

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 16 DECEMBER 1884**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Tuesday, 16 December, 1884.*

Question.—Assent to Bills.—Question without Notice.—  
 Officials in Parliament Bill—Third reading.—Formal  
 Motion.—Bundaberg Gas and Coke Company Bill—  
 third reading.—Supply—Loan Estimates.—Crown  
 Lands Bill—message from the Legislative Council.—  
 Adjournment.

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

## QUESTION.

Mr. BUCKLAND asked the Colonial Treasurer—

When it is likely the clam-shell dredge will be available for opening the channel into Wynnum Creek, as promised by the Treasurer in December of last year?

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) replied—

The clam-shell dredge is at present employed in the Coomera River and the department hope on completion of her work there to make her available for opening the channel into Wynnum Creek.

## ASSENT TO BILLS.

The SPEAKER intimated that he had received messages from the Governor notifying His Excellency's assent, on behalf of Her Majesty, to the following Bills:—A Bill to amend the law relating to Jurors and to amend the Jury Act of 1867; a Bill to establish a Board of Pharmacy in Queensland and make better provision for the Registration of Pharmaceutical Chemists and for other purposes; and a Bill to provide for the Drainage of Lands in the Colony of Queensland.

## QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I would like to ask the Minister for Works, if I may, without notice, why there are not sufficient carriages on the morning train from Toowong to Brisbane? Every morning there are crowds of people who have to come in by the 9 o'clock train, who have either to stand upon the platforms or go into the second-class carriages. I do not expect to have a direct answer now from the Minister, but wish to bring the matter under his notice.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles): It is the first time I have heard of a crowd of people who could not get accommodation. If the hon. gentleman will communicate with the Traffic Manager I am sure he will put the matter right. It is the first I have heard of the carriages being overcrowded.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: It is not the business of the hon. member for Port Curtis, or any other member, to communicate with the Traffic Manager; it is the business of the hon. Minister for Works to communicate with him, and keep his department right. The less hon. members interfere with the Traffic Manager the better, whether they are members of the Government or the Opposition.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the Traffic Manager's attention were called to the matter he would have the carriages there at once. I made the suggestion in order to save time.

Mr. SCOTT: This has been going on for a very long time.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman is out of order.

The SPEAKER: There is no question before the House.

Mr. SCOTT: I shall put myself in order, sir, by moving the adjournment of the House. I intended to say only a word or two, and now it

will take two or three times as long to do so. I merely intended to say that this matter came under my personal knowledge months back. There has not been sufficient accommodation in that train between 8 o'clock and 9 o'clock in the morning, and it has been nearly impossible to get a seat in it. The sooner something is done the better. I do not know how the matter could have escaped the notice of the Traffic Manager; but it has been notorious. I move the adjournment of the House.

The PREMIER said: The proper way is to let the Minister for Works know these things, as he cannot be cognisant of everything that takes place in the department. There has never been a word said in the Press, or to the Minister, or the Commissioner, on this subject. If anything is wrong the head of the department should be informed, and then, if the case is not attended to, it is time to make a complaint. How the Minister can know of things he does not see, I cannot say.

Mr. NORTON: The Premier says the proper way to bring a matter of this kind before the department is to let the Minister know. I let the Minister know; I put it before him as a question, and, in doing so, I stated that I did not expect to get a direct answer, I merely did so to draw his attention to it. I know complaints have been made about this matter over and over again. I may remark that I usually come in by that train, which comes from Ipswich, and arrives in Brisbane at about 9 o'clock. About a fortnight ago there were more carriages than there were people; sometimes there were carriages without any people in them at all; but for the last week or two it has been impossible to get a seat. This morning I stood up the whole way in, and yesterday morning I did the same. I am not speaking for myself alone; there were others standing up in the same carriage as myself, and the platform at the end of the carriage was crowded. Not only that, but upon other days when I have not chosen to stand up I have had to sit in a second-class carriage. I thought that if the matter were brought up in this way it would have much more effect than as a complaint to the Traffic Manager. At the same time I quite agree with the Premier that the proper course is to direct the attention of the Minister to it. I think the Minister might have been satisfied to say that he would attend to it, instead of telling me that I had better look after it myself.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: The hon. member has admitted that it has been only during the last eight or ten days that this overcrowding has occurred.

Mr. NORTON: I said it existed a fortnight ago.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am very glad indeed to hear that the train is crowded, and I can promise the hon. member that I shall take care that reasonable accommodation is provided.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I may as well draw the Minister's attention to another fact in connection with the railway traffic. I have frequently seen the Sandgate morning train overcrowded. Many people have had to stand on the platform; I have often done it myself for many weeks past; in fact, for many months past, at different times. If the Minister is going to reform the traffic on the Ipswich line, he might also reform the traffic on the Sandgate Railway, especially on that portion of the line between Brisbane and the Albion. The course pointed out by the Colonial Secretary may be the right one to pursue in these matters, but I remember the time when even if a porter failed in his duty the hon. gentleman would stand up in the House and attack the Minister for Works.

The PREMIER: No.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Yes; regularly.

The PREMIER: No; you cannot find it in *Hansard*.

Question put and negatived.

#### OFFICIALS IN PARLIAMENT BILL—THIRD READING.

On the motion of the PREMIER, this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence by message in the usual form.

#### FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to:—

By Mr. PALMER—

That there be laid upon the table of the House, a Return showing the total cost and expenditure in the construction of the railway line between Ipswich and Toowoomba; particularising the cost per mile from Murphy's Creek to the top of the Main Range.

#### BUNDABERG GAS AND COKE COMPANY BILL—THIRD READING.

On the motion of Mr. BAILEY, this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

#### SUPPLY—LOAN ESTIMATES.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Loan Estimates.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be granted, out of Loan, a sum of £750,000 to defray Immigration expenditure. He had previously pointed out that the expenditure in connection with that service since the 1st July, 1882, had been no less a sum than £550,000, while from the special surplus revenue appropriation of £150,000, the greater portion—namely, £137,000—had been spent, leaving, on the 1st October last, only a sum of £12,000 to the credit of surplus revenue to provide for the continuance of immigration. The greater portion of that expenditure was incurred in 1883, and the expenditure was still going on. It was expected that that sum of £750,000 would provide for immigration for the next five years at least, and it was hoped that the public works which were proposed by the Government would form such an attraction as would induce a large population to the colony without putting the State to actual expense to such an extent as had been the case during the last three or four years.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that on the previous day the hon. Treasurer had delivered his second Financial Statement for the year. Of course there was a large amount of matter in it well worthy of discussion, and in consenting to the motion to go into Committee of Supply he had no intention of allowing that discussion to pass. On the other hand, he thought it would be more convenient to have the discussion in committee, because they could get more information without transgressing the rules of the House. He would like the Treasurer to state the reason for the very apparent want of reference to the position of the Land Bill throughout the whole of his Financial Statement. The hon. gentleman had given no reason why a loan of such magnitude as that proposed should be gone into when the Land Bill, which was to provide the necessary amount for the payment of the increased interest, was still undecided. One would have imagined from the critical position of that Bill, according to that part of the Press which usually supported the Government, that the subject would have been

well worthy of discussion in the House. But there was not the slightest reference to it. If the Government depended on the Land Bill for finding the interest, and also adhered to their previously expressed determination not to pass the Loan Bill before the Land Bill, he would like to know if the Loan Bill was dependent on the Land Bill passing. The Committee ought to have had that information before they went into the Loan Estimates at all. If the Land Bill did not pass, what was the alternative? Would the Government still go on with the Loan Bill? Having in the last Parliament contended that no money should be borrowed until it was clearly seen how the interest was to be paid, and having carried out that principle on work during the present session, he thought it was incumbent on the Ministry to take notice of what was a probable risk—namely, the Land Bill not passing. If that risk became a certainty, what would be the position? Would the loan be withdrawn, or modified, or decreased in amount? What steps did the Government propose to take?

After a pause—

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Premier ought to try to get a Cabinet Council.

The PREMIER: What is the matter?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: It seemed that the Colonial Treasurer could not answer a plain question put to him by the leader of the Opposition, without whispering in consultation with the Premier. He would advise the hon. gentleman to take all his colleagues and hold a Cabinet Council.

The PREMIER: I am prepared to answer any question you put. What is the question you want answered?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The Colonial Treasurer would be able to tell the hon. gentleman what question they wanted answering.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was quite ready to answer the question put by the hon. member for Mulgrave. He thought the hon. gentleman would have gone into a lengthened criticism of the statement he (the Colonial Treasurer) made on the previous day. However, the hon. gentleman wanted to know the position the Government took up with reference to the Loan Estimates in connection with the present position of the Land Bill, and he accused him (the Colonial Treasurer) of not taking into consideration the position of that Bill in the statement he had made. He thought he did refer to the Bill, and to the expectation that the Government had of increasing the revenue by its operation. He did not think he was justified in going into minute details of the operation of the Bill, because he had frequently said that no man at the present time could definitely state what would be the extent and the force of its operation on the finances within the next three or four years. If that were attempted, it would be met by counter-statements—and on both sides they would be conjectural—as to what the financial result would be. The Bill was one which was intended to largely contribute to an increased revenue in the future; and it was doubtless in view of the Bill becoming law that the Loan Estimates had been arranged, because not only were those Estimates larger than any hitherto brought before the House, but the annual interest would be greater, and a larger revenue would be required to assist in paying that interest. They were not yet in a position to say in what condition the Land Bill would finally pass; but in the expectation of its becoming law pretty much in its present form, the Government had no hesitation in submitting those Estimates to the Chamber. The Government had been accused

several times during the session of delaying the consideration of the Estimates, and they had as repeatedly stated in reply that the Estimates would not be considered until substantial progress had been made with the Land Bill in that Chamber. The character of the Land Bill had now been twice affirmed by that Chamber, and they had every reason and right to believe that it would become law substantially in its present shape. Therefore, they were now proceeding with the consideration of the Loan Estimates. He did not at all disguise the fact that the Loan Estimates had been framed on the supposition that the Land Bill would become law, and as there was every probability that that would be the case, he had no hesitation in asking the Chamber to consider those Estimates which the country expected to be passed at the present time.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the Colonial Treasurer had made a very circuitous speech to avoid answering his questions, and in doing so he had given a very strong reason why they should postpone the consideration of those Estimates. The hon. gentleman said they had every right to assume that the Land Bill would pass. Let hon. members remember what the Land Bill was; it was one of the most important links in the chain of the Government policy, and without it their policy was impossible. They had over and over again argued that it was a most improper position for a Government to take up—to borrow money without showing clearly where the extra revenue required to meet the interest on it was to be provided. Now, the position of the Land Bill was such that the Colonial Treasurer had not the slightest right to assume that it would pass. He would go further, and say he believed the Government were certain in their own minds that the Bill would not pass, and that they had already made arrangements as to what they actually intended to do if the Bill did not pass. And yet the Government now asked them to do what was simply a mockery—to vote ten millions of money on the faith of a Bill passing which they believed would not pass. No Government ought to play pranks on the Committee in that extraordinary way, and especially at that time of the session. But, without saying a single word about the Land Bill, he need only read the comments made from the other side when he brought forward his three-million loan in 1879, to show that if they adhered to their own principles they had not the slightest shadow of an excuse for bringing forward the loan at the present time. He believed the country ought to have a loan. He had always advocated the extension of certain of their railways by loan, and he did not believe they ought to be stopped; but he was thoroughly opposed to the proposition to borrow ten millions of money at the present time. It was not justified by the circumstances of the colony, and it was still less justified by the circumstances of Parliament. What was their present position? They had had legislation during the last five months which the Premier had often described as being of a non-contentious character; but it had often been a great deal worse than non-contentious—it had been beneath the dignity of the House to spend its time upon. The early part of the session was to a great extent wasted in small measures, and now they asked Parliament to vote them ten millions of money at a time when it was utterly impossible for the House to give a fair and unbiassed opinion upon the proposal. A large number of members had left town. The present was the first time for a long while that they had seen what might be called even a moderately small House, while last night it was almost a display

of empty benches. It would not be possible to get a much better House together even if they postponed the consideration of the Estimates for another week, because many of the country members had left, and others had made arrangements to start very soon. The consequence was that they were obliged either to swallow the Estimates as they were or prevent any business being done at all. He had no intention to prevent business being done, but at the same time he had no intention that that loan should pass without the country understanding the principles on which it had been brought forward. He would read an extract from a speech delivered by the present Premier when he (Sir T. McIlwraith) introduced his three-million loan in 1879:—

"We have spent already much time during the session and have made no real progress; but that want of progress is to be charged to the Government themselves, because, while they have been frittering away our time on a variety of matters of less importance, they have declined until last week to let us know what their real policy of Public Works was. We on this side of the House have been waiting and asking for information, from the beginning of the session, to hear what the policy was, or to have its principles disclosed. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government had a place of repentance, or, at least, a *locus penitentiae*—it does not necessarily follow that that means a place of repentance—when he made his statement on introducing the Loan Estimates; but having heard it, I ask, do we really know their intentions? I must say that I still have some lingering suspicion that they may turn round and say they did not mean this or that."

On that occasion he (Sir T. McIlwraith) had actually laid the Loan Estimates on the table two months before the session closed, and commenced the debate by moving them six weeks before it came to a conclusion. On the present occasion the Premier had already intimated that the session must close next week, and that of next week only two days were available. During that short period they were asked to vote ten millions of money in addition to all the other work that was before them. Considering the present juncture it was interesting to note the hon. gentleman's views as to the position of affairs at that time. The Premier said, in the course of the same debate:—

"At the present time we know that we are worse off than during the previous history of the colony for many years. Our revenue, instead of receiving a yearly addition to it, is, if not falling off, at any rate stationary."

He hoped the Colonial Treasurer was listening.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I am listening. The revenue is increasing now.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman seemed to expect that the usual spurt at Christmas was going to last for ever. The Premier went on to say:—

"Our population is not increasing as it was wont to do; on the contrary, the action of the Government has tended rather to decrease than to increase population. Our products are not increasing as they have done, and as they ought to; and we find ourselves, therefore, in difficult circumstances—not peculiar to Queensland, I must say, but shared in by nearly the whole of the civilised world at this time. That fact, however, is a most important element in the consideration of the affairs of the colony, and no Government has any right to bring down a proposition involving a large expenditure of public money without taking that fact into their serious consideration. I have no doubt the Treasurer will tell us he has considered it, but I maintain that he has not given due weight to this circumstance; and, though I give him every credit for a knowledge of the world, I still say he has not given proper weight to them. Therefore the proposals he makes to the House under existing circumstances are unsatisfactory. I am a believer in party government. I believe that general rules and principles prove the best in the long run for conducting public business, just as in the private affairs of men; but if ever there was an occasion when one's faith in the principles of party government could be shaken it is the present. If hon. members on that side

were free to express their opinions upon the policy now submitted, without endangering the position of the Government, that policy would be condemned by an overwhelming majority. If I am defeated on this motion, it will be because a sufficient number of the House prefer to keep the present occupants of the Treasury benches in their places rather than condemn a policy which in their hearts they did not approve of. We must, however, take things as we find them, and I would say that it is not with the desire of turning the present Government out of office that I move this motion. I wish that the matter could be disposed of on its merits entirely irrespective of the interests of the occupants of the Treasury benches. I hope that a higher sentiment will prevail with hon. members than the interests of Government or of party. The present time is not one in which anyone need be eager to have the responsibility of conducting the affairs of the colony. I believe from my heart hon. members on the other side think so, too; but, from the fact that the circumstances of the colony are different now to what they were in prosperous times, it requires more skill and wisdom to pilot it through its troubles. That fact ought only to give rise to more caution and more care, and to call for the exercise of those higher qualities of statesmanship which we had hoped hon. members sitting on the Treasury benches possess, and which they ought to have been able to show now."

Just let them consider that speech as being part of his (Sir T. McIlwraith's) at the present time, and just let hon. members refer to the amount of statesmanship shown by the Minister for Works during the present session. Then Mr. Griffith went on:—

"But there is one great difference—that the late Government never made it their policy simply to borrow money. The proposition that I shall endeavour to establish is, that the only policy disclosed by the Government up to the present time is to borrow money simply. If you ask the question, 'What will you do with it?' the answer is, 'That is immaterial; we will borrow the money.' If you ask, 'In which direction will you take the lines?' the answer is, 'We will settle that afterwards; let us have the money.' If we ask, 'Upon what principle will you construct these branch lines?' the answer is, 'We do not know; there is at present no principle applicable, but we will find that out afterwards—only let us have the money.' I will go through this policy, and show that there is nothing more in it, from beginning to end, but to borrow money; and I need not remind hon. members that that is a most unsatisfactory state of things. It is only a fragment of a policy, and it does not require any great business capacity or statesmanship to borrow money, if anyone will lend it to you; on the other hand, it is evidence of statesmanship to borrow money, spend it upon reproductive works, and establish a sound system upon which to pay the interest without ruining everybody by the process."

Hon. members must consider that the Treasurer was now slavishly following his (Sir T. McIlwraith's) Estimates, even to the extent of giving the general direction of the railways out west.

"At the present time I am contented to confine myself to condemning the proposals of the Government. In considering the separate items of the Loan Estimates it must be borne in mind that this loan of three millions is intended to carry us over three years. All will agree that a million a year is quite enough to borrow, and it cannot be expected that anything beyond that will be added during the next three years. The first item is immigration, for which service the Government propose to borrow £100,000, which, with the addition of £90,000 or £90,000 which the Treasurer says he has in hand, means a serious diminution in immigration. With a present debt of over ten millions, or about £50 a head on a population of 200,000, we cannot afford to increase that debt to the enormous extent proposed unless we have some proposition which will have the effect of increasing the population so as to divide the burden among a greater number of people. It is absolutely suicidal, without making provision to increase the population, to propose to increase the public debt to such an enormous extent."

That, hon. members must remember, was a speech of Mr. Griffith's in 1878.

The PREMIER: And a good speech too.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman reminded them of their debt per head at that time, but he would like to know what it would be soon with the enormous cost of

immigration, and the equally large number of departures every week from the colony.

"The Treasurer does not say he proposes to rely upon additional traffic on the line—he says he relies upon additional land revenue; but unless some change is made in the law no additional revenue will be derived from that source. Here is, then, a proposition simply to borrow money for an unknown, unascertained purpose, without any proposition as to raising revenue to pay any part of the interest. I expect by-and-by the Treasurer will say he does not propose to borrow all at once."

He would draw the Treasurer's attention to the fact once again, that Mr. Griffith was speaking then. The hon. gentleman next referred to some rather rosy prospects that he (Sir T. McIlwraith) drew of the probable increase of trade, and he said—

"What additional revenue will there be from the land through the construction of that line? Will there be more land taken up? We have been told that runs there were not stocked for want of water, and that there are droughts for two or three years at a time—will that be remedied?"

"The PREMIER: Yes.

"Mr. GRIFFITH: The railway cannot bring rain. Possibly the drought might be remedied, not by the railway, but by the money borrowed. It is not the construction of the railway but the money authorised to be borrowed that is looked to, to remedy the drought. The mere construction of that line, which we know will not pay its working expenses, will not of itself, without some additional proposition accompanying it, increase the land revenue any more than the extension of the railway in the southern district."

Hon. members must remember that the railway the hon. gentleman was condemning was exactly the same as that proposed to be extended, and a sum of £360,000 was down on the Estimates for the purpose. Mr. Griffith went on:—

"Then we have the Northern Railway—where is that going to? A proposition to construct a railway to the moon would not be much more absurd. They tell us one terminus, but not the other. The known one is to be at Charters Towers, but we know of no surveys beyond there. The Government, in fact, propose to borrow money for 130 miles of railway before they have begun to survey the route. What is there to show that that extension will be immediately beneficial to the land revenue of the colony? It seems almost nonsense to ask such questions. It seems impossible that any set of men affecting to govern a country can make such a wild proposition—to borrow money about the mode of expenditure of which they know nothing. The only result would be that the country will be permanently saddled with the payment of interest for many years before there could be any possible return. So much for the trunk lines of railway, the construction of which I should cordially approve of if the proposal to construct were accompanied, as such a proposal always ought to be, with a proposition to meet the interest on the cost of construction."

Hon. members would see on the map hanging in the Chamber the blue line indicating the lines that the late Government constructed; and the red lines indicating the extensions would be seen to go exactly in a straight line out west. The late Government said exactly where their lines were going, and were prepared to mark the railways definitely from town to town; but the Government had now actually drawn a straight line a few miles due west, knowing nothing, he believed, of where the railways were going. The hon. member then went on, on page 1208 of *Hansard*:—

"Has there ever been an instance known in this colony of Parliament authorising the borrowing of money for railways before sanctioning the lines to be constructed? Has Parliament ever authorised the borrowing of half-a-million without first knowing where the lines were to go? The usual practice was to get the lines authorised, and then to ask for the money: but this is to be exactly reversed, and the House is to be asked to borrow the money without sanctioning the works, and with the knowledge that the Government will not be in a position to ask the House to authorise them for two years."

Why, there was that line from Warwick to St. George, in a civilised district, where any surveyor

might have made a good survey, and yet there it was drawn on the map for 200 miles in a straight line. He would next read some extracts from the speech of Mr. Dickson, now Colonial Treasurer. That hon. member said:—

"The hon. gentleman's remarks chiefly go to show that he considers there exists a necessity for borrowing money at the present time for the purpose of keeping up the credit of the colony—or, in other words, to provide against the stoppage of public works through want of loan funds. He objects, however, to borrow such sums as may be conveniently obtained from time to time, but prefers to go in for what he terms a comprehensive loan policy, covering a sufficient amount for all purposes during the ensuing three years. But he shows no necessity for adopting this course. He says he is only following the example set by previous Treasurers, who asked, from time to time, for such money as was required; whereas he intends to ask in advance for the same amount of money as would be required by other Treasurers at annual periods. I cannot observe that he has advanced a single argument to show that any saving or benefit to the colony will result from borrowing so large an amount of public money in one estimate. He added, subsequently, that he did not intend to float the whole of the loan at one time; but, if the Loan Bill is passed, he will be able to act as he likes, and no restrictions can be imposed upon him."

That was all about his three-million loan. The hon. the Treasurer would, he hoped, listen to it, because he was going to say something about it.

"He knows it was an empty vaunt to tell us that we could impose restrictions upon him, because, if the Loan Bill is once passed, he can sell the debentures as he pleases, and no enactment could prevent him from doing so. Nor should I recommend the House to impose any such restriction, inasmuch as the Executive has a right to accept the full responsibilities of their action, and accept the responsibilities of selling the loan at once, by deferred instalment or such other manner as they may consider conducive to the interests of the colony. The Colonial Treasurer has no right to tell the Opposition that they may relieve him of his responsibilities by preventing him from selling the loan in any larger portion than the Opposition consider best. He abdicates his proper functions if he asks either the House or the Opposition to prevent him from having that full control which the Administration ought to possess so as to deal with the funds of the colony in such manner as they consider most beneficial."

That was the present Treasurer of the colony, who was now trying to get the full and uncontrolled expenditure of £10,000,000.

"Those are the two main questions, and the Treasurer need not imagine he is answering this objection when he says that he will be receiving 3½ per cent. interest from railways. He may receive that return when they are constructed; but the present loan is to extend over three years, and the several lines proposed, even if sanctioned, will not be completed within that time. Where is the interest, meanwhile, to be found to pay for the money not employed or being employed in the construction of these lines? That is the whole gist, or a very important part, of the present contention."

"At this stage I enter my protest against this system of borrowing money. I say that this system must have a termination sooner or later. If we are simply to go on borrowing money for the purpose of keeping up our loan balances, depend upon it it will soon have a disastrous conclusion. We are endeavouring to extend our credit far beyond the gradual increase of our capital, and there can be but one termination to such a disastrous procedure."

"I do not deprecate borrowing, but we ought to take warning by our present position to borrow only for reproductive works. That should certainly be the keynote of our further loan proposals. In the past we have been borrowing, if not too largely, certainly not wisely, and we ought to be warned by the errors of the past; and the Treasurer of the day, to whichever party he belongs, should take care that the country is only committed to loan obligations which will be re-invested in works of a sufficiently reproductive character to provide interest upon such increasing obligations."

"As a member of this House I protest against the new system the Treasurer seeks to introduce, and which I may term 'Victorianising' our institutions—that, because the Victorian Legislature has passed a loan for seven millions without inquiry—"

"AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: New South Wales.

"MR. DICKSON: It does not matter.

"THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: It is somewhere.

"MR. DICKSON: It is something like the Government railways, uncertain and vague. I say that the fact of a sister colony having passed a loan without inquiring minutely into details is no argument that the same thing should be done here. The House has a right to scrutinise such a large loan proposal as this, and I consider it an insult to the intelligence of hon. members that they should be asked to vote something like a million and a quarter for the construction of railways which the Government themselves have not the slightest knowledge of. They have no surveys in their possession; they know nothing of the character of the country these lines must traverse or to what point of the compass they intend to go. I say, under these circumstances, the proposal is a most monstrous one; and I am sure that even hon. members who may ardently desire to see the construction of these main trunk lines—and I class myself amongst them, if it be done upon a safe basis—will agree with me that no Government has a right to solicit the confidence of hon. members to the extent that they are to be given the command of three millions of money to construct railways to lead anywhere and nowhere. If the Government had come down and said they intended making these lines to certain points we might respect them for having carefully considered the matter and obtained due information; but I say that such a proposition as this surpasses all the bounds of decency and propriety in constitutional parliamentary government."

The Ministers now proposed to carry the lines due west from the authorised termini without the slightest reference to any settlement in the interior of the colony.

"I think the vagueness of the loan proposals reflect no credit on the Government, and will have a very injurious effect upon our borrowing powers. We have been accustomed, in transmitting loans to England, to accompany them with statistics showing the position of the colony, the nature of the works embraced in such Loan Estimates, and, in short, giving every information to the buyers of our debentures at home; but that information it will be out of the power of the Treasurer to convey, because he is not in possession of it, and his Loan Bill will be received as not having received that careful forethought and attention which it ought to receive unless accompanied by that information."

No doubt the Minister for Works was just as anxious as the Treasurer to know what he said on that occasion; but he would not take up the time of the Committee by reading that hon. member's speech. Mr. Griffith, on that occasion, claimed and got the right of reply, and he wound up his speech thus:—

"If ever there was a matter vitally concerning the prospects of a young colony it is a proposal of this kind, which is a mere leap in the dark—a speculation like gambling—if it is successful it will bring us out all right, and if unsuccessful it will lead us into financial troubles which may take more than a generation to get rid of."

"I appeal to the House, and, if it is against me, to the country, for a verdict in this matter. I complain, further, that they have proposed no means of providing for the payment of the interest on the proposed loan. Some sort of answer has been attempted to be made to that, but to the other charges none whatever. The Colonial Treasurer tells us a large loan is necessary—for what?—to keep the workmen now employed by the Government still going. To borrow money for such a policy is absolutely ruinous, and the sooner we abandon it the better. But I do not believe the money is wanted for any such purpose, for if it were so not more than £48,000 of the whole amount could be applied to it. All the rest of the money could not be employed until Parliament has met next year and approved of the plans—until the land has been resumed and the contracts let, which cannot be until the end of next year at the earliest. Not a farthing of the rest could be employed for the purpose suggested, and must, if borrowed, lie idle in the banks."

"Under these circumstances, no sane man having any regard for the interest of the country can propose to borrow these large sums of money without making also a proposition as to how the interest is to be paid meanwhile to prevent us from getting into inextricable financial difficulties. We know, and the Government know, although they have not the courage to make the propo-

sition, that someone will have to make it. They know the money to pay the interest will have to be found, but they put off the evil day. One hon. member told us to-night that when we come into power we can do it; and no doubt that expresses the views of the Government. They say—'Give us the money and let others pay for it; we shall have the money and certain advantages appertaining to it.' I do not mean to say advantages for themselves, but for those parts of the country they more particularly represent. I call that rank cowardice. It is trusting to the future, like a reckless spendthrift or gambler. When we were in office we proposed certain means of paying the interest, and if they were insufficient the mistake was an honest one; and that principle of the railway reserves will yet have to be applied to pay the interest on the construction of these railways. No one knows that better than the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government. The Minister for Works tells us the lines will be immediately reproductive, but the Premier proposes to pay interest on them out of land sales. Where would the price come from in the present state of the colony? We shall be repeating the process going on in New South Wales—the money borrowed will go into the banks. We shall wait £100,000 a year more to keep going. To get that extra £100,000 land will be placed in the market. The squatters will buy the land and pay for it by overdrafts at the banks made out of this very money. In this way a portion of this money will be credited to Revenue as well as to Loan. As well as standing in the banks to the credit of the Government Loan Account, it will stand there to the Government Revenue Account. The land will be sold nominally for cash, but really on credit to the banks. The money will be doing double duty—apparently a large sum will be in the banks to the credit of the Government when there will be really none at all. Then, he says, a great advantage will be gained by borrowing one loan in three instalments. The position taken up by the Opposition to borrow about one million at a time as wanted is objected to, but what conceivable advantage can there be in going into the money-market and saying, 'We are going to borrow three millions, but only want one million this year?' What shall we gain by authorising a loan of three millions except that the Government will gain the advantage of being able to borrow the whole amount at once? And seeing the way loans are floated in London, there may be a syndicate to float the whole loan at once. If so, the bulk of the money will remain idle, and we shall pay interest on it. If we are to borrow three millions, what can we gain by pledging ourselves for three years to borrow no more during that period? Is there anything rational in this? The real facts are, that the amounts put down are admittedly inadequate for the work they have to do."

Those were extracts from the speeches of the present Treasurer and the Colonial Secretary, made when they were in opposition to the proposal he brought forward to borrow three millions, and at a time when the position of the country was not, in some respects, unlike its present position. That was—they were suffering from the effects of a severe drought, and expectations were rather gloomy in regard to the different industries of the colony. At that time they deprecated almost all the loans proposed with the exception of the few branch railways to meet the wants of the populous districts, and in districts represented by themselves. But they opposed in the most violent way, and by obstruction which lasted for some considerable time, his proposal to extend the main trunk lines of railway. Now, they not only, in the proposals which they had laid before them, made those extensions greater, but they added another main line of railway to the West, which was not thought of in those days. Anyone, in considering the extract he had read, would see how unjustifiably the Government had changed their position. If they were true at that time in the criticisms which they made on the policy of the Government of that day, surely they could not be right in now adopting actually that policy, and carrying it to an extreme that almost threatened the responsibility of Parliament to their constituents altogether! Everything which the Premier and the Colonial Treasurer said at that time against the three-million loan could easily be said—and said with ten times more justification—against the ten-million loan at the present time. He was not

going to take up that course, nor was he going to adopt the tactics of the Premier on that occasion—because he believed a loan was necessary—but he intended to show that, if the Committee passed the loan proposed at the present time, they were binding themselves hand-and-foot to the Government, who would do with them what they chose for the term of Parliament. The Colonial Treasurer had told them that most probably the amount of money proposed to be borrowed, £9,980,000—call it ten millions—would be spread over a period of from three to five years. But at the same time, in another part of his speech, where he was advocating that they would not require to provide interest for five years, it was clear that the hon. member would not sell the loan for five years, for if he did they would require to pay interest the whole of that time; so that the Treasurer had definitely made up his mind not to sell a large portion of the loan for five years.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that he did not state they would not pay interest for five years. He had said that the amount of interest distributed over that period would not appreciably increase the pressure for payment of annual interest.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that was not a contradiction of what he had stated. He would read the hon. member's own words. He said:—

"It may therefore be freely admitted that the rapid progress made by the country in the past will be largely augmented and stimulated by the present Loan policy, and as, with the encouragement of immigration and land settlement, population and production must largely and rapidly increase, the augmented charge for interest distributed over four or five years hence will, I am assured, be provided without any appreciable pressure."

That was, that the Treasurer anticipated that a time would elapse up to five years, when they did not require to pay interest on some considerable portion of the loan. That was saying, in other words, that the loan would not be sold for five years. What then was the meaning of the Treasurer's contradiction of his argument?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he had understood the hon. member to say that they did not require to sell the whole or greater portion of the loan for five years.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman knew that a certain portion of the loan would not be sold. The money was to be gradually borrowed in London and spent up to that time, but the time would not come before five years when the amount would actually be required for the construction of those works. If that was the case, what right had they as a Parliament to say what works they would construct and what money they would borrow five years hence? Surely it was enough to construct the works and borrow the money which they had been sent by their constituents to do, and not to provide for works and borrow money to make those works five years after the present time. At that time the Colonial Treasurer might not be there; the men in Parliament might be very different men from those now sitting there; and why should they assume a position which would make those men virtually abdicate their functions before they had come to be members of Parliament? They would be rendered helpless if the ten-million loan were passed now. Hon. members would see how those future members would be deprived of their liberty, and actually of their rights as representatives of their constituencies, by handing over the responsibility for borrowing the money and constructing the works to the Ministry of the present day. He had shown that they could not spend the money in the time;

or rather he assumed it from the assertions made by the Treasurer, and for the additional reason, that the Treasurer had said that they would not borrow a great portion of the money for five years. They would, therefore, have over £10,000,000, and a roving commission to do what they liked with it. They knew perfectly well they could not spend more than half of it; at all events, by the Treasurer's own showing, they could not spend it. As soon as the Government were placed in that position, who would say what the Government would spend? The Ministers themselves. It was passed out of the hands of Parliament, and that responsibility was given to Ministers which Parliament should never allow to go out of its own hands. What a dangerous power it gave the Ministry! They would see at once that it gave them unlimited power, subject always to the private log-rolling that might go on outside themselves, but subject to no control whatever by Parliament. That power had been claimed by the Treasurer in the speech he had just read—to spend that money as they chose; because, by passing the money, they virtually handed over to the Government the power to expend it, and afterwards, according to the hon. gentleman, the Government should not be dictated to by Parliament. As a matter of fact, they would not be dictated to; and then those members who were pressed by their constituents to support the Government, that they might get a railway through their district, would find after all that they had not got that railway. They would find they had got back to the old days when those tricks were as common as they were likely to become now. The Government used not to have the slightest hesitation in putting money on the Estimates for a thing, and then it was allowed to lapse until great indignation was caused in the colony, and they had local government. That was one of the evils of the old style of Government—that they had not the slightest hesitation in putting an amount of money upon the Estimates—but afterwards exercised their discretion as to whether they should spend it at all. Did they fancy for one moment that, during their term of office, they would not have to ask for another Loan Bill; did not they know that the same harpies, against whom the Minister for Works had had to contend for the last three months, and whom he growled at, and who growled back effectively, would be dissatisfied and would still come forward, and there would be the same hungry mouths to feed? Had they not had a foretaste of that already? Those men who were promised a survey this year would have a sum of money placed upon the Loan Estimates next year; and what would be the consequence? They would have Loan Estimates next year, and the next year again, the same as they had had every year before. So long as the present Ministry were in, he would guarantee that that would be the case, and he guaranteed that if ever he got into office he would not be bound down very strongly by what they had done. He would regard very closely the way in which the Government had forced those Estimates through the Committee. He would remember that it was not an expression of opinion of the Parliament at all. He would recollect that if it were an expression of opinion at all, it was one that ought never to have been asked, because they were asked to give an expression of opinion upon matters entirely beyond their own control. The present Government would have additional Loan Estimates, and if he got into power he would have Loan Estimates too. In what position was the Government? If the loan were carried, did they think that it would exhaust all the works in the colony; did they think that, having gratified a few of their loudest-mouthed supporters, they were actually supplying all the



wants of the colony with that ten-million loan? Did they not know that they would only have raised a feeling abroad that if people only howled long enough they would get something? Was it not perfectly sure that the Government would have another Loan Bill before long? And as he had said before, if any other Government came in, they were sure to have one. If the present loan were carried, instead of having a Parliament to decide upon the money to be borrowed, and the works to be carried out in the colony, they would have a Ministry who had the choice of spending £2 for every £1. They could borrow £10,000,000 or £15,000,000, and choose the amount of work they intended going on with, and from what portion of that £10,000,000 or £15,000,000 they would take the money. But they did not have Ministers for the purpose of dictating to Parliament what work should be gone on with; but in the present case they would leave to the Ministry of the day the power to say what they ought to have the courage to say themselves. It showed a great want of courage on the part of members of Parliament, and primarily upon the part of the Ministry, for not limiting the amount of loan. Let them assume that the Ministry would remain in office for another three years; they had no right to go beyond what would be necessary for their own term. By that time constituencies would be represented by other members, perhaps with opinions diametrically opposite. But the Government had adopted that policy not because it was a bold policy—because it was opposed to everything they had done in the House before—and not because it was a statesmanlike policy; but because their friends had come to them for railways, and they would have their £10,000,000 to enable them to make them. After the modest way in which the Supplementary Estimates were got through last night, he did not think the colony would have the money very long.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They were your Supplementary Estimates.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he chose them as the best sample of the way in which they were going on. They got on better with them than with the Estimates-in-Chief; he would refer to them if the hon. gentleman wished. The Parliament would, by passing the Loan Estimates, be actually handing the power over to the Ministry of the day to choose what loans should be spent, and what were not to be spent. He would protest against it so long as he held a seat in that Committee. The hon. gentleman in his speech last night referred to the bad prospects of the colony, but he did not refer to the mining industry or to the sugar industry. He pointed out that the pastoral industry had suffered great depression and was in a bad state now. He also said something about the general agricultural industry of the colony, and said that from that depression a feeling of insecurity had arisen, and it was the duty of a patriotic Government to come forward and give those men confidence by borrowing that large amount of money. But that was a policy that ought only to be allowed, or even contemplated, while they could foresee a probability at least of the Treasury being always full. But it was a dangerous policy to contemplate for a moment, unduly increasing the large balance which they had had for a great many years up to the present time. He did not know what the balance of the consolidated revenue was just now; but he thought it was a great deal more than it would be in another twelve months. But leaving out the savings bank balances, and taking nothing but the loan balances, they had, he guessed, somewhere about two and a-half millions of money at the present time. That, of course, would be rapidly spent. Surely the

hon. gentleman did not contemplate increasing that balance, yet he seemed to look forward to the time, and had depicted it in his speech when they would have a greater amount than that. The hon. gentleman said the reason why they should borrow that large amount of money was that they ought to be prepared to lend money through the financial institutions to the small pastoral lessees who were to take the place of those whose runs were to be taken from them by the Government. Was that a statesmanlike view? Was it a creditable view to take of a matter of that kind? And did not the Government propose to expend the loan on railways and other public works? The hon. gentleman could not pay away the money and have it at the same time. If he paid it away for railways, how could he have it in the banks and lend it to the small pastoral lessees, unless he intended having much larger balances than the Government had at the present time? He (Sir T. McIlwraith) hoped to have an explanation from the Colonial Treasurer on that point. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) did not wish to see the Government having larger amounts in the banks. If they increased those balances it would be a bad thing for the colony, because if the money were lent to small pastoral lessees it would not be got back in three years; he did not believe it could be got back under ten years. To hold out hopes of the sort he had referred to was a proposition unworthy the Colonial Treasurer. But what effect would it have? It would have only one tendency, and that was to damage the credit of the colony at home. If they proposed to borrow money simply to lend it again, they would be looked upon with the greatest suspicion. There was no doubt that it was their duty as long as they had balances in the bank to make the best possible use of them; but to deliberately increase those balances for the purpose of lending money was another thing altogether, and was a matter which he hoped the Colonial Treasurer would reconsider. All the rest of the speech delivered by the hon. gentleman was devoted to a laudation of the present position of the colony. It was, in fact, a speech, a great portion of which might be used, and was possibly intended to be used, in a prospectus of a £5,000,000 or a £10,000,000 London loan. He thought the hon. gentleman in making his statement intended it to have a wider effect than simply to induce the House to vote the money asked for by the Government. When the hon. gentleman made a speech of that kind, and quoted from the statistics of the colony, he ought to represent the position of the country fairly; he ought not in any way to exaggerate; he ought to state the facts exactly as they existed. When he entered into statistics he should be especially careful, and should be perfectly satisfied that his statements were correct. The Government had so much clerical assistance at their command that there was no excuse for a Minister making a mistake in figures. The hon. gentleman deliberately advised investors at home that the railways of the colony were paying  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. That was misrepresenting the facts, because the Colonial Treasurer knew perfectly well that if the capital account of the railways was made up it would be seen that they were a long way behind paying 1½ per cent. It was an easy thing while the capital account was not closed, and while it was a very difficult matter to say what expenditure ought to be charged to the annual expenses and what to the capital account, for the Engineer-in-Chief—to whom was entrusted the duty of making the calculation—to make a calculation by which it would appear that the railways were paying  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. That might appear to be the profit on their lines, but he (Sir T. McIlwraith) said it

was not. If the Colonial Treasurer had made a calculation in the same way as he (Sir T. McIlwraith) did on a previous occasion in reference to the Southern and Western line, it would be seen that they were not making anything like  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The hon. gentleman ought to have based his figures on the principle adopted in that case, and not have taken them from the Commissioner. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) was not aware, of course, whether the hon. gentleman had got them from the Commissioner, but he assumed that he did, because the Commissioner always tried to make the profits appear more than they really were. That was a piece of officialism for which perhaps they could scarcely blame the Commissioner. But when the Colonial Treasurer made a statement to the House he ought to go a little further, and put the true state of the case before investors at home. The hon. gentleman did not allude in his remarks to a fact which he had often referred to before, namely, the extraordinary extent to which the colony had borrowed up to the present time. Queensland had already borrowed more than any other Australasian colony with the exception of New Zealand. They were far ahead of Victoria with its larger population and its immense resources; they were ahead of New South Wales with all its immense property and income; in fact, as he had said, they were ahead of all the colonies except New Zealand; and their loan liabilities would soon exceed those of that colony. The Colonial Treasurer, in the speech from which he (Sir T. McIlwraith) had read quotations to the Committee, stood aghast at the idea of the debt of the colony being increased to £50 per head when he (Sir T. McIlwraith) submitted a three-million loan to the House. But the ten-million loan of the present Government would increase the debt to over £90 per head, an amount that had never yet been reached by any colony or country in the world. That fact would, of course, be considered by the money-lenders at home. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) wished to see the case fairly stated, as he would deplore the possibility of the loan not being floated, because such a result would be very disastrous to the colony. He would be very sorry to see any steps taken such as would alarm money-lenders at home and make them inquire further as to the resources of the colony than they had done hitherto. He would not like to see anything done that would not induce them to lend money to the colony more freely than they had done on previous occasions. As a matter of fact, they had not lent so very freely to the colony, as the Colonial Treasurer asserted in his speech. The hon. gentleman said they had lent very freely for a long time. That was not a fact. The first loan which was freely subscribed was a loan floated during the term of office of the late Government, and the next was the loan recently put on the market by the present Government. All other loans were subscribed in a most niggardly way. As a matter of fact, if the late Government had not made good financial arrangements to prevent the last loan they floated being a failure, it would have been a perfect failure, because the public did not subscribe 25 per cent. of the amount required. What did the hon. gentleman mean then, by saying in the face of a thing of that sort, that the capitalists at home had freely lent their money to the colony? That circumstance did not show that they gave the loans freely. The hon. gentleman had quoted from Mr. Westgarth's circular, to show that there were really good times coming for the colony, and that they would be able to float their loans easily and successfully; and said the reason was that the attempt made by the Chancellor of the

Exchequer to convert the 3 per cent. consols into  $2\frac{1}{2}$  and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. had resulted in a perfect failure. That was not a reason why they should get their loan at less. The reason why the hon. gentleman got his loan so well floated was the fact that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had threatened that he would lower the 3 per cents. to  $2\frac{1}{2}$ . The holders of 3 per cents. were people whose incomes were limited—who had perhaps £500 or £5,000—but who were accustomed to live up to every penny of their income. Consequently, as a reduction from 3 per cent. to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  would be one-sixth taken away from their incomes, they sold their 3 per cents. and went in for Colonial Government securities. That was the reason why the loan was received so favourably. But the very fact that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had met with a failure would make people keep their 3 per cents. The Treasurer did not seem to have taken that into consideration. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) was not going into details of the Estimates at present; he was only going to refer in general terms to the Treasurer's policy. Whilst he should regret if there was any failure in the loan, he thought the Treasurer had taken the best means to make it a failure in the English market. The whole of the money borrowed at present was £16,000,000. The hon. gentleman now asked for £10,000,000 more, and asked in such a way as to excite the attention of the people at home. He had brought it forward at the tail-end of the session, when it was perfectly impossible that it could be opposed by the Opposition, because most of the members had returned to their homes. It was deliberately postponed—even the production of the Estimates was postponed—until it was impossible that it could receive that criticism from the Opposition which it merited. As to the works themselves, he did not think they would commend themselves very much to the English public. The railways would stand much in the same category as they stood before; but there were features in them that would tell very badly. He did not see the slightest reason why, with a line to Gowrie away round by Toowoomba and on to Warwick, there should be another line to twist and turn over that one. He did not see why the line *via* Gowrie should not be made to do service for a good number of years, and why that place in the Speaker's constituency could not, with a railway nearly three miles off, go on for the present without any assistance from the Government. Why also should they spend £750,000 to get the trade in the West—that was, on the border of New South Wales—when a line could be made for one-fifth the money from the Southern and Western Railway, which would more than take all the traffic, and be made in about one-fourth the time? Those facts would be known by those at home who studied the railways of the colony. The colony had gone into a great deal more expense than was necessary in adopting the best means of increasing the producing power; and had the House been in full session, which it was not, and his followers been behind him, he would with the greatest pleasure have proposed a vote of want of confidence in the Government on account of the way in which that loan had been brought forward; but it was perfectly useless taking a course of that sort now. It would be abortive, simply because members were not present. He had done what he considered was his duty in warning those members who considered that they had done fair justice to their constituents. They would find that they had voted a large amount of money, while at the same time it was left to the Government to say whether it should be spent or not. Parliament was thrown out of consideration on that point as soon as the Estimates were passed; it was then left to the discretion of the Government how the

money was to be spent. In that way hon. members were abrogating their functions, but he for one would not be a party to such a proceeding.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he had listened to the long and able speech of the hon. member, and he was glad to find that he did not intend to move a vote of want of confidence in connection with the Loan Estimates. He felt sure, if he did so, the hon. member would place his own supporters in a very awkward position, and therefore he thought the course the hon. member proposed to take a prudent one for him. He (the Colonial Treasurer) looked round the Chamber and he saw a large number of members on the other side who, if they expressed their opinions, would approve of the distribution of the loan quite as heartily as hon. members on the Government side. The wants of the colony had been more fairly met in those Loan Estimates than in many previous Estimates that had come before that House, and he was sure that the country generally recognised that it made provision for a large number of public works to meet the requirements of the people, irrespective of any of that political pressure to which the hon. gentleman had referred. He thought, therefore, that even if the session was at its height, and the hon. gentleman's supporters were in stronger numbers, he would not meet with that encouragement that he appeared to think he would; in fact, he was deluding himself with regard to the support that he would receive. The hon. gentleman had twitted the Premier and himself (the Colonial Treasurer) about certain remarks they made in depreciation of the three-million loan in 1879; but they ought not to forget the circumstances under which the colony laboured at the time. He contended that those circumstances were not at all as encouraging in the way of borrowing money as they were at present. The best proof of that was shown by the sales of the loan in 1878-9 as contrasted with the loan sales in the present year. In 1878 the loan only produced in the London market an average of £88 5s. 2d. per cent., and the large loan which the hon. gentleman floated in 1879 only produced £93 1s. per cent., and that was considered a marked success; but still it must be borne in mind that there was a large sum for heavy depreciation upon loan moneys which were sold under such circumstances. If they looked at the amount of their last loan sales of over £5,000,000, they would find that that loan brought a price closely approaching par; and hon. members would see from the present Loan Estimates that the Government only asked an amount of £35,000 to cover depreciation of the last loan. Consequently they were selling their loans just now under much more favourable circumstances—at much less cost to the colony—and it was not too much to expect that the loan now proposed would meet with an equally favourable and advantageous reception. That of itself was a consideration not to be overlooked, and was one feature which justified him in urging the desirability of taking advantage of the London market at the present time to a reasonable extent, because the terms of selling were so very much more favourable than in 1878 and 1879. That answered the hon. gentleman's argument that there was no benefit from borrowing so much money at one time. He did not think he had said anything to lead the hon. gentleman to infer that the Government had decided as to the exact time for placing the loan, but he deprecated the course taken by the late Administration in arranging that no further portion of a loan should be placed on the market for a period of twelve months. That was a power which the Executive had a full right to keep in their own hands and to exercise

as they deemed best for the interests of the colony. On another point the hon. gentleman had evidently misunderstood him. What he (the Colonial Treasurer) intended to say in his speech of yesterday was that the whole of the loan would not be expended in construction within a period of from three to five years, and that up to that time the financial institutions with which the money would be entrusted would be paying them interest upon it; so that there would be no actual charge on the revenue until that money had been expended for the purpose of construction. As to the placing of the loan everything would depend upon the reception it was likely to meet with, and care would be taken that favourable times were chosen for operating in the London market. The hon. gentleman put their loan application before the Committee not altogether in a fair way. The hon. gentleman seemed to wish to create in the minds of hon. members a feeling that the Government were actually asking for a roving commission—to use his own words—to spend what proportion of the ten millions they chose. To listen to the hon. gentleman one would imagine that the Government could spend it without any reference to the Loan Estimates submitted to the House. Hon. members who had been in the Chamber for some time knew very well that the Government could not depart from that appropriation of the money. They could not expend the money voted for the construction of one line in the construction of another without the sanction of the House.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: It has been done dozens of times.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The hon. gentleman might have done it, but it had never been done by the present Government. The hon. gentleman introduced a system of allowing loan expenditure to be anticipated, which, to his mind, was not altogether free from objection. While they might anticipate revenue, they ought not to anticipate loan expenditure without the sanction of the House to Loan Estimates. He was anxious to disabuse the minds of hon. members of the supposition, urged as a reality by the hon. gentleman, that the Government had full power to expend the money in whatever manner they chose. The Government would not depart from the appropriation made by the House in the form of those Estimates. Those were in no way analogous to Estimates of the Consolidated Revenue, on which, under political pressure, Governments had occasionally to put sums for special services, and which were subsequently allowed to lapse.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: Do you not propose that the loan vote for the Bowen railway should lapse?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that would be a transfer, and it illustrated his argument that the money could not be appropriated for any other purpose without the sanction of the House. Had that been a revenue vote it would have lapsed; being a loan vote it could not lapse, and can now only be transferred by consent of the House. When they came to the railway vote the Government would be able to satisfy the Committee that they had obtained every possible information with respect to those lines. Since 1879, when the three-million loan was proposed, a considerable amount of additional information had been acquired, and therefore the proposal to carry the lines 120 miles further west was not by any means so much a "leap in the dark" as was the proposal in 1879 to extend them 130 miles further west, when there was actually no attempt made to give information. At that time those lines were described as

"railways to the setting sun," as they had no territorial destination assigned to them. Notwithstanding the bad season the colony had just passed through, the traffic on those lines was such as to justify the Government in proceeding further with them; but that was a matter which would be more fully and forcibly referred to afterwards by the Minister for Works. The hon. gentleman referred to the statement made by Mr. Westgarth, well known as a leading financial authority on the London Stock Exchange, intimating that he (the Colonial Treasurer) had misunderstood the information contained in that circular. The hon. gentleman was incorrect there. He expressed an opinion that the information given by Mr. Westgarth referred to the action of the Imperial Government at the time the last loan was sold in London in May. That was not so. The action of the Imperial Government did not take place in May, and their loan in May was sold entirely on its own merits, and under favourable conditions in the London money market.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman misunderstood him. What he said was, that in a speech made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer he stated that the forthcoming financial policy would be the reduction of 3 per cent. consols to  $2\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., the immediate effect of which would be to make all Government debentures go up by forcing people to sell who could not afford to take up at those rates.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that his reading of Mr. Westgarth's statement was that in consequence of the action of the Imperial Government there was a probability of colonial stock rising in public estimation, and thereby coming more into demand, and creating a wider field of investment to Colonial Governments. The hon. gentleman had adverted to what he (the Colonial Treasurer) said in his speech about possibly withdrawing the funds from London, and placing them in the custody of some of the local institutions. He quite agreed with the hon. gentleman that loading one institution with a large amount of funds would be a very unwise and disastrous proceeding, both for the institution itself and the colony at large; but he was convinced of this, from conversations with authorities on the subject; that the local financial institutions would be prepared to accept moderate amounts of Government funds provided they were withdrawn under certain conditions, at reasonably short notice, and withdrawn ratably; and that those moneys could be employed by them satisfactorily without disturbing the circulation of the colony, and with a view of benefiting the industries of the country. He, at the outset, said that it would be highly improper for any Treasurer to do what the hon. gentleman said should not be done; but he believed that the local institutions could make a profit out of deposits for short periods. The hon. gentleman knew that it had been customary to place deposits with the banks at twelve months. He (the Colonial Treasurer) considered that that was the maximum time that such deposits as he referred to should be placed with any institution, and three months' notice of withdrawal would be a fair notice. That was not only a means of encouraging the financial industry and prosperity of the country, but it also kept their deposits virtually within call, and available at any time. He did not agree with the hon. gentleman that there were very good grounds for the rejection of the Loan Estimates. He should regard their rejection as a public calamity at the present time. He was convinced that the prosperity of the colony would be largely promoted by the Loan Estimates, and

while it was perfectly true that they might not have been able to provide for all requirements of the colony—for all requirements which hon. gentlemen could individually feel that they could eloquently advocate—still he said the scheme of public works was a very comprehensive one, and such as would promote the interests of the colony for the next five years. He trusted the Committee would lend him their assistance in carrying to a successful issue the appropriation asked for in that estimate, and he had not the slightest fear, notwithstanding the apprehensions of the hon. member for Mulgrave, that if the loan were prudently placed on the market it would meet with a ready and favourable demand.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Colonial Treasurer had just stated that he would regard it as a public calamity if the Loan Estimates were not accepted by the House. Well, he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) did not think it would be a public calamity, and he thought there were many members in the House who looked upon the question in the same light as he did himself. It might be a public calamity if they were not able to borrow money to carry out public works; but that was a different thing to its being a public calamity if the Loan Estimates were not passed. The hon. gentleman must have been guilty of a little exaggeration in making such a statement. Hon. members would remember how carefully the Colonial Treasurer had avoided the question that was put to him so distinctly and plainly by the hon. gentleman who led the Opposition. That was, what was the connection existing at the present time between the Loan Estimates and the Land Bill, at present in the other Chamber? The Treasurer had not said one single word about that question, and he seemed to him (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) to walk all round it and carefully avoid it. Hon. members might recollect that the first intimation they had had of the connection between the Loan Bill and Land Bill was from the Minister for Works, when in one of his flighty moods on the Darling Downs he announced the fact that the Government would very likely go in for a ten-million loan, but they would have to provide first for the payment of the interest from the soil of the country. Now, most people who read that statement looked upon the hon. gentleman as being mad; and certainly no one gave him the slightest credit for having made the statement seriously, and being in the confidence of his colleagues when he made it. However, whether he was or not, the statement must have borne fruit, because the same statement had been made by the Colonial Treasurer himself. He had stated also that he would go in for a ten-million loan if he could provide the interest from a new Land Bill. Very well, now they had got the Loan Estimate before them of £10,000,000, and the Land Bill had not yet become law. The hon. gentleman had avoided the question of what he would do with the Loan Estimates if the Land Bill did not become law. He was not at all sure that it would become law; he had no more control over it than he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) had. It was under the control of the other Chamber, and if it was returned to the House with the clauses they insisted upon being interfered with, the hon. gentleman would have to accept the amendments or withdraw the Bill. Then what would become of the interest on that loan? That was the question they must have answered. No amount of beating about the bush, or shutting their eyes, or ignoring the fact would blind the country to the statement made by the hon. the Treasurer last September, and he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) would read an extract

from that statement. The hon. gentleman was asked a question by the hon. member for Mulgrave, and yet he made two speeches and never attempted to answer the question. On the 9th of September, in his Financial Statement, the Treasurer said :—

"Government are now framing the Loan Estimates—such as they consider the requirements of the country demand—and these will be laid before Parliament as early as practicable; but they desire to see their land policy affirmed, so that provision may be made for the payment of interest without oppressing taxpayers of the colony. Should their proposed land legislation be accepted, they will have no hesitation in advocating a much larger loan than any that has heretofore been sanctioned by Parliament, and if they deem the services of the colony demand it, will not hesitate to approach the sum of £10,000,000 sterling."

Now could there be a plainer statement made by any man in that Committee than the statement which connected the two things together—the Land Bill and the Loan Bill? Nothing could be more plain, and yet the fate of the Land Bill was hanging in the balance, and the hon. gentleman wanted them to vote the Loan Estimates. He (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) hoped that when the Treasurer got up next time he would make a plainer and more straightforward statement than he had done so far. Of course he was not going to enter into the question of whether the Land Bill would provide interest or not, but the Treasurer believed it would, and had led the House to believe that it would do so. He had led the country to believe that that Land Bill would provide a sufficient amount of interest to pay for the ten-million loan; and he had done more than that. He had led his supporters to accept the Land Bill upon the condition that the Loan Estimates would pass, and that a large number would be rewarded by having railways made to their very doors.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I never said so.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said one followed upon the other as certainly as day followed night. Numbers of members accepted the Land Bill on the condition that it was to provide interest on a large loan, but now the interest was just as far from being within the grasp of the Treasurer as on the day when he made his Financial Statement. The hon. member had no more control over it than any officer of the House, and he believed he would have no control over it for a long time to come. The hon. gentleman had said, in answer to the leader of the Opposition's remarks about loan votes not lapsing the same as the revenue votes, that therefore the Government would be bound to carry out the proposals they made on the Estimates. The hon. gentleman knew that the Government were not bound to carry them out. Had not the last Government obtained a vote for a line from Bowen to Haughton Gap, and had not the Minister for Works distinctly refused to attempt to carry it out?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The money is still available.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: What difference was there between allowing a vote to lapse, and not carrying out the work? Every other vote on the present Estimates might be treated in the same way if the Government chose. What was to prevent them from refusing to go on with the Beauaraba branch if they chose? Once the vote was passed, the matter was entirely out of the hands of Parliament, and the Government might refuse to go on with the work under the pretence that something else was more pressing. If hon. members passed the Loan Estimates they were voting away their own liberty, and putting themselves entirely in the hands of the Minister for

the day, whoever he might be. The hon. gentleman had twitted the hon. member for Mulgrave with what he had said about bringing forward a want of confidence motion. The hon. gentleman must remember that such motions were not always brought forward with any expectation of carrying them, but often merely with the object of directing public attention to the reason why they were brought forward. The hon. gentleman should not run away with the idea that by putting railways down for hon. members on that side he had bribed them to support him; he had tried that once before, and found that more members than one refused to vote for railways which they themselves were interested in. In refusing to make the Bowen line, the Government were going to do worse than refuse to carry out the vote of the last Parliament; they were going to commit a breach of faith with the people who lent the money. There was a note on the Loan Estimates that the £150,000 down for the Bowen railway was proposed to be appropriated for a railway to the coalfields. The Committee had no right to do that, as the money had been voted by the people in England for a specific work. The Government were actually going to ask the Committee to be guilty of a breach of faith to the money-lenders in England. The hon. gentleman had told them that they had a great deal more information since the three-million loan was introduced. They certainly had a good deal more information, but they knew no more now about that country than they did then. Every railway proposed then had some objective point. The objective point of the Northern Railway was Hughenden; of the Central Railway, Barcardine Downs; and of the Southern and Western Railway, Charleville. It was all very well for hon. gentlemen to say that those railways were going towards the setting sun; but they knew the points where they were going. Did the hon. gentleman know the points to which some of the railways he proposed were going?

Mr. BEATTIE: The setting sun.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: The hon. gentleman told him the Government had all the information they could get. He found on looking at the map that there were seven lines of which the route was marked as undefined. The Government did not know where the lines were going, nor what kind of country they were going through. All the information they had got might have been obtained from almost any member in the House without applying to a single officer in the Railway Department. He was not going to discuss the railways separately; he would do that when the vote came on. Of course he quite approved of the Immigration vote, but he did not approve of the Government taking in hand the proposal for a ten-million loan, which they would never be able to spend during their term of office. Their loan expenditure hitherto had been from a million and a quarter to a million and a-half a year, and now it was proposed to double it. The hon. gentleman said it would take from three to five years to spend the money. He was certain the hon. gentlemen would not be in office in five years, or if they were they would have to run the gauntlet of a general election; because their term would expire in five years, and they all knew what the last year of a Parliament was. If the Government doubled the loan expenditure, even if the country remained as prosperous as they hoped, the Government would be the chief and almost the only employer of labour, and the other industries of the colony would be cramped out of existence for want of labour. But he did not believe they were going to have

nch prosperous times. The country was now certainly enjoying more prosperous times than when the three-million loan was passed; it was enjoying very much the same times as the last year the hon. gentleman was in office; but now the drought had prostrated the pastoral industry; the sugar industry also was prostrated, and that would certainly have a terrible effect on the prosperity of the country. The hon. gentleman would probably find the next year or two exactly similar to the year he went out of office. He would ask the hon. member also whether he had ever considered what the meaning of that £10,000,000 would be. According to his own Financial Statement it meant that they were going to empower the Government to borrow as much money as the whole Customs of Queensland had produced from the day of Separation up to the 30th June last. Now, that was an extraordinary statement; yet the whole Customs of Queensland from the day of Separation to 30th June last had not produced ten millions of money. He thought hon. members should pause before they gave the Government the power which they asked. Let them give the Government a sufficient loan—sufficient power, but not, as he had pointed out, a power to play with them—to play one member against another member, and one constituency against another constituency—as they would have if they received that ten-million vote.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. gentleman had indulged in a very gloomy forecast of the affairs of the colony; but he (the Colonial Treasurer) trusted, as in the case of Prophetess Cassandra, who was always prophesying evil, that nobody would believe in those dismal prognostications. He did not think the hon. gentleman himself believed in his own gloomy forebodings. He trusted at any rate that hon. members would take a much more sanguine view of the resources of the colony, and not only of its ability to sustain the loan, but also of the great advantages that would accrue from the expenditure of the loan. His remarks in reply to the hon. member for Mulgrave had, to a certain extent, answered the objections of the hon. member for Kennedy, except in one point in which he had been twitted about being so silent about the Land Bill. He quite admitted that, in making his Financial Statement in September, he had coupled the Land and the Loan Bills in such a sense that he represented that the Government would not be afraid to make application to the Committee for a ten-million loan, provided their land legislation was approved of; and he now said that such land legislation had been approved of by that Chamber. It had been twice affirmed by that Chamber, and now the Government submitted to that Chamber the Loan Estimates. He maintained that he had strictly and exactly carried out the representations he had made in September. Hon. gentlemen seemed to forget that there were further proceedings in connection with the loan. They were considering the Loan Estimates, but he had said nothing of the Loan Bill. He asked consideration of the Loan Estimates on the basis that the land legislation of the Government had been twice approved of by that Chamber, and, so far as they knew, it would become the law of the land. To the Legislative Assembly of Queensland he submitted the Loan Estimates for their consideration. When those Loan Estimates were determined, it would be quite time enough to go on with the Loan Bill, without which the Government could not carry their plans into effect.

Mr. ARCHER said that formerly the hon. gentleman had stated that he would take a large expression of opinion on the Land Bill as a

course for his guidance in regard to the Loan Estimates. But they got to something stronger, for it was said that on the Land Bill becoming law the Loan Estimates would be introduced. Of course the Land Bill passing that House had no influence on the revenue of the country; but now it was said that that House having passed the Land Bill, that was sufficient to provide the interest on the loans.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he did not say so.

Mr. ARCHER said he had understood the hon. gentleman to say that, the Land Bill having twice passed that House, he therefore submitted the Estimates for ten millions exactly the same as if it had become law. The thing that struck him (Mr. Archer) most in connection with the whole of those Loan Estimates, so far as regarded railways, was that the Government had most distinctly followed out and even gone far beyond the lines of their predecessors, which they had adversely criticised. They had criticised their predecessors for proposing railways which had no end; but now they had got railways which had neither beginning or end. He had read the interesting report on the Gulf country lately laid before the House, yet the Government had evidently not got sufficient information to state where the terminus of the Gulf line was to be, let alone the country the line would pass through. It was absolutely necessary for the Government, if they were going to have any influence on the money expended on public works, that they should vote the money for lines that would immediately pay, instead of frittering away money on lines from which there would be no return for some time, if ever. The works should be taken up consecutively, and the best paying ones made first. They could not foresee the time when some of the proposed lines would be made, and they ought to hesitate before committing themselves to such large works and such a large loan.

Mr. PALMER said he considered the immigration item affected the remainder of the loan in a very great measure. The amount of labour that they could introduce into the colony would affect the expenditure of the loan far more than hon. members seemed to consider at the present moment. It came home to him or to anyone else who lived in the country. When they desired to extend their improvements it was almost impossible to get the work done from the scarcity of labour; but what would it be when there was such an immense sum of money invested in works all over the colony? He scarcely thought that the immigration policy proposed by the Government would introduce a class of labour suitable for the public works. There would be such a call for navvies and men used to strong rough work that the class of cheap labour proposed to be introduced would be quite inadequate to the carrying out of large public works, and unless some special system of immigration were introduced, such as that which was in force when the present Government came into power, the large contracts proposed would never be carried out except at an enormously increased expense and a needless waste of money. He certainly thought that the contrast which the present immigration policy of the Government offered would not be favourable as compared with what had gone by. A statement of the number of immigrants from Europe from the date of Separation to the 31st October, 1884, together with the cost, showed that the total number introduced was 162,863, at an expense from Consolidated Revenue—which was not taken into account in that vote—of £323,467, and from Loan £1,509,077, and from other sources £436,000, or altogether about £2,500,000,

That did not include the land-orders issued of a certain value, which amounted to £958,000; so that really there was a sum of £3,527,234 expended on immigration in the colony. That extended over twenty-two years, at an average annual cost, including land-orders, of about £160,328. The result, after all, was that there was introduced an insufficient class of labour for the work of the colony. The average annual amount proposed to be voted now for immigration was £150,000 for five years, according to the Colonial Treasurer's statement; and, if that amount were expended upon the class of labour which was proposed to be introduced for the sugar industry, it would be altogether inadequate for the carrying out of large public works. It was no use saying that there were men unemployed on account of the drought. They were not the men whom contractors would employ, nor those who were loafing about towns; as he recently saw an advertisement from some New South Wales contractors, asking for men to assist them in carrying out certain works. The other evening, when the Railway Estimates were going through, he asked the Minister for Works what provision was made for repairing the lines, and whether the expense came from Loan or from Revenue.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: From Revenue.

Mr. PALMER said he saw several items in the Loan Estimates simply for repairing existing lines, including deviations on the Main Range, relaying with 60-lb. rails, etc., £200,000. According to the Minister for Works' statement, that should come out of Consolidated Revenue, and that was where the percentage from the railway was at fault. The figures that were given by the Colonial Treasurer did not represent the actual receipts from railways, when they had to appropriate from Loan a sum of £200,000 for one item. There were several other items in the estimate, one for a bridge over the Burdekin River, and several others which showed that the Loan Estimate was to be punished as it were to make repairs upon lines now in existence instead of the expense being borne by the consolidated revenue. He would ask the Treasurer if that 3½ per cent. he referred to covered every expense from the time a rail was first laid in Queensland to the present time? That was the proper way to look at the percentage. There was no use in calculating it on the returns of this year or last year. It did not cover the whole of the expense from the time railways were first started, including the work and repairs. If so, why should they have to put that large amount for repairs upon the Loan Estimates? When the railway items came on there would be an opportunity of discussing the proposed railways, and the routes they proposed to follow, and the amount of money that would be expended upon them. They could be discussed *seriatim* and he would refer to them as they came on. Taking the whole sum of the loan vote together, it seemed strange to him to bind a Government to such an amount of expenditure covering so many years, or to force a policy that would be the policy for the next four or five years. It seemed an enormous amount of money to be entrusted with. New South Wales had only brought in a loan of £14,000,000 with a population of 850,000, a revenue of nearly £7,904,000, and an expenditure of about £7,658,000. There was no comparing that with Queensland, and the statistics showed that they were reaching beyond their depth when they proposed to borrow £10,000,000 with a revenue of £2,500,000. It was out of all proportion for them to borrow £10,000,000 when a colony with such resources and such a population as New South Wales only bor-

rowed £14,000,000. It was completely far and away out of all proportion. The public debt of New South Wales, including the three-million loan of December, 1883, the last payment of which was made in June, 1884, was £24,721,000; and the public debt of this colony was £16,517,850. The mileage of railways in New South Wales was two-thirds more than the length of lines in Queensland. It occurred to him that when the amendment in the Land Bill providing for survey before selection was before the Committee the Government raised the objection that it would be impossible to find enough surveyors to carry out the provision effectively. In view of that objection he would like to know how they would stand for surveyors, contractors, engineers, navvies, and all the rest of the people who would be necessary to carry on the construction of railways if the works contemplated in those Loan Estimates were proceeded with. The price of such labour would no doubt go up to such an extent that all prudent Governments would hesitate before they would accept contracts at the high rates which would be inevitable owing to the then current price of labour. It must be remembered that there would be four colonies in the market borrowing for public works. Where would the money come from to pay the enhanced value of labour? He was quite sure the information on that point would be very necessary to the Committee. He would like the Government to state what works they intended to go on with first. If they would specify the works they intended to proceed with first, and then borrow accordingly for the next eighteen months, they would be following an honest, straightforward course. No one would deny that the works of the colony should go on. There ought to be a bold public works policy to meet the future of the colony which the Colonial Treasurer had so eloquently portrayed. There was no doubt that the colony had a grand future before it, and that it required a strong and firm public works policy no one would deny; but the question was whether the Government had not gone a little too far in that immense loan, when the circumstances of the colony were not equal to carrying out the works in a sufficiently economical way. The circumstances of the colony were not such as to justify such an expenditure. The colony had spent large sums of money for immigration; and he must say that the only effective immigration was that carried on in the last two years of the *régime* of the late Government. That was felt all through the colony; even in the far West it was felt that the population had so increased as to benefit the outside parts. With such a public works policy before them it was necessary that immigration should be extended, and extended so as to bring out the class of labour that was required. There had as yet been no voice from the other side, except that of the Colonial Treasurer; and he hoped the "conspiracy of silence" referred to by the hon. member for Townsville as being evident during the course of the Land Bill throughout that House would not mark the course of the Loan Bill also.

Mr. BLACK said the Treasurer had made a remark which certainly attracted his attention, when he suggested that hon. members on both sides would approve of the distribution of the Loan Estimates. He (Mr. Black) must admit that those Estimates were most ingeniously framed. They were framed in such a way as to be very enticing, he was afraid, to hon. members on both sides. All the constituencies either got a railway, or a work of some kind, or else they saw that a railway was sketched out, which in the years to come might very likely approach them. But he thought it was well to take into consideration that having votes



placed on the Loan Estimates did not necessarily mean that the money was going to be expended. He had seen that before now. He knew several instances in connection with his own and other constituencies in which an apparent sop was thrown out in order to ensure votes, but in which the promises were never fulfilled. And especially would that be the case in those Loan Estimates under which the huge amount of £10,000,000 was to be expended. The Treasurer said it would be expended in from three to five years; but judging from the loan expenditure in the past, he (Mr. Black) did not think it was at all likely that it would be expended in five or seven years unless it was intended to disturb the industries of the colony by the Government coming into direct competition with them in the labour market. The silence of hon. members on the other side certainly led him to think that they were going to be parties to what he could only denounce as one of the greatest attempts at log-rolling on a big scale that had been attempted in that House. He could only look at it in that light; and although a comparatively large sum was put on the Estimates for the constituency he represented, he did not intend on that account to express his satisfaction with the Estimates; he intended to criticise everyone of the items whatever the result might be. It was quite certain that a large number of the votes would not be carried out for some years; and the Treasurer had not given the Committee any inkling as to what works ought to take precedence over others. There was no doubt that some of the chief lines of railway—trunk lines especially—would be extended if those Loan Estimates were passed; but he would like to know which of the other works were to be carried out—which lines of railway, which harbours and rivers, which buildings and bridges, and in what direction the electric telegraphs were likely to be extended; in fact, before they passed the votes they ought to have a far better explanation of when the expenditure was going to commence and at what rapidity it was likely to be carried out than they had had up to the present. There was not the least doubt that when the Land Bill was introduced the Colonial Treasurer informed the House that the introduction of a Loan Estimate amounting to ten millions very materially hinged upon the passing of that Land Bill. That Bill, with the increased revenue to be derived from the public lands, they were given to understand, was to be the means of providing for the interest on that huge sum of money. It was very easy to satisfy hon. members by holding out that promise of extensive public works. He was not one of those who deprecated public works, but he certainly thought that no Government had a right to go into such an unlimited expenditure as was now contemplated, an expenditure which they, in the ordinary course of events, could not complete. They were binding the next Parliament to an expenditure which very likely that Parliament would not see its way to carry out, and that could only lead to disappointment amongst the constituencies which were now led to believe they were going to get such expenditure. At present the colony had a debt of something like £56 per head of the population, and it was now proposed to increase its liabilities to something like £90 per head—an amount of indebtedness per head of population considerably in excess of that of any of the other colonies. Although the Colonial Treasurer had made a very rosy speech as to the vast prosperity of the colony, he would like him to explain at far greater length how he expected to meet the interest on that additional indebtedness. The hon. gentleman could certainly not point to the present prosperity of any of the producing industries. The mining

industry was undoubtedly in a satisfactory state, but when they came to look at the agricultural industry, or the pastoral industry, the most sanguine man in the Committee would see that the most sensible thing was to say as little as possible about it. Nor was there any prospect of that prosperity being renewed. He failed to see what possible inducements could be held out to immigrants at the present time. If the immigrants, for whom they were now asked to vote £750,000, were to be introduced merely to carry out the public works policy of the Government, that would be a wrong thing for the Committee to sanction. If, on the contrary, it could be shown that those immigrants, when introduced, could benefit themselves and benefit the colony by settling on the land, or by entering into some of the industries which were likely to be progressive in the future, then they would be justified in introducing them. Before those immigrants were brought out, it should be clearly shown that they would add to the permanent prosperity of the colony by taking advantage of the increased facilities which the Land Bill would very likely offer when it once became law. But until the Land Bill had actually become law they had no right to compromise the country by that large loan expenditure; otherwise he failed to see where the interest on that expenditure was to come from. He almost regretted that the discussion on the Loan Estimates had not taken place before the Speaker left the chair, so that the discussion might have been more general. However, he hoped the remarks he was about to make would excite more ample debate from both sides than had been the case up to the present time. He proposed to refer to some of the items on the Estimates in the hope that some hon. gentlemen on the other side, whose constituencies were likely to be affected by his remarks, would be able to give their views, not only on that but on the general question involved in that enormous loan expenditure. Amongst some of the railways proposed, he noticed that the lines that constituencies might approve of were not those which had been adopted; and that led him to believe that the Government were not sincere in their intention of carrying out the works as put down on that schedule. He would begin with a constituency near his own—that of Bowen; and what did they find there? They found that a line from Bowen to Houghton Gap, by way of the Burdekin—a line which was undoubtedly popular, and which ran through rich agricultural land—was absolutely shelved, although it had been approved of by the previous Government, and the money for it had been actually passed by the House and borrowed. That was a line which not only met with the approval of the Bowen constituency, but, he had every reason to believe, of the Charters Towers and Kennedy constituency as well; and yet it exemplified what he had said before, that the mere fact of a work being put on the Loan Estimates did not mean that a constituency was ever going to get any benefit from it. Instead of that line, they found that a line was to be made from Bowen to the coalfields. Up to the present time no one knew where the coalfields were. They had not been discovered yet. If he had not been misinformed, the Government were actually getting a diamond drill, and were going to send a party up there to hunt for coal. Nothing could be more irritating, more monstrous, than to frame Loan Estimates on such a ridiculous basis. There was an item of £100,000 for a railway from Bowen to some coalfields that might be discovered, or that might not be discovered. None had as yet been discovered, and it was very doubtful if any were likely to be, within



such reasonable distance of Bowen as to enable coal to be landed there as cheaply as it could be landed from the Burrum or even from Newcastle. That was a specimen of the railway lines proposed in those Estimates. A line which the people actually wanted, which would encourage settlement, and which ran through a rich and well-known agricultural district, was shelved by the Government, and in its place they were going to build a railway to some unknown coal-field—

Mr. KATES rose to a point of order. The question before the Committee was that of immigration.

The CHAIRMAN: No doubt the question before the Committee is the immigration vote, but as latitude has been allowed to other speakers, I think it is the feeling of the Committee that the hon. member should be permitted to proceed.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said it had been the practice to have a debate of that kind in Committee. It was quite optional with the Opposition to have continued the debate that was initiated last night by the Treasurer on the motion to go into Committee, but it was thought expedient in order to get more information that they should go into Committee. The Treasurer having moved the vote there should be a general discussion upon the whole subject.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that certainly was the understanding, but he understood that when the hon. member for Mulgrave and other hon. members had spoken the Committee would settle down and discuss the particular items. He trusted that the hon. member for Mackay would remember that the individual votes would have to be discussed afterwards.

Mr. ARCHER: We shall have found the coalfields by then, probably.

Mr. BLACK said he wished to point out that the immigration vote was perfectly unnecessary until the Government could show that the public works policy that they had sketched out was likely to be carried and to be beneficial to the country. He was very glad to find that the Committee would allow a certain latitude in the discussion of those Estimates, and he was induced to make his remarks because he wished to elicit an expression of opinion which, it seemed to him, could only be brought about by treading on the toes of some hon. members on the other side. However, he had not yet referred to any railway in the southern part of the colony, in which the hon. member, Mr. Kates, was interested. They would come to that later on. He pointed out what he considered the most glaring case in the whole of the Estimates, where a necessary and popular line of railway had been shelved for an imaginary vote for a line to some place not hitherto discovered. From that vote he very much doubted the sincerity of the Government to carry on the lines as sketched out in the Loan Estimates. He believed that certain lines should be constructed—certain necessary lines—but he thought that the Committee were entitled to have some expression of opinion from the Colonial Treasurer as to which lines were going to take precedence. They had got a loan expenditure proposed which would take five or six or very likely seven years to exhaust, and he wished hon. members who were going to vote for that to understand that perhaps they would not get the particular works put down in the Estimates, constructed for four or five years. Amongst the railways was the Roma to Charleville line. He believed that was a necessary extension, and the extension of the Southern and Western line westward was also one to which no very serious opposition could be raised; but it

was very distinctly understood throughout the constituencies that the extension of Western lines in future was to be contingent on the rents from the pastoral lessees being considerably increased. That was distinctly understood; but now they had got the cart before the horse. They were going to vote the money for those Western extensions before they had got any assurance that the rents of the pastoral tenants were going to be proportionately increased; and on that account alone he was opposed to the extensions. He considered that the coastal districts were entitled to the greatest expenditure for providing railway facilities. It was on the coast that the population was settling down, and it was the more popular place for immigrants, none of whom, he believed, ever went further inland than 100 miles. It was on the coast that the comparatively close settlement existed, and they had there industries which were far more attractive to the immigrant than those of the Western interior, and for that reason he thought the coast should have far greater prominence bestowed upon it. Although he was in favour of coastal lines, he saw in the list a line which he could not conscientiously advocate—that from Brisbane to Cleveland.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Oh!

Mr. BLACK said he was glad to hear signs of dissent, which showed that the Estimates would get fair discussion. He could remember how that line was initiated at the very grand banquet held at Cleveland, when the senior member for Maryborough expressed himself as being perfectly satisfied with sitting at the feet of his great leader; and from that small beginning they now found a proposed expenditure of £80,000. He did not object to a railway going to Cleveland at some future time, but he maintained that there were other districts of the colony entitled to precedence. The success of the Sandgate line had, no doubt, stirred up the people of Cleveland, but he thought that town was of sufficient unimportance for the line to be deferred to some future time. Then came the South Brisbane branch, upon which, including wharves, £120,000 was proposed to be expended. He was not going to offer any special objection to that, because he believed the trade of the colony even justified a very considerable expenditure in that direction in the capital; but he must say it was a very large expenditure, and he would rather see it embracing the next two years. He thought that would be a far better system on which to have framed the Loan Estimates than to have asked for the huge sum which, in his opinion, meant this: that any constituency or any part of the country that was not in the present schedule was not likely to have any of its public works supplied for the next five years at the very least. There were many railways that might be considered advantageous to the country now which, in four or five years, would be considered unnecessary lines; while, on the other hand, there were many lines which had been omitted from the schedule which, before five years had elapsed, would be considered most important to the progress of the country to be constructed. Those lines, unless they happened to be in the schedule now, had no hope of being constructed until seven years passed over—the time which he said the £10,000,000 would take to expend. Again, there was a line from Beenleigh to Southport and the border proposed, but they had already got one to the border; and that line he considered could be very safely deferred until the more important requirements of the colony had been attended to. There was an expenditure of £44,000 to complete the

Sandgate branch. That matter had been discussed the other night, and it would certainly rather astonish the Committee to find that the amount required to complete the line was almost as much as the whole line was to have cost originally. He did not know whether, after the revelations which had been made, the Government were serious in asking for £45,000 to extend the Brisbane Valley branch. It was a line that could not possibly be reproