other from Revenue? They both should be paid from the same vote; they were doing the same work, and the money which paid them came from the same source.

Mr. PALMER said he should like information as to the manner in which the percentage of receipts was arrived at in the returns of the Commissioner for Railways. Did the replacing of rails and the repairing of bridges come out of Revenue or out of Loan Fund? If a depreciation account were not kept up the returns were altogether misleading, and they were not getting the receipts that really belonged to them. He knew there was a maintenance vote. Did that provide for replacing rails, repairing bridges, and ultimate wear and tear?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said nothing was paid from Loan but the cost of construction. All the maintenance of the lines was voted by the House, and paid out of Revenue. Now that the existing lines open for traffic had been taken

out of the Chief Engineer's control, and he had nothing at all to do with any works except those paid out of Loan, his salary ought to come out of Loan altogether.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would point out that the Northern Engineer received the same remuneration as the Engineer-in-Chief—£900 salary, and £500 allowance; but in addition to that he had another £104, which appeared, he thought, in a little foot-note in the Blue Book; he did not know if it appeared in the Estimates. He thought very few members were aware that that officer received more than the Engineer-in-Chief of the colony.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving that a sum of £1,150 be granted for the Logan Branch, construction staff, said there was an additional clerk and draftsman and one inspector.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving that a sum of £1,250 be granted for the Brisbane Valley Branch, said there was only one increase in the vote.

Mr. ARCHER said that, after the revelations made by the hon. member for Townsville the other night, he should like to know whether the Secretary for Works had taken the trouble to inquire into the manner in which that line had been constructed, or whether he was perfectly satisfied and meant to pass it over. Did the hon. member intend really to inquire thoroughly into the matter, and see whether the line had been really a muddle, as was alleged? He hoped the hon. member would make an inquiry so as to be able to give information to the House, if not this session, at least as soon as they met again.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he could assure the hon. member he was not going to pass it over. He should feel very much surprised indeed if Mr. Stanley could not acquit himself of the charge which had been brought against him. He hoped at all events that the Chief Engineer would be able to give a very good account of himself. He did not take all for gospel that the hon. member for Townsville said.

Mr. ARCHER: That is a compliment we can return.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the matter would certainly be inquired into.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said it did not require an engineer to satisfy himself as to the correctness of the statements he had made about the Brisbane Valley branch. Even if the hon. member did not understand anything about engineering, he could go on the line and see for himself that the cutting had been widened. He would see the track of the old road—because they could not shift a railway without leaving a track behind it—provided he went before the rains obliterated it. He could take a tape-line and measure the width of the banks, which he would find in many cases to be fifteen feet, where the original plan showed them thirteen feet. He could see the rotten ballast which had been taken out, lying alongside the line in many places, and in other places put into the bank. He could see all that without having a single engineer with him. He could see the bridge he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) had spoken of with the four openings filled in—at 18 miles some chains. When the hon. member had seen all that, then he could have the line surveyed. He had not the slightest doubt that the engineer would attempt to give some explanation, and whatever that explanation might be, he hoped the hon. member would give it to the House.

Mr. ARCHER said that the hon. the Minister for Works might spend the next Saturday in looking over the line instead of going home. Of course a Minister was supposed to work rather with his head than with his hands, but a Minister's eyes might be of some use. He had enough confidence in the Minister for Works to know that if he saw what had been pointed out by the hon. member for Townsville he would not disguise it. If the hon. member looked he could see that the track had been widened; he could see the old line of railway; he could take a tape-line and measure the banks; and he could see the original tender and specifications. If he would do all that before the track was obliterated, he would be able to form an independent opinion on the matter; and it was not too much to ask the hon. gentleman to spend next Saturday in that work instead of going home to spend his Sunday. The hon. gentleman would then be in a position to check any explanations that might be offered.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he hoped hon. members would not ask him to express any opinion on the subject, and he thought it rather an impertinence on the part of the hon. member for Blackall to dictate to him as to whether he should go to his home or not. The hon. member told him to examine the work on Sunday. He would not do it. It was not a work of necessity.

Mr. ARCHER: It is a work of necessity.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not intend to examine it on Sunday.

Mr. ARCHER: I never said you should go on Sunday.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You did.

Mr. ARCHER: I did not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Then he apologised. He would point out that the members of the late Government spent half their time in the southern colonies, while there was no one who stuck more closely to work than he did. Hon. members might rest assured that no long time would elapse before he inquired into the matter. The question was a serious one for the Chief Engineer, and he hoped hon. members would not ask him to express an opinion upon it before he was in a position to do so.

Mr. ARCHER said a person who would pervert Saturday into Sunday was capable of anything. The day he mentioned was Saturday, not Sunday, and he spoke loud enough for anyone to hear him. Even after the hon. member's friends told him he was making a mistake, he persisted in it. It showed an exceedingly dense nature. He would again advise the hon. gentleman to inspect the line next Saturday, and if he did not he would be simply neglecting his work—neglecting the work which he was paid for doing. Indeed, he hardly believed the hon. gentleman was very capable of doing it, for they had never been able to get an answer from him which had much in it. He believed the hon. gentleman persistently neglected his work, and if he persisted in perverting statements made on that side he would find it would not help him in getting his Estimates through. He repeated that if the hon. gentleman was true to his duty, after the charge that had been made against the Chief Engineer, he would at once see whether that charge had any foundation or not. If he did not, he would be neglecting the plain duty laid before him.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member went home in a very bad temper last night, and had brought it back with him to the House. He always thought the hon. member was an even-tempered man, and was sorry to

find that he had on that occasion lost his temper. He had misunderstood the hon. member and apologised for it.

Mr. ARCHER said it was no use the hon. member talking rubbish in that way, because after his own friends had told him he was making a mistake he persisted in it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I told you I had misunderstood you.

Mr. ARCHER: The hon. member persisted in saying that I said "Sunday," whereas I said "Saturday."

The PREMIER: He has apologised for the mistake.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have said I misunderstood you. What more do you want?

Mr. ARCHER: I never intended to imply that the hon. gentleman would willingly pervert what I said; but, having once made the mistake, it seemed as if he intended to stick to it.

Mr. BLACK said he hoped that little episode between the two honourable and venerable members would not have the effect of dragging a red herring across the trail. They were at present engaged on the Estimates, and he was afraid those amusing little interludes were apt to lead the Committee to pass a vote of that sort without mature deliberation, and without that discussion to which it was entitled. Now, as far as he could make out, the question that was raised, and which led to the little episode, was a reference by the hon. member for Townsville to the very lax way—to use a very mild term—in which the Brisbane Valley Branch had been constructed. The Minister for Works got up, and as far as he (Mr. Black) could judge wished to defend Mr. Stanley, the engineer at the time the construction of the railway was carried out. It was only right that the Minister for Works should defend any man in his department from the remarks made by the hon. member for Townsville; but at the same time he must say that the hon. member for Townsville had made his statement in a straightforward way. And he had every reason to believe that what the hon. member for Townsville had said had been corroborated in a very strong manner by opinions he had heard expressed not only in the House, but outside the House; and that there was something very true in it. As far as he could ascertain, the construction of that railway—no matter who was responsible for it—was simply a disgrace to the colony; and he thought it was a matter that all members of the Committee should take into consideration at a time like the present, when they were voting large sums of money for the construction of railways in all directions. They should have a department competent to see that those works were satisfactorily carried out. He was very much afraid that the Brisbane Valley Branch had not been carried out in a satisfactory manner, and that its cost of construction was very likely to be very much in excess of what it might have been. In connection not only with this vote, but of other votes, and in connection also with other departments, he wished to point out one simple fact—namely, that the estimates for the Railway Department of the colony were £100,000 in excess of what they were last year. He wished also to point out to the Colonial Treasurer, who was looking over the Estimates, that his estimate of revenue from the railways of the colony for the twelve months, that he had laid before the Committee, were falling off very seriously. So far as he could make out, the revenue for the nearly six months which had already expired, from 1st June up to the present time, showed a decrease of no less than £30,000

under the estimate that the Colonial Treasurer had laid before the Committee. Now, unless there was going to be some increase in the railway revenue for the twelve months, there would be a deficiency in the Railway Department alone of £60,000 on the year. If hon. gentlemen looked at the whole of the Estimates they would find that all the Colonial Treasurer had to come and go upon, in estimated revenue over expenditure for all departments, was only £44,000. If the Railway Department alone was going to show a falling-off of £60,000 on the twelve months, he was justified in anticipating that there was going to be a very serious decrease; because there had already been a falling-off of £30,000 from the hon. gentleman's Estimates. He could only say that the whole £44,000 would not only be absorbed, but that there would be a very considerable decrease in the revenue over the whole twelve months. His object in making those remarks was to point out the absolute necessity of economy, not only in the Railway Department, but in all the other departments; otherwise when the House met again he was afraid that the Colonial Treasurer would have to show a very considerable deficiency in the revenue of the colony, instead of the very small anticipated increase of £44,000 which he had led the colony to believe he would get.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he really could not see what that had to do with the Brisbane Valley Railway. He promised the hon. gentleman that he would without delay make inquiry into the matter, but he would rather not give any decision until he had satisfied himself and had seen the Chief Engineer. He would, however, take the liberty to point out that the greater portion of that line had been constructed under the supervision of Mr. Thorneloe Smith. But it did not matter under whom it had been constructed; he would very willingly take the advice of the hon. member, and inquire into the matter and find out the facts.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said it was very true what the hon. gentleman had pointed out, that Mr. Smith had been engineer during part of the construction of the line. It had been begun by Mr. Stanley, carried on by Mr. Smith, and finished by Mr. Stanley. But the original design of the railway was due to Mr. Stanley; and it had been altered by Mr. Stanley, and not by Mr. Smith, and altered also since the line had been taken out of the hands of the contractor. He was not sure how far the responsibility of Mr. Smith went, but it could not be far. He would like to know why they were asked for a full year's vote for that line. They were asked for £1,250—even more than last year—when the line was no longer under construction, and had not been for several months. It was usually the case when a six months' vote only was required that a six months' vote was asked for, but here the whole year's vote was asked for. He would like also an answer as to how it was that the Assistant Engineer of that line had £100 more than the Assistant Engineer of the Logan Branch just passed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said there was a contract for the second section of the line, and of course the proposed staff of officers would be required. It was an inspector of works for whom the increase was put down. The Assistant Engineer had the same salary as previously. The two inspectors had an increase of £25 each.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was not finding fault with the increase to the inspectors. They ought to be very well paid. They had responsible duties to perform, and were sometimes placed in a position of temptation. They

ought to be paid at such a rate as would place them above temptation. He had asked why the Assistant Engineer of that branch had £50 a year more salary, and £50 more allowance, than the Assistant Engineer of the branch just passed—the Logan Branch? He hoped the hon. gentleman understood him. Did it come through length of service?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was informed that the Assistant Engineer of the South Brisbane Branch had been a long time in the service, and had much more experience than the Assistant Engineer for the Logan Branch, who had only recently come into the service.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked what was the name of the Engineer on the Logan Branch?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The name of the Assistant Engineer of the Logan Branch is Mr. Raff.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he knew the Chief Engineer must have told the hon. gentleman that the Assistant Engineer of the Brisbane Valley Branch had been a long time in the service, or he would not have said so. He (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) knew how long he had been in the service, and could say he had not been a long time in the service. He had been only two years in the service; and the Brisbane Valley Branch was the first line he was put in charge of. It was by him he was appointed, while he was in office. As to what his experience outside the service might be he could not say, but the experience he had had in the service could not be much. However, he was not going to quarrel about the salary, and he only asked why his salary was greater than that of the Assistant Engineer of the Logan Branch.

Mr. WHITE said that in his opinion they had a wrong school of engineers. He found that in these construction lines the inspectors were perhaps vigilant and doing their duty, and when they saw a defect in a bridge or any other part of the work they would point it out to the engineers; and they exhibited evidently an indecision, and would not make a stop at it and insist upon the defect being remedied, but would allow the work to go on until it was finished. If they were not corrupt, they were following a system which corrupt men would follow. They were evidently all in the one school. They allowed a defect to go on till the last, and then, if they were not favourable to the contractors, they could put their foot down on the different defects, and perhaps ruin the contractors. He thought they ought to have some other system introduced in the construction, and alter the system of engineers altogether. An engineer should do his duty, and when a defect was found see to it at once; stop the work and have it remedied there and then, and then there would be no after cost on the contractors.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON asked if the Minister for Works would intimate to the Committee the name of the Assistant Engineer of the Brisbane Valley Branch, who had been so long in the service. He wished to learn his name, and also how long he had been in the service as assistant engineer?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had no. said that that gentleman was the longest in the service. He said he had been longer in the service than the Engineer of the Logan Branch. His name was Mr. Gibbins.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said the Minister for Works said he had been a long time in the service. Those were the hon. gentleman's words without variation. He had £400 a year; and he wished now to know how long he had been in the service as an assistant engineer.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he stated that he had been longer in the service than the Engineer on the Logan Branch. Of course he knew there were engineers who had been much longer in the service.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Mr. Gibbins has been in the service since 1st October, 1882.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said that circumstances had prevented his being at his post at half-past 7 o'clock that evening, and he had intended to say something with regard to that matter. He wished to get some further information about the engineering staff, and he did not think they had got sufficient from the Minister for Works. The hon. gentleman left the Committee to obtain certain information, and after leaving the Engineer-in-Chief, and coming back to the House, he said, "I am informed so-and-so." That was not a position which the Secretary of Works should occupy in regard to that service. The hon. gentleman had had previous experience of the department, extending over some time, and was a crucial critic in regard to it when he was in opposition; and he ought to be able to give the House his opinion of almost every officer in the service, especially those who were only three removes from the Engineer-in-Chief himself. He (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) had not been in the House when a certain part of the Estimates-in-Chief were passed, and he was very sorry for it, because he wished to advert to it, and he hoped the Committee would not object to the few observations he had to make in regard thereto. First of all he would say that he was greatly obliged personally to the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, for pointing out the distribution of the engineering power all over the colony, in his speech the other evening. He had not quite made up his mind that it was desirable to have one engineer for the whole colony; but he had no doubt that by the next session he would have his mind made up on that point. The seed which the hon. member had sown would sink into the minds of the hon. members on both sides of the Committee, and he had done good service both for the House and for the colony. What he wished first to call the attention of the Committee to, was that they had a service which was really an underpaid service, so far as the men who bore the heat and burden of the day were concerned. Let them look at the Engineer-in-Chief, Mr. Stanley. His emoluments amounted to £1,400 a year, and he saw he was down for 15s. per diem when travelling on maintenance duty. He took that to be a clerical error, because he thought Mr. Stanley should have 21s. a day while travelling on the business of his department; and they were informed the other night that Mr. Stanley had nothing to do with the Maintenance Department.

The CHAIRMAN: I must call the attention of the hon. gentleman to the fact that he is now discussing a vote which has been passed and done with. My attention was called to this sort of thing the other day. If it is the wish of the Committee that the hon. gentleman should deal with the question, I am of course entirely in their hands, and I just draw the attention of the hon. member to the fact.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said he had asked the permission of the Committee, and there was no dissent. He could achieve his object in another way, and he would be glad to do so if the Committee thought it necessary.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member ought to be allowed to speak—he had stated that he could not have been here before. He (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) had intended

to be present when the House met, and he had believed that it would meet at 7 o'clock; but through delay in the trains he could not be present earlier than he was, and it was twenty-five minutes to 8 before he entered the House.

The CHAIRMAN: With the permission of the Committee the hon. gentleman may of course continue. I do not wish to throw any obstacle in the way of his speaking, but it is my duty to call attention to the fact that he was discussing a matter which had already been passed. If there is no objection taken to the course, the hon. member may proceed.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said that what he had to say would be said somewhat disconnectedly; but he was speaking of the Chief Engineer, and had said that his emoluments were put down at £1,400 a year, and a foot-note said that he received 15s. a day for travelling expenses and maintenance duties. That must be a clerical error, because he understood that Mr. Stanley had nothing whatever to do with maintenance duties. In the debate on Mr. Cross's position it was clearly intimated to the Committee that that section of the engineering staff was a separate department not under Mr. Stanley's supervision; so that Mr. Stanley had now nothing whatever to do with maintenance. It occurred to him, and it had been his opinion for some years, that there was not that relative payment for services by the State to Mr. Stanley as between Mr. Stanley and his subordinates. If Mr. Stanley was worth £1,400 a year his principal Assistant Engineer should be worth more than £700.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: He is, and a great deal more than £700.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Yet on page 89 of the Estimates-in-Chief the principal Assistant Engineer was put down at £700. By the way, he might remark that he hoped that when the Estimates came up next year they would have the whole of the salaries of the various officers shown in one estimate; and that a system of bookkeeping would be arranged by which a certain part would be debited to Loan Account, and that they would have no Loan Estimates as regarded salaries. The letters *a*, *b*, and *c* could be used in the Estimates to indicate the amounts paid from General Revenue and Loan Fund respectively. Now, as he had said, the principal Assistant Engineer received £700. That was too little; either that officer was paid too little or Mr. Stanley was paid too much. If Mr. Stanley was paid £1,400 a year, the principal Assistant Engineer, if he were worthy of the position, should receive at least £1,000. But he would go a little lower and take the men who, if they were worth anything, must be aspiring to the position of Chief Engineer, which was now held by Mr. Stanley; those third-rate men should have, at the very least, £750 a year. But what did they find? That those men who had been years in the service of the colony—some of them as long as ten and twenty years—were only receiving an annual salary of £400. That was not creditable to Parliament, and it was not creditable to Mr. Stanley, who was responsible for those Estimates. He (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) did not believe the Minister for Works was responsible, as the hon. gentleman in answering a question just now said, "I have been informed." He (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) could see from that expression where the weakness was. If Mr. Stanley had been worth his salt, morally—if he had been worth anything outside his professional ability—he would have put his foot

down and said to the Minister for Works, "This man is worth £600 a year, and he must have it or I shall resign." The Engineer-in-Chief, he contended, was in a position in which he could put his foot down if the Minister for Works did not concur in his recommendations. The Engineer ought to protest in the first instance, and if subsequently his representations were disregarded he ought to leave the service. He said this in all seriousness. He did not believe Mr. Stanley had his way in those matters, but he believed he was having it where he ought not to have it. Now, having called attention to the absurd salary paid to the principal Assistant Engineer, he would direct attention to the salaries paid to the men below him. The average annual emoluments received by those subordinate officers was £400, and in some cases the amount paid was as low as £350 and £300. The Assistant Engineer on the Brisbane Valley Branch, however, who had only been two years in the service, was receiving £400 a year. He (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) took that opportunity of saying that he was thoroughly American in his belief that they could train as good engineers in the Australian colonies as they could get from England. Australian engineers were better men for Queensland than men trained in England who came out here as new chums, and in reference to whose engineering experience they had no satisfactory testimony; all they knew was that they had been perhaps a few years in an office, and had measured up a few contracts. He knew a man, not in Queensland but in one of the other colonies, who had only been fifteen months in the field and two years in an office, and who had been promoted over men who had been working hard in the profession for many years. He stated his opinions on the engineering department now, because he would refer to the subject on some future occasion, and someone would suffer, if they did not run on the lines he was at present indicating. He thought he was sufficiently protective to believe that they had sufficient talent in the colonies of Australia to educate men up to the highest standard of railway engineering that could be had in America. It was better to have men who had been trained in the colony, and understood the circumstances of Australia, than to have men who had been trained in railway construction in Britain; and he just gave this note of warning that he expected the chief engineers of this colony to think well of their locally trained men, and give them every chance of promotion, if they merited it, in preference to new chums. There were some members of that Committee who were sufficiently conversant with the matters of railway construction and superintendence of maintenance to be able to say at once whether it was right that a man who superintended the maintenance of any line should be paid a higher salary than the man who worked from daylight till dark in exploration surveys and railway construction. As a matter of fact that was the case at the present time. He would give one or two instances. On page 72 of the Estimates-in-Chief it would be found that the Inspector of the permanent way of the Maryborough and Gympie Railway received £300 last year, and an allowance of £100. That office was abolished this year, and an amount of £500 per annum was set down for the Superintendent of Maintenance. The duties of that officer would require him to superintend about sixty-five miles of line at the very most. He found that there was also some provision made for the Inspector of the permanent way of the Maryborough and Burrum Railway. However, they might credit that officer with having the control of that as well. Now, was it at all fair that the Superintendent of Maintenance, as he was called—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he must rise to a point of order. The hon. member was going back to the Estimates passed on the previous day. He excused himself for referring to the Estimates already passed that evening by saying that he was unable to be present at half-past 7 o'clock; but now he was actually going over the Estimates passed the previous day.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot proceed without the sanction of the Committee.

Mr. ANNEAR said the vote was a Railway vote, to be paid from Loan, and the hon. member was referring to the Railway Department. He considered that the hon. member was in order, and he hoped that he would be heard.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said he should not say another word now. He was much obliged to the Committee for their attention to his remarks.

Mr. PALMER said that attention had been called to the increased expenditure of the department, about £100,000, and also to the probable deficiency of £60,000 in the railway revenue, and that deficiency would very likely be intensified by the insufficient provision made for water supply in the interior. There was no probability of the railway revenue increasing while the roads leading to the railways were in their present state with regard to water; and he hoped the Treasurer would see that he had it in his power to increase the railway receipts by making provision for water supply along those roads.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he did not share the hon. member for Mackay's apprehensions concerning the great deficiency in the railway revenue during the current year. The stagnation during the last two or three months was only to be anticipated from the condition of the interior. The hon. gentleman evidently based his statement on the *Gazette* returns issued by the Railway Department, which differed in point of time from those issued by the Treasury. The Financial Statement dealt with the period from the 1st July to the 30th June ensuing, while the railway returns published in the *Gazette* dealt with the period from the 1st January to the 31st December. The first quarter of the present financial year showed the gratifying increase of over £35,000 on the corresponding period of the preceding year. Of course if the drought continued the second half-year would not show a commensurate increase, but he should be quite satisfied if it maintained a level with the corresponding period of last year. As soon as the season became more genial a large quantity of produce would find its way to the railway, which could not now be carried thither. If hon. gentlemen studied the railway returns they would observe that one or two months might alter the whole complexion of the year's revenue. The receipts for December, January, and February were the heaviest in the year; therefore he hoped his estimate would be yet be realised. He was not at the present time dismayed at the falling-off in the railway revenue, because he was convinced that there was a large quantity of wool in the interior waiting to be brought to the railways, but which could not be carried owing to the waterless condition of the roads. He did not wish to reopen the debate on the water supply; but he hoped that before another year passed the water supply would be in a more satisfactory condition, both from the natural supply and from the efforts of the department.

Mr. BLACK said the Colonial Treasurer inferred that his statement with reference to the decrease in railway revenue was inaccurate,

because he derived his information from the *Government Gazette*, the return there being for the period from the 1st January to the end of the year, while the Treasury returns were from the 1st July to the 30th June; but he begged to inform the hon. gentleman that he took that fact into consideration; and though he did not wish to raise any alarm in connection with the matter, he still adhered to the calculation and the statement he made just now. Taking the six months from the 1st July to the end of the year, and reckoning the four weeks yet to elapse on the same basis of revenue as the previous five months, the revenue for the six months would be £30,000 below the Treasurer's estimate; and if that were continued for another six months, to the end of June next, the year's revenue would be £60,000 below the Treasurer's estimate. No one would be more gratified than he to find the railway revenue increasing; but he was afraid that if the Treasurer anticipated an increase from the wool waiting for carriage he would be very much deceived. That wool had no existence, owing to the calamitous loss of stock the colony had sustained during the last few months; so that it was vain to look for an increase from the pastoral industry. He did not wish to be an alarmist, but he wished to point out that with such a large and increasing expenditure it behoved hon. members to take into consideration the question whether strict economy would not be an essential in the very near future.

Mr. KATES said the hon. member for Mackay had informed the Committee that there would be a deficiency of £30,000 in six months, and of £60,000 at the end of the year; but he had not given the reason why that deficiency would come about. He might have seen a telegram from St. George in the *Brisbane Courier*, stating that a large number of teams with goods had arrived from Narrabri, in New South Wales. They were losing the border trade, and the loss would be greater when the railways in contemplation by New South Wales were constructed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Wait till the Loan Estimates come on.

Mr. KATES said he was speaking in reply to the hon. member for Mackay.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: He wishes to choke you as well as me.

Mr. KATES said that the water supply had nothing to do with the decrease in the railway revenue; it was owing to the loss of the traffic over the southern border. Not only were drays bringing goods over the border from New South Wales, but they were taking wool back; and the sooner they took steps to recover that freight the better it would be for the country.

Mr. ARCHER said he did not think it worth while to make such a statement as that made by the hon. member. The chief source of revenue was not the trade from St. George. A large portion of it had come from the Central Railway, but it would be found that for the last two weeks the Central line had been earning about £1,000 a week less than that time last year. But the Central Railway was not connected with St. George at all, so that the hon. member's argument was worth nothing. It was simply a fact that the sheep that produced the wool brought down by the Central Railway were, to a certain extent, dead, and fencing materials and other stores that went out to the West formerly were not now going there. It was the Central Railway that was really showing the greatest falling-off, and he had never heard that it derived any of its traffic from New South Wales. That was the real case. It was no fault of the Government or anyone that the

line was not paying. It simply arose from the fact that the seasons had been unpropitious. The sheep were dead or dying, and people could not, under the circumstances, go on with the numerous improvements they would make if successful and prosperous. No doubt the Land Bill had something to do with the depression, but he was not going to talk about that measure. It might be a good Land Bill, but at all events it had disturbed men's minds and prevented their expending money on new works. The Central Railway, however, had nothing whatever to do with St. George.

Mr. KATES said he was replying to what had been said by the hon. member for Mackay, and he mentioned that goods landed at St. George had been taken from Brisbane to Roma, and thence to St. George. That was where the deficiency came in. He did not say a word about the Central Railway.

Mr. ARCHER: That is your lookout.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said he wished to say that he did not thank the Minister for Works for his very marked discourtesy in persisting in interrupting a debate, which he evidently wished to choke off, notwithstanding the general consent of the whole Committee that he should speak. It was not in deference to the wish of the Minister for Works that he did not continue, but in deference to another member of the Committee, who did not wish the discussion to be prolonged. He should take another opportunity, and a special one on another occasion, of pointing to the matter he had already referred to, and he should do so in considerable detail, showing the lights and shades of the Railway Department in a way that he could not have done in the very cursory manner in which he had spoken. He was sorry that the Minister for Works felt inclined to block reference to matters of which they should have an intimate knowledge. The susceptibility of the Minister for Works must be a matter of regret to others as well as himself.

The PREMIER said he did not understand the hon. member. He was not aware of any discourtesy that had been shown by the Minister for Works. On the contrary, the hon. member was allowed to proceed at considerable length in the discussion upon matters that were not before the Committee, but the Minister in charge of the department wished to proceed with the Estimates. The hon. member went a certain distance, but when he diverted too far from the discussion it was very natural that the Minister for Works should call attention to it. Even then the hon. member would not have been prevented from going on if he desired, but he said he did not wish to go on. After that he (the Premier) did not see how the hon. member could complain of any discourtesy on the part of the Minister for Works.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said it was after the expressed discourtesy of the Minister for Works that he said he would not proceed any further.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that a sum not exceeding £525 be granted for the extension, Highfields to Crow's Nest. Hon. members would see that the vote made provision for six months only. The plans, sections, and books of reference had been passed, and the Government intended to call for tenders for the second section. The vote made provision for the working staff on the second section of the line.

Mr. BLACK said that was another of those matters in connection with the railways that he thought the Minister for Works should keep his active eye constantly fixed upon—the expendi-

ture upon that particular line. He understood that the second section of that railway had already been approved of, and the Minister told them that the vote was for the purpose of carrying on the work in connection therewith. He thought that it was only right that hon. members' attention should be called to that particular line of railway, which he looked upon as a very experimental one indeed. From a return he held in his hand he found that £48,540 had been expended on the line—that was from Pengarry Junction to Cabarlah—and the receipts from all sources for twelve months had been the munificent sum of £674. There was a mania for branch lines of railway at present, but a day of reckoning would come; and if the country was going to continue to make railways in the haphazard way they seemed to have been doing lately, he was afraid the colony would very soon be on the verge of insolvency.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. BLACK said, unless that railway would show a better return, the Minister for Works was not justified in carrying out the extension, and he would like to know whether the Minister had any reasonable hope of the line being made more profitable in the future than it had been in the past. The line, as he said, produced £674 out of an expenditure of £48,000. That was the actual revenue, and the working expenses had still to be deducted. In fact the line was a dead loss to the colony, and he would like to have some assurance from the Minister that on calling for tenders for the second section he had some reasonable expectation of its paying.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he would point out to the member for Mackay that he was a supporter of the Government that initiated the construction of the line; and the object of the present Government was to carry it to a point where it would be profitable. It was all very well for the hon. member to get up and find fault with the line not paying, when he must have known very well that his chief went about during the election time and enumerated the political lines the then Government were building. The Highfields and Crow's Nest line was one of them, and the object of the present Government was to endeavour to extend it to a point where it would find traffic to pay the country.

Mr. BLACK said the hon. gentleman said he went about at election time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I said your chief went about.

Mr. BLACK said he was afraid the Minister for Works had been unfortunate that day. He (Mr. Black) would suggest that the hon. gentleman should restrain his impetuosity and keep cool. The hon. gentleman said that his (Mr. Black's) chief went about advocating a particular line of railway at election time; but he was very sorry the hon. gentleman referred to one whom he (Mr. Black) was proud to own as a chief, when that hon. gentleman was not present to give the Minister the answer he deserved. He was not there to own special allegiance to any particular chief. He was there upon the present occasion to denounce any unnecessary expense, and he was sorry to think that the Minister for Works, while admitting that it was a political railway, was prepared to carry out an extension of it. That was what he called a political swindle. Why did not the hon. gentleman put down his foot and say that he was not going to perpetuate the mistakes of his predecessors? That was what he should do. The hon. gentleman had not given him an answer to the question he asked as to whether he had any reasonable expectation of this line being remunerative. If an additional extension were made that line would still be a

political line; and if they turned to the Loan Estimates, as laid upon the table of the House, embracing no less than £10,000,000, they might see a great many more political lines. It ill became the Minister for Works to talk about political lines after allowing that Loan Estimate to be laid upon the table. Half of those proposed railways were nothing but political lines, and they would be found to be so. He was glad to have somebody disagree with him, but when those Estimates came before the Committee it would be found that there were more political lines on them than proposed by any previous Government.

Mr. J. CAMPBELL said he thought that, in the evidence taken by the Select Committee held by the Upper House some few weeks since, it was conclusively shown that there would be sufficient traffic upon the line after it had been extended. At present the line was useless, and he thought there was a great deal of truth in what the Minister for Works said when he said that it was a political line. There was no doubt about that. It was a political line in the first instance; it was carried to a point where it was altogether useless, and it was a very great pity that it was ever taken in that direction at all. It ought to have gone away some few miles nearer Toowoomba, up the valley amongst the inhabitants, where no doubt it would have created a considerable amount of traffic. But as it had been taken to the point where it was at present, it was absolutely necessary that it should be extended as far as Crow's Nest, so that it would create the traffic necessary for the line.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he supposed he might as well say a few words about branch lines, as they were discussing branch lines at present. The line in question had been called a political line by the Minister for Works and also by the hon. gentleman who had just sat down. If it were a political line then, it was still a political line. The intention of the Government who proposed the line was to take it to Crow's Nest; the title showed that "Highfields to Crow's Nest." So that it was just as much a political line as ever it was. He did not say, for a single minute, that it should not be extended; possibly it should be. The hon. gentleman said it would pay; but the only branch line that was ever likely to pay was the Sandgate line, during the present generation, and that was for very different reasons. The traffic on branch lines would be of such a nature always that they could not pay. The only way in which branch lines could be made to pay was where they opened up new country and induced settlement; and when the day of reckoning came both sides of the House would be responsible. No Government could sit upon the Treasury benches without making branch lines; no Government would be allowed to continue making only main lines, as there were too many members representing Southern constituencies interested in the construction of branch lines. Every Government must make them whether they paid or not. As to political railways, he would be able to point out one railway line which was a political line, and which would cost more than all the political railways yet made and branch lines. He did not mean to say anything against the vote, as he thought it ought to be passed. They had agreed to making the line to Crow's Nest, and, of course, they must have a staff to superintend the construction of that line.

Mr. FERGUSON said he did not know whether the line was a political line or not; but, at all events, it was a line that should never have

been constructed; there was not the slightest doubt about that. He called attention to it when the plans and book of reference were before the House. The prospects of that line were worse now than they were then. So far as they could gather, the total income of that line was £674 14s. 5d. for twelve months. They were now asked to pass a vote of £525, almost as much as the line returned for twelve months, for part of the salaries of the officers who were to superintend the construction of the extension. The hon. member for Aubigny had referred to the committee appointed by the Upper House to inquire into the line before they passed it. Anyone who looked into the evidence taken by that committee, and the constitution of that committee, would see that there was nothing to guide them as to the necessity for that line. The only evidence taken outside the department was that of two interested men—two sawmill proprietors—Messrs. Pechey and Munro. They were the only two witnesses called outside the officers of the Railway Department. The railway was actually constructed for the benefit of those two men, and no one else. In fact, Mr. Pechey acknowledged that if all the sawmills in the district were in full swing the returns would not amount to more than £48 per week, and that was at the rates that were being paid at present to bullock-teams and horse-teams. How was that line to pay? There was nothing else but timber, and it had been acknowledged that there would be no traffic except from the sawmills. The line was to be constructed simply to accommodate some sawmills; and it was very well known that the rates at which timber was being carried by the Railway Department would have to be reduced to the same as those at which it was carried on the other lines of the colony, that was 2d. per 1,000 feet per mile. Everything went to show that the line was simply a waste of money, and there was no possibility of its ever paying. There was no land fit for cultivation; every selector who had taken up a selection there had cleared out. The land was so poor that they could not get on, and the whole of the traffic on the line depended upon the timber trade. They knew very well that the timber traffic would never pay upon any line, and it was useless to construct a line for that purpose only. The evidence given by the department was that of the Acting Commissioner for Railways, and of one of the surveyors who surveyed the line, and both of them said that they considered that the line could never pay. In the face of that, without further information, although they were told by those two officers that there was no hope of the line paying, and there was nothing to recommend it, it was passed. That only went to show that any line which was taken in hand by certain people would be carried out, whether it was for the benefit of the country or not. That was not the only line in the southern part of the colony which was as bad as it could be. It was such lines as that—the Burrum, the Bundaberg and Mount Perry, the Fassifern, and the Crow's Nest—that reduced the interest on the railways. They were a loss to the country; and they reduced the interest on the money borrowed which the paying lines yielded. He hoped the Government would not consent to any more such lines. The Committee should object to them being carried out, whether they were branch lines or not. He did not agree with the hon. member for Townsville that the Committee was forced to concur in those lines. They ought to make a stand, and not allow such lines to be carried out until the country had progressed more, and until its position warranted them in being constructed.

Mr. J. CAMPBELL said the hon. member was in error in what he said about the land. The hon. member had probably taken his cue from a member of the Upper House, who stated that the land along the line was useless. He (Mr. Campbell) knew better than that member, and better perhaps than any hon. member in that Committee, and he could assure them that there was very good agricultural land there; and the reason why it had not been used was that it was so far from a market. If the railway was constructed all the land would be utilised.

Mr. GROOM said he agreed with what had been stated that the railway had been taken in a wrong direction. He did not think the residents in the district were to blame for that, because they had never been consulted in the matter. He knew Highfields and Crow's Nest thoroughly and had known them for many years past; and he could say that the railway had been built in such a way as to avoid settlement. If it had been chosen for the express purpose of avoiding settlement, of making it the most unprofitable line in the country, and of showing that branch lines would ultimately result in a loss to the country, a better route could not have been chosen. Had the line been taken through the Gowrie Scrub, Gowrie Little Plain, and Meringandan, where there were from 1,200 to 1,500 people settled, there would have been a sufficient warrant for its construction; but the line was built at least three or four miles away from those people, and they were obliged to take all their produce to Toowoomba on market days and take away what they wanted on drays. The railway was practically no use whatever to them. It was made at the instance of a gentleman who was a political power in the district, and who thought he could put in and throw out what members of Parliament he liked. He was the person who picked out that particular route; and, as the hon. member for Rockhampton had said, it was a great loss to the country, and would continue to be a great loss for a considerable time until the branch was extended. He hardly knew, owing to the loss being necessarily so great in the first section, whether the increased traffic would compensate for the loss which must necessarily attend the second section. With regard to a remark that had been made by the hon. member for Townsville, he thought it could easily be proved, by the Maryborough and Fassifern lines, that the timber traffic was the worst and the most unprofitable. Beyond Crow's Nest there were thousands and tens of thousands of acres of the finest agricultural land in the colony still in the possession of the Crown; and there were plenty of people ready to select on it as soon as the Government thought fit to throw it open for selection. The hon. member for Rockhampton, in saying that the land was of an inferior character, must have overlooked the fact that it was selected in 1863 as an agricultural reserve by a gentleman who professed to have a considerable knowledge of good land. He selected it; part of it was heavily timbered land, which for clearing would cost a selector £10, if not £20, an acre. In the clearing of the farms, many of them were reduced almost to beggary and starvation. A considerable portion of the land the first section passed through was found to be sour and unproductive, and hardly fit for agriculture; but there was good land further out. It was not the fault of the district nor of the people that the railway was taken in that direction. It was not his place to say it was a political railway. He only wished to inform hon. members what he knew of its construction. It could not have been taken in a worse direction; while in the Gowrie Scrub there were from 300 to 400 Germans settled down, and they had made that place—once a perfect nest of marsupials—a perfect paradise,

like the Rosewood Scrub. Those people were entirely cut off from railway communication, and, as he had said, they had to take their produce to Toowoomba every Saturday. If there had been an honest desire on the part of the Government to prevent the largest number of people getting railway communication, then the best route had been taken. As he had said before, it was chosen by a person—

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Who is he?

Mr. GROOM: He would not mention the name; but it was at his particular desire that that direction was taken, and a most unfortunate thing it was. He hardly agreed with what had fallen from the hon. member for Townsville, that no other branch line than that to Sandgate would pay for years. He believed that as soon as settlement took place along the branch lines they would pay interest on the cost of construction.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said it was extremely difficult to select a route to suit everybody. The hon. member seemed to think that a route ought to be selected by public opinion; but it did not matter what route was taken, they would always find a number of people declaring that it was in the wrong direction. There were so many different matters to consider. The Engineer-in-Chief looked at it from an engineering point of view, and did not consider the political, the social, or the commercial bearing of the line. Then the Minister had to study a number of different interests. He (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) did not think any such individual as the hon. member for Toowoomba had alluded to had selected the route of that line; at all events, he did not know him. He might be a resident in the district, but he did not know any gentleman who had such influence as that. There were several routes proposed, and the present one was supposed to be the best. There was another route which he favoured more, and he was sorry afterwards that it had not been adopted. That line would have been even farther away from the people the hon. gentleman spoke of. He could tell the hon. member that timber was not the only traffic that would not pay; the traffic the hon. member thought most of, and which they would all like to encourage—that was agricultural produce—did not pay any better than timber. The hon. gentleman must not run away with the idea that if there were farms at the end of a line they would make it pay; it required a higher paying class of goods than agricultural produce to make a line pay. His experience had not been confined to Queensland; his opinion was derived from experience gained in other colonies.

Mr. GROOM said he was perfectly sure that if the hon. member had been taken to the Gowrie Scrub, and the Gowrie Little Plain—if he had seen how the selectors were situated, and the amount of traffic—he would have insisted upon the line being taken in that direction rather than adopt the route that had been decided upon. He would say that the gentleman to whom he had just alluded made it his boast that he was the father of that route, and that he had his way notwithstanding the wishes of the people, who wanted it to go in another direction. Whether that gentleman had such power he did not know, but the fact was that the very worst route had been adopted, and he boasted that it was by his special desire.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving that a sum of £1,210 be granted for the construction staff, extension Warwick to Killarney, said there was an increase of £50 in the allowance to the Assistant Engineer, and increases to two inspectors of £40 each.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving that a sum of £1,520 be granted for the construction staff, extension beyond Roma, said there was an increase of £20 for one inspector.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN asked the name of the District Engineer for the extension?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was a gentleman named Mr. Weedon.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN asked how it was that he got a salary of £500 a year, with an allowance of £200, while his appointment only dated from the 1st of October, 1883? The hon. Minister for Works could not say he had been long in the service. While getting that information, the hon. gentleman might also ask what that gentleman's experience had been in railway construction?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that the previous engineer had not given satisfaction; he had resigned, and a good job too. The present officer did not draw that amount by £100 a year.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Why is it down then?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the estimate was prepared before the other officer resigned. The present officer only drew £400.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Including the allowance?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Then he had £600. The hon. gentleman had not answered his question about Mr. Weedon's experience in railway construction. He was down in the Blue Book as having joined the service on the 1st of October, 1883. Were there not other officers with more experience down for smaller salaries?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Do I understand that the hon. member wants to know his professional ability?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I want to know what experience he has had in railway construction?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the gentleman had been engineer for contractors, and he presumed he got his experience there. He did not know whether it was a very good school.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: It is sometimes.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he hoped the hon. member for Blackall would not get angry at his referring to the hon. member for Townsville as a contractor; he was a contractor outside the colony. He did not know whether it was a recommendation or not that this officer had got his experience in the service of contractors. He understood that was where he got his professional ability.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he knew little more about that gentleman than the hon. Minister for Works did.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know anything at all about him.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said perhaps he knew more about him than even the hon. gentleman's informant. The service of contractors was very often a good school for practical engineers. Contractors frequently paid their engineers higher salaries than they got in the Government Service. Now, this gentleman had had no experience in railway construction. He (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) knew the contractors he had been working for, and knew his railway history for the last six or seven years. He was a pet protégé of the Engineer-in-Chief. It was to be hoped he would turn out better in the Government Service than he had in the contractors' service. He (Hon. J. M. Macrossan)

objected to a man of that description being paid a higher salary than officers that were in the service before he joined.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the salary was £400 and £100 a year allowance; and if he was a professional man at all he should be worth that salary. He thanked the hon. gentleman for the information he had given. It was one of the greatest misfortunes that could happen to a Government to have inexperienced men in that position, as they were apt to unnecessarily harass contractors. Of course, a contractor should be compelled to carry out his contract in a proper manner, but he knew contractors had been very much harassed. He knew nothing whatever about that officer. The hon. member for Moreton said he ought to know every officer in his department, and what his professional abilities were.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I did not say so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Supposing he were to pay a flying visit to Cooktown, Mackay, and Ravenswood on the Northern line, how could he be expected to form a competent opinion as to the abilities of the engineers engaged there? If anything was pointed out to him that was wrong he should be very glad to rectify it, but he did not think a mere layman was competent to express an opinion as to the ability of professional men. He should be very sorry to condemn any professional man until he had had some considerable experience of him.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said a non-professional man could judge by results. As to the engineer whom they were discussing, it now appeared that his salary was £500, and not £700 as it appeared on the Estimates; and he could only hope that he would do much better in the Government Service than he did before he entered it.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said the Minister for Works had quite misunderstood him. He did not say the hon. gentleman ought to know every officer in his department, but that he ought to know the engineers, of whom there were not more than a dozen. Excepting the Chief Engineer, the hon. gentleman did not know the name of one. Surely he ought to know why they had been appointed, and on whose recommendation! Who recommended the appointment of the officer in question?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said Mr. Stanley submitted the name of that gentleman for the position, and if he was not fit to recommend an officer of that description he (the Minister for Works) was not.

Mr. ARCHER said the Minister for Works had expressed a hope that he would not get angry at hearing his hon. friend the member for Townsville spoken of as a contractor. He (Mr. Archer) was never offended at the truth being told. They all knew the hon. member was a contractor in another colony. What he objected to was the Minister for Works spreading rumours which he knew to be false—stating that the hon. member for Townsville was a contractor at the time he was Minister for Works, which he knew perfectly well was not true. If the hon. gentleman chose to spread such malicious, mean, scandalous, and contemptible rumours he must expect to find them taken up warmly by the hon. member for Townsville's friends.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that £625 be granted for construction staff, Stanthorpe to the Border. Provision was only made for six months.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked when the work was likely to be commenced?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied that tenders had been called for, and the result would be known in a few days.

Mr. BLACK said that when the matter was discussed last session a question was raised as to the point of junction. Had it been distinctly settled where the junction of the lines was to take place, or would the Queensland Government be called upon to extend its line along the border later on to meet that of New South Wales?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the place had been definitely settled, and not only were the New South Wales Government surveying the line up to that point, but they had made provision on their Loan Estimates for carrying out the work.

Mr. BLACK said another question raised at that time was as to break of gauge—whether it would take place at Stanthorpe or on the border. Had it been definitely decided whether the break of gauge would be at the border, or in New South Wales, or in Queensland?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it had been definitely decided that the break of gauge would be on the border. The Chief Engineer of New South Wales and Mr. Stanley had come to an arrangement as to the site of the railway station and the design for it. He presumed that one half of the railway station would be in one colony, and the other half in the other. The station would be built by the Queensland Government, and the New South Wales Government would pay half the cost of it.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1884-5, the sum of £2,450 for the construction staff of the Kilkivan and Burrum to Bundaberg Branches.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that there seemed to be an extraordinary large staff for such a small line.

The PREMIER said there were two separate lines.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked how they were mixed up? Why had they not been kept separate? Those lines were not near each other at all. The Burrum to Bundaberg branch was an extension from Howard Junction, and the Kilkivan was a branch from Maryborough. They did not know in passing those Estimates who were the engineers for the lines. He should like to have some explanation.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that the estimate was for the construction of the Kilkivan line, and also for the branch from Howard on towards Bundaberg. He did not think that the sum was at all out of the way for going on with two lines at a time. There was to be one district engineer for the work and two assistant engineers.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked who was the district engineer?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The engineer is not appointed yet.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked if the hon. gentleman would tell him who was to be the district engineer? They were going to vote his salary and they ought to know who he was to be.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the gentleman to be appointed was Mr. Pagan.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Just so; then he supposed Mr. Pagan could not be a Christian! He wanted to know something more

about Mr. Pagan, under whom the assistant engineers would be placed. Was he the gentleman that had gone home on six months' leave of absence, and who had had charge of the Bundaberg Railway? Was it the same Mr. Pagan?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was the same gentleman.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he protested against the appointment of Mr. Pagan as District Engineer over the heads of better men than himself. What was the date of this man's appointment? He was appointed on 1st January, 1882, by himself (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) on the recommendation of the Chief Engineer, after a great deal of persuasion indeed. Now, he knew that Mr. Pagan—how he got on the Lord knew—was on the list of members of the Institute of Civil Engineers. How he got there was a mystery to him (Hon. J. M. Macrossan). The Minister for Works should just ask the Chief Engineer what was the amount of work that Mr. Pagan had done on the Bundaberg Railway: what measurements he had made, and whether he was capable of measuring a concrete culvert. He (the Chief Engineer) dared not say that he was; because he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) knew the fact was otherwise. His information, he believed, was thoroughly correct; and he told the Minister for Works that, during the whole time that that gentleman had charge of the construction of the Bundaberg line, he had never measured any earthworks, or bridges, or anything that required measurement; that his whole time had been occupied in his own house; that his inspector had done the work for him; and that he was not capable of measuring a concrete culvert. Let the Minister for Works inquire if Mr. Pagan had failed to do his duty in furnishing the final certificate for the Bundaberg Railway, and if he had not been allowed to go home without furnishing the final certificate. And yet that was the gentleman who was to be appointed over the heads of gentlemen far superior to himself, and who had been longer in the service. Let the Minister for Works ask the Chief Engineer those questions, and see what answer he would get.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that Mr. Pagan had seemingly incurred the displeasure of the hon. member for Townsville. He did not know where they could get engineers to please him. He knew that Mr. Ballard, the Chief Engineer of the Northern District, had represented to him that he had been compelled to take men whom he would not have employed if he could have got better men. They were not so easily got. However, he would ask for information. He knew that Mr. Pagan's professional abilities stood very high indeed.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Indeed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said very possibly he might be entirely mistaken.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said it had been alleged by the Minister for Works that Mr. Pagan had incurred his displeasure. Any man he considered should incur his displeasure if he were found placed over the heads of better men than himself. What were the facts connected with that man? Let the Minister for Works satisfy himself by asking the principal Assistant Engineer his opinion of him. Mr. Annet, whose name had been mentioned that night as that of an engineer worth more than £700 a year, knew the work that that man had done, and he should be asked what he thought of him. Who were the assistants to be placed under him?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he did not know the names of every employé on the railways.

The PREMIER said that the Minister for Works was surely not expected to know the names of all the porters at all the railway stations.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mr. Paterson was one, and the other was not appointed.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would compare the length of service of Mr. Pagan with that of Mr. Paterson. Mr. Paterson stood in the Blue Book as having been appointed on 1st November, 1878, and his first appointment in the Government Service was in 1872. And yet, Mr. Paterson was to be placed under Mr. Pagan. He said Mr. Paterson was a more competent man than Mr. Pagan. He said it advisedly, but let the Minister for Works take the advice or ask the opinion of the principal Assistant Engineer before making such an appointment as that. He (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) did not care a straw about any man in the Public Service except so far as his merits were concerned, and he maintained that the Assistant Engineer to be placed under Mr. Pagan was a better man than his chief—a man, moreover, who was on six months' leave of absence, and had only been two and a-half years in the service. Was Mr. Pagan receiving full pay, or any pay at all?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was utterly impossible that he should know the professional abilities of every man in the Government Service. He would like to know if the hon. member for Townsville did when he was in office.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: No; I did not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Then how can I be expected to know it?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I did not ask you to know it.

Mr. FERGUSON said he was glad the hon. member for Townsville had mentioned that case. He had heard of it himself. He had heard that that gentleman was incompetent to do any work in the Railway Department. The officers under him had to go over all the work he had done, and put it right before it could come before his superiors in a proper manner. He was incompetent to be in the service at all, and he could not understand that men like Mr. Paterson could be placed under him. He had known Mr. Paterson for the last twenty years; he knew him when he was in the Railway Department in the Central district, and he could give Mr. Ballard's opinion of him. Mr. Ballard, the Chief Engineer of the Central district, had told him that he was sorry Mr. Paterson was taken away from him. It was some time now since Mr. Paterson was removed from the Central district to Maryborough, but Mr. Ballard had told him that he had lost one of the best officers he had when Mr. Paterson was removed. Had he remained in the Central district he would have been now twice as well off as he was. He had been receiving £600 a year when he left the Central district, and he was now only getting £400 under that incompetent man. That was not the only case of the same character which existed at the present time. It was not Mr. Pagan's ability at all, but simply his political influence, that had placed him in his present position.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: The Engineer's influence.

Mr. FERGUSON said the man would never be appointed except by some influence or other.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Who appointed him?

Mr. FERGUSON said he did not know. That was not his business; he was only stating

facts. He did not blame the present Government or anyone else for it. It did not matter to him whether it was the last or the present Minister for Works, or the Engineer-in-Chief who was to blame, but the fact remained the same that the man was incompetent, and should not have been appointed.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. Minister for Works seemed to be angry, as if he had accused him of making bad appointments. That gentleman was appointed by him (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) and he was really blaming himself when he referred to the appointment. But he was appointed on the recommendation of the Chief Engineer, and, as he had said, after much persuasion. He would tell the Committee how Mr. Pagan came to be appointed. The Chief Engineer had represented to him that he was short of engineers, and he recommended the appointment of this gentleman, who had been engaged in the service of the New South Wales Government in the Roads Department. He refused to appoint him, and the Engineer asked him twice afterwards, and it was only after his being asked the third time, and several weeks or months having elapsed between each time he was asked, that he consented to appoint that gentleman on the recommendation of the Chief Engineer. The Minister must take the recommendation of the Chief Engineer, as he was the best judge of the man's professional ability. But, as he had said before, non-professional men could judge of those things by results. That man could now be judged, and he said he was incompetent; and if the Chief Engineer told the Minister for Works that he was a man of ability it was misleading him. Let him ask the chief Assistant Engineer his opinion of that man, and let him ask whether he had ever made out a final certificate. He had never made out anything; and yet he was now to be hoisted over the heads of better men than himself, simply because he happened to be a friend of the Chief Engineer.

Mr. ANNEAR said that the gentleman who was appointed to take charge of the Kilkivan contract was in England, and the fact was that there was now no district engineer to look after that contract. He protested against there being no district engineer for that purpose. They had heard in the House during the present session that a great many troubles had arisen through three or four engineers being at work on one job—there was no finality whatever in. They found that engineers who could write "C.E." to their names had a great objection to work with those who could not write those initials after their names, and a greater mistake never existed. There was a gentleman in Maryborough at present who received £500 a year, and he could not write "C.E." after his name, and yet he did not believe there was a more practical man in the colony. He could carry out a railway contract with the Government and the contractors, and the work would be finished and there would be no trouble about it. He would draw the attention of the Minister for Works to the fact that in New South Wales at the present time, a Mr. Owen—a man who could not write "C.E." to his name—was chief engineer for Amos Brothers, who were carrying out two contracts, and he received £3,000 a year. That would show the Committee that, as the hon. member for Townsville had said, there were men working for contractors who were quite equal to any man in the Government Service. As he had said, the Kilkivan line was going on, and cylinders had arrived at Maryborough for the bridge. He knew that about twenty segments of those cylinders were broken, and the question would

have to arise somewhere as to who was responsible for the breakage. At the present time they were in the hands of the contractors, and when Mr. Pagan came back six months hence he would be a new man altogether. The contractors would say, "We have carried out the orders given to us by So-and-so," and Mr. Pagan would probably say, "You ought not to have done so." That was how difficult questions between contractors and the Government cropped up. He hoped the Minister for Works would take the suggestion thrown out, and at once appoint a district engineer for the Kilkivan Railway.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Where are we to get one?

Mr. ANNENAR said there were plenty of them to be got. He would mention one—Mr. Paterson, at Maryborough. That gentleman had had a calamity in his family within the last few weeks, and he had naturally got leave of absence during his trouble. There was a gentleman in Maryborough at present—Mr. McGhie — and it should be placed in his hands to carry out the work on the Kilkivan Railway. And what did they find? That a draftsman—a very good young man, no doubt, but he was not an engineer, and had no practical experience — was instructed to take Mr. Paterson's place, and carry out the work on that railway. From what he knew of Mr. Paterson he said that he should receive the appointment of district engineer of the Kilkivan and Bundaberg line. He said that because Mr. Paterson was an honourable and competent man; and he might mention that when Mr. Thorneloe Smith sent Mr. Paterson to measure up the second section of the Maryborough and Gympie Railway, in the contract between J. T. Annear and Company and the Government, there was no dispute whatever. He did an honest thing between the Government and the contractors; and the Committee would see what trouble that saved to the country, and how soon it brought things to an end. There were many people who had just claims which had arisen in the way he had stated, by not having men to measure up who would make out a final certificate or do anything final. When he was a young man, twenty years of age, he had worked for two years on a Government contract near Plymouth, and all work that passed the Government engineers in England at 6 o'clock in the evening was paid for. That was not the case here, but it should be the case. He had done work here, and twelve months had passed when he was told the work should be taken up and done over again and that there would be no extra payment. He hoped that justice would be done to the competent engineers who were in the colony. Mr. Pagan was now in England, and they had competent men here doing his work. As soon as he returned to the colony he would probably be met on the wharf and made a great deal of, and perhaps escorted up to Maryborough and have a nice house to live in. For that gentleman to go and decide on the work carried out under the supervision of other men would be a great injustice.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he hoped the Minister for Works would not think that he was accusing him of having done anything wrong in connection with the appointments that had been made, for he was doing nothing of the kind. He understood the position the hon. gentleman was placed in, having been in the same office himself, and being a younger man he was perhaps more active in dealing with the business. What he had said about the officer under discussion he did not know when he was in office, but

had found it out since; and if the hon. gentleman would take his suggestion he would advise him to ask the principal Assistant Engineer, in the presence of the Engineer-in-Chief, what was his opinion of Mr. Pagan? If the principal Assistant Engineers said he was a man of the ability the Chief Engineer informed the Minister for Works he was, then he (Hon. Mr. Macrossan) would admit he had been wrong in making the statements he had made to the Committee. Those statements, however, were not made on his own authority, but on the authority of engineers.

MR. MACDONALD-PATERSON said the Mr. Paterson who had been referred to by hon. members was his brother; but he was not going to be mealy-mouthed in what he had to say about him on that account. He wished to remark that on one occasion a gentleman who held a not very inferior position in this colony, said to him, "Can I do anything for your brother?" To which he replied, "Yes, you will do me a great favour if you will sack him, or cause him to be sacked." That was all that ever passed between him and any Government with reference to his brother and the department in which he was at present employed. He knew his brother had professional merits; he had those before he left Scotland. It was incorrect to say that his first appointment in the service was in 1872. Doubtless that date was according to some departmental regulation, but it was not the date of his first appointment. His brother had had good experience in Scotland with a large and important firm before he came to Queensland. There was no railway here when he arrived in the colony, but he received an appointment in the Survey Department as soon as he set foot on the soil of Queensland. Subsequently he went into the field, and was afterwards persuaded to enter the Engineer's Department by Mr. Ballard, who chose him as his third man next to Mr. Hannam, which was paying him a very high compliment. He (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) had been told by Mr. Herbert and Mr. Ballard, and, he believed, by Mr. Stanley also, that there was not a better surveying engineer in Australia than Mr. Hannam. That was all he had to say on the subject. He simply rose to show that Mr. Paterson's appointment in the Government Service dated further back than was stated, and to corroborate what Mr. Ferguson, who had known him for twenty years, had said on the subject. He thought it was a great pity that a professional man who came out here, and was sober and industrious, working from daylight to dark, and giving satisfaction to his superior officers, should find himself only receiving £400 a year, after twenty-two years' residence in the colony. He pitied him and pitied his superiors even more. That was the first time his brother's name had been mentioned in that House, and he sincerely hoped it would be the last. His case was one of those which he thought the Government might give to the gentleman who was going to the old country to lecture, with the view of showing the people how desirable it was to emigrate to Queensland. It would show what an attractive place the colony was for young professional men who earned the esteem and respect of their superiors.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS said that was the first time he had heard any complaints about Mr. Pagan. If he knew there was anything wrong he would, of course, rectify it; but he did not. Mr. Paterson's name had also been alluded to. He had never received any application from that gentleman; he seemed to be very well contented with his position. He (the Minister for Works) found that Mr. Paterson was actually receiving £50 a year more than Mr. Pagan. Mr. Paterson received £550 a year, while Mr. Pagan only received £400, and £100 allowance.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: You have made a mistake.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said Mr. Paterson had never made any application, to his knowledge, and, as for Mr. Pagan, he had never heard his name before that night, except that he was employed on the Bundaberg and Mount Perry Railway.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said of course the Minister for Works understood that they were not making any complaints against him. The hon. gentleman was mistaken when he said Mr. Paterson was receiving £50 a year more than Mr. Pagan. The latter gentleman was down on the Estimates for £500 a year, and £200 allowance, which made £700; whereas Mr. Paterson's emoluments only amounted to £550.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had explained to the hon. member that Mr. Pagan had only £400 a year salary, and £100 a year allowance.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman did not explain that at all. He did not know whether the hon. gentleman spoke from information he had got in the gallery, but he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) knew that Mr. Pagan had been in charge of the Bundaberg and Mount Perry Railway, and had been in receipt of the income he mentioned—namely, £500 a year as salary, £200 allowance, total £700. Mr. Paterson had £400 a year, and £150 allowance, total, £550.

Mr. FERGUSON said the Minister for Works had stated that Mr. Paterson was receiving £550 a year. Now that gentleman's salary was £400 a year. His allowance was £150, which was not sufficient for the travelling expenses of a surveyor who had to provide his own horses and forage, and he would therefore have to pay part of such expenses out of the £400. It could not therefore be said that Mr. Paterson was receiving £550 a year.

The PREMIER said he thought they might get on with the business now. But before they passed the vote he wished to remark that it was scarcely fair for hon. members to attack the conduct of a Government department in connection with matters of which the Minister could know nothing. Ministers were not omniscient: they did not know every officer in the department together with his qualifications or disqualifications. Neither did a Minister know anything of grievances till they were brought before him; but if, when they were brought under his notice, he did not act fairly then he was to blame. Yet as much heat had been displayed over Mr. Pagan and Mr. Paterson as if his hon. colleague had been aware of all the things that had been said about them, which he heard for the first time to-night. If anyone was to blame, it was the hon. member for Townsville, for appointing Mr. Pagan over the head of Mr. Paterson.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman was preaching a doctrine he never preached or practised before. How many times when he sat on the Government benches had he been attacked by the hon. gentleman for offences committed by the officers in the department over which he presided? He did not attack the Government at all; and if any heat was displayed it was because of information conveyed to the Minister for Works which he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) believed to be untrue. The Minister for Works must act on the information he got, and so must every other Minister; but a certain amount of discretion must be exercised. They were not wishing to stop the Estimates; but there was a time for the discussion of grievances, and each item with which a grievance was con-

nected must be discussed, no matter how long it took. The hon. member talked as if he were under the impression that Mr. Pagan's want of ability had been known to members on the Opposition side for a long time. He (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) had known of it for some time, but not for a long time; and the corroboration of the hon. member for Rockhampton was quite unexpected by him, for Mr. Pagan's name had not passed between him and any member of that Committee till that night. He had no opportunity of bringing the matter forward before the vote under consideration was moved, or he should have done so. Could he be expected to go to the Minister for Works and tell him what he knew? It must be done openly in that Committee if at all; and that was the proper time to do it. No more heat had been displayed and no more time had been lost than was absolutely necessary, and he hoped the discussion that had taken place would have the effect of making the Minister for Works have an inquiry into the relative merits of the man who was to be district engineer, and of the one who was to be placed under him as his assistant.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS asked why the hon. member for Townsville did not appoint Mr. Paterson to the position instead of Mr. Pagan?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Because he was never recommended.

Mr. ARCHER said the hon. member for Townsville admitted that he made the appointment on the recommendation of the Chief Engineer, and then he was taken to task. There had been no attack made on the Government; but the hon. member for Townsville, having discovered that the appointment was a mistake, now gave the Minister for Works the information so that he might rectify the mistake. As for stopping the Estimates, there was not the slightest wish to do anything of the kind.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that the sum of £256 be granted for the construction staff, Bundaberg Railway. The vote was for three months, and the money had already been paid.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that the sum of £9,475 be granted for salaries in connection with Extension Surveys. There was an increase to the Inspecting Surveyor, Mr. Phillips, and the hon. member for Townsville was probably aware that that officer was entitled to the increase.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Hear, hear! Mr. Phillips is well entitled to it.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that the sum of £7,212 be granted for the general staff, Central and Northern Railway. The increase was accounted for by the fact that there were sixteen additional men.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not think they could criticise the remaining votes with the same expectation of getting information that they got on the other votes, seeing that the Chief Engineer of the Northern District was not present. They could not expect the Commissioner to give as full information as the Engineer. He should like to know the reason of the enormous increase from £3,712 to £7,212?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it appeared that a large number of men had been paid formerly out of Contingencies in the Northern district, but they were now put down on the Estimates.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he knew a great many men used to be paid from Contingencies in the Northern district; but were all the officers paid from Contingencies, seeing the vote was so great?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said no; not all. Provision had to be made for additional lines that had been carried on. Mr. Ballard had had to make provision for the Cooktown Railway. The principal Assistant Engineer was a new office, but not a new man.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I know him.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Assistant Engineer had to make provision for the carrying out of the Cooktown Railway.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he believed the hon. gentleman alluded to Mr. Delisser as principal Assistant Engineer.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he knew there were a great many more railways under construction in the North than there were two years ago. He was not going to oppose the vote.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that a sum of £2,245 be granted for the Central and Clermont Railway.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Who is the district engineer on this vote?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mr. Gwynneth. He had seen the officer, and believed he was most efficient.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he saw the Engineer had reduced the number of sub-inspectors from five to two. Was that in consequence of the Clermont Branch having been finished? He supposed it must be.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that a sum of £578 be granted for the Springsure Railway. Tenders had been called for the line, and the amount set down made provision for six months for the construction staff.

Mr. ARCHER said he was rather surprised to see the amount that had been put down. There was £150 for the Assistant Engineer, which would be at the rate of £300 a year, and he also got £100 for allowances. The officers they had been discussing got much more than that. £400 was the full salary of the Assistant Engineer, including allowances, while out of that he had to find horses, forage, and the usual etceteras. Might he ask who was the Assistant District Engineer?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said no appointment had been made; but the officer to be appointed would work under the District Engineer, Mr. Gwynneth.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that a sum of £1,355 be granted for the Mackay Railway.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked, how was it that there was an officer mentioned in that vote who did not appear anywhere else except in the Estimates for the Cooktown line? He believed Mr. Watson, the pay-clerk on the Northern Railway, answered for the same purpose. What was the duty of a clerk and store-keeper? He was a civilian, he presumed, and not connected with engineering.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was surprised at the hon. gentleman asking such a question after having been in the office so long himself. Could not the hon. member find something else to ask about?

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that a sum of £2,070 be granted for the Northern Railway, construction staff. A few additional men had been appointed, and that made up the difference between £1,730 and £2,070.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he saw that the number of sub-inspectors had been reduced, and he thought that was scarcely judicious economy. There was only one first-class inspector, a second-class inspector, and a sub-inspector, but there were two sub-inspectors before. He thought, from the length of line under construction, a greater number of inspectors were required. Of course he knew there were two engineers, but the work of superintending construction and looking after the contractors was done by the inspectors, and not by the engineers at all. Who was the District Engineer?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the District Engineer was Mr. McArthur; and a first-class inspector had been appointed, one of the sub-inspectors having been done away with.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was very glad that Mr. McArthur had got a good position. After his long service in the North he deserved it. He would tell the Minister for Works what he had heard about one of the inspectors upon that railway. About nine months ago—he would not be sure about the time—a man was taken from Charters Towers who had no knowledge whatever of railway construction, and he was made an inspector. If that was the case it was something very serious, for, as he had said before, the real work of looking after the contractors was done by the inspectors; and if a man had no knowledge of railway construction, what inspection could be made? He knew that the man was sent for a couple of months to another line to get some instruction; but that was not the way to appoint Government inspectors. The Government inspectors should be men having some knowledge, and not only that, but a good knowledge of railway construction acquired by experience.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was perfectly aware that there were men on the Northern railways who were not as much good as they might be. Mr. Ballard had complained to him very recently that he was compelled to put on quite raw men—men new to the work—and he asked permission to bring one or two engineers from New South Wales, representing that he was acquainted with a very efficient engineer. He gave him permission to appoint him; and he was quite surprised that no hon. member had got up yet and denounced him for bringing a decent man from New South Wales, although he dared say it might be done yet.

Mr. ARCHER said there was no fear of anyone denouncing the Minister for Works for bringing efficient men here. He would ask if the inspector who was taken from Charters Towers, and sent to learn his business on the Northern Railway, was recommended by Mr. Ballard?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mr. Ballard recommends his own officers.

Mr. ARCHER: I am very glad to hear that he does.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman was not the only Minister who had brought engineers from New South Wales. He

did so himself when he was Minister for Works, and in one of them, he was sorry to say, he made a mistake.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You ran a great risk in doing it.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he believed the other one was a very good officer; but Mr. Ballard ought to be in a position to pick up some men whom he knew, to promote them to the rank of inspectors without taking men who, for all he knew, knew nothing about railway construction. If he were not in a position to do that, it was his own fault, for he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) knew many competent men who could be had down here. For instance, Mr. Ballard had men who were called maintenance men, and some of them might have been appointed. Just fancy Mr. Ballard passing over those men and taking absolute novices to the work! The thing was not right; if he could not get men on the Central or Southern lines, he should ask the Minister for Works to ask the Engineer here to recommend someone. That had been done before. The man in charge of the maintenance on the Townsville line was a working man on the Southern line until he was selected and sent up there. He did not see why men working on the Northern lines should not get promotion on the Southern, or why men working on the Southern should not get promotion in the North. The engineers ought to work together to appoint good men.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that £1,100 be voted for the Ravenswood Railway.

Mr. ARCHER asked if the attention of the Minister for Works been called to, or had he himself seen, the report that appeared in a paper recently about the opening of the line in question. He did not want to raise a discussion; but he would ask the hon. gentleman if he had seen the charges brought against a railway servant?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had heard a report from the Traffic Manager, who was charged with a dereliction of duty. Of course he could not deal with the case now. He thought it was a matter of too much picnicking.

Mr. ARCHER: Will you inquire into it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will see into the matter.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he believed that a great many of the complaints that had been made against the Traffic Manager on the Northern line were because he was doing his duty too strictly. There was a remarkable incident in the report he read, that when the train with the picnickers was going home from Ravenswood Junction one of the men fell out when it was going along, and could not communicate with the guard, and they left him sitting upon the ground, and looking most astonished at the train leaving him. The man was seemingly unhurt; he did not know whether the Minister for Works had heard of that.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that £1,682 be voted for the Cooktown Railway.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that, now they had got nearly through the Estimates, he wished to say a word about those staffs. Several of them seemed to be too big, judging from his own experience. He knew a railway in New South Wales where there were between 700,000 and 800,000 cubic yards of earth-works, and the Government staff consisted of an engineer and two inspectors. There was

no such work going on in Queensland, and if there were he supposed that they would have half-a-dozen engineers and about twenty inspectors.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that that was Mr. Ballard's estimate for the officers to carry out the work. If he were not mistaken the hon. gentleman brought forward a resolution to place £5,000 upon the Estimates as a gratuity to Mr. Ballard, and he gave that gentleman credit for having saved the country a tremendous deal of money. Now he got up and said that was all wrong and the staff was too costly.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the two things had no connection whatever. He did not speak particularly about the staff at Cooktown; he was alluding to all the staffs, and his experience was quite as great as that of the Minister for Works. What he told the hon. gentleman was that he could mention a line on which nearly 800,000 cubic yards of earth were being taken away, and the whole Government staff was one engineer and two inspectors. They did their duty and they saw that the contractors did theirs. He thought if ever he became Minister for Works again he would make a change.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that £7,190 be granted for the survey staff of the Central and Northern Division. There was a slight increase in the vote, but it was hardly worth taking notice of.

Mr. BLACK said he could not let the vote pass without remarking on the equanimity of the hon. gentleman. He told the Committee that there was a slight increase, but it was not much. But that slight increase was £1,100 on the previous vote of £6,050. It was quite in accord with all the railway votes. The Minister for Works said, "Never mind; vote it; it's all right." But he (Mr. Black) thought it was a very large increase. As he had said earlier in the evening, he hoped that during the recess the Colonial Treasurer's ambitious estimates would be realised, and that the Minister for Works would take into consideration the possibility of reducing the constantly increasing railway expenditure. He thought there was a great deal of sound sense in the remark made by the hon. member for Townsville, in connection with the district engineers, and the assistant engineers. It seemed to be really necessary that directly a new railway line was started they wanted a new and expensive staff—a district engineer at £400, and one or two assistant engineers. He saw no reason why an engineer should not take charge of two or three of those Northern lines. Economy might be practised by reducing the number of engineers. It was not necessary for each railway to have its own staff, with an engineer who did nothing but ride backwards and forwards during the construction. He hoped the Minister for Works would take what he was saying in good part, because he was anxious to see as large an extent of railway carried on as practicable, and carried on economically. If they economised in the cost of construction, that meant that they would be able to make so many more miles of railway. He believed the hon. gentleman wished to see railway extension profitably carried out, and for the benefit of the colony; and it would be a good thing if, instead of spending a few thousand pounds in supervision, they could get an extra mile or two of railway. It was quite evident from what had transpired that an expensive staff did not mean efficiency in construction.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was surprised that the hon. member found fault with the vote. It was for surveys in the North, and there was an increase of five men. He hoped the hon. member did not want to reduce the surveys up there.

Mr. BLACK said the hon. gentleman had misunderstood what he said altogether. He was not referring to any particular vote, but speaking in general terms of the whole of the Railway Estimates. It must be apparent to all hon. members that there was a sort of laxity in the department, and that economy ought to be studied very much more than it had been hitherto. He did not want to reflect on any particular line. It was quite evident to hon. members that the Minister for Works, in having to constantly consult the head of the department, was not quite as familiar with his department as other Ministers had been who had preceded him; and it would be far more satisfactory if the head of the department was allowed to come into the House and give the information. He did not wish the hon. member to misrepresent what he had been saying.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was glad he had misunderstood the hon. member. His suggestions would have every consideration.

Mr. STEVENSON said he had not spoken while these Estimates had been passing; but he had listened to a good deal that had been said, and on every vote he had heard reflections cast on the Chief Engineer. That gentleman had been Chief Engineer for twelve years. Hon. members on both sides had been in the habit of placing a good deal of stress on what had fallen from the hon. member for Townsville, who was for a good while Minister for Works. Now, as they were likely to spend a great deal in the future in the construction of railways, it seemed to him a most extraordinary thing that so many charges should be brought against that gentleman without inquiry being made into them. The whole of the appointments were made on his recommendation, and rightly so too. The hon. member for Townsville had admitted that he himself went on the recommendation of that gentleman; but now he said that he thought he was wrong in doing so. He (Mr. Stevenson) thought he was not wrong; and he hoped the hon. member had been misled in the information he had since received, not only for the satisfaction of the public, but for the sake of the Chief Engineer himself. As those charges had been made, there should be some inquiry into them. He hoped the charges were not well founded, and perhaps, on inquiry, it would be seen that that was the case. He hoped the Minister for Works would have a real inquiry into the matter, and not a sham one.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that a sum of £788 18s. be granted as a supplementary vote for the Legislative Council and Assembly.

Mr. ARCHER said he thought it was time to stop.

The PREMIER said a very large proportion of the items on the Supplementary Estimates had been expended by the hon. gentleman himself. The item he had moved explained itself. The previous items did not need parliamentary sanction; they were only put there for the information of hon. members.

Mr. ARCHER said they had been asked to meet that night without sufficient warning, after having been allowed to understand that they would not meet at all. It was not till half-an-hour before the House adjourned the previous night that he knew of the arrangement. The

hon. leader of the Opposition and his chief supporters were not present; yet the hon. gentleman tried to carry on the business beyond the usual hour. He thought it would be better to move the Chairman out of the chair. He did not understand the Premier's sardonic laugh.

The PREMIER: You have been extremely amusing all the evening.

Mr. ARCHER said they wanted now to go home and have a sleep, and they would get on with the business next day all the better for doing so. It would probably not have been so amusing if the Minister for Works had known more about his own business, and had been less insulting occasionally. He could not see the necessity for going on any longer.

The PREMIER asked if the hon. member could suggest any hon. member who was not present and who was likely to wish to discuss any items on those Estimates. It was not usual that there should be any lengthy discussion on Supplementary Estimates. Were there any hon. members unexpectedly absent—understanding that the House would not sit—who desired to discuss those Estimates?

Mr. ARCHER said they were not unexpectedly absent. They were absent in consequence of the statement made by the Premier. The Premier had told them there would only be three sitting nights this week, and was it worth while to go on after 11 o'clock at night? It would be far better to move the Chairman out of the chair. Not that he made any threat; he had never in his life tried to obstruct business; but people were apt to get fightable if they were kept late. He thought they had a right to go home at 11 o'clock and get a little sleep.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman had been misunderstanding everything that had been said by the Minister for Works and himself in a most extraordinary manner. He had asked the hon. gentleman whether he thought any members who were not present probably desired to discuss some items in those Estimates—

Mr. ARCHER: I am certain they do.

The PREMIER: And whether they would have good ground of complaint if the Estimates were brought on unexpectedly. The hon. member took up what he said in the very opposite sense to which it was intended. He would be very sorry indeed to take advantage of the accidental absence of any hon. member.

Mr. ARCHER said it was not the slightest use for the hon. member to argue like a lawyer and make points. The fact was, there were hon. members absent simply because the Premier had told them there would be no House. They would want information about those votes, as the hon. member knew well; and, therefore, he ought now to move the Chairman out of the chair, and ask leave to sit again. He knew there were hon. members absent who would like to discuss the items, and they were absent on account of the Premier's own statement.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman had now given a good reason why they should adjourn, and under the circumstances he certainly had no desire to go on. There was nothing in the Estimates to occupy much time; but if any hon. member would have a fair ground of complaint if they came on unexpectedly, that was sufficient reason for not going on with them. Before they adjourned, he would say that for the remainder of the session they would probably ask the House to sit till a later hour.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again tomorrow.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that the resolutions of the Committee of Supply be received to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER, in moving the adjournment of the House, said: To-morrow we propose to take the motions of the hon. Minister for Works for the approval of some railways, in order that the Legislative Council, who have in every case to appoint a select committee to inquire into the construction of railway lines, and sit from day to day, may not be unnecessarily delayed. After that we propose to take into consideration the amendments of the Legislative Council in the Crown Lands Bill.

The House adjourned at 11 o'clock.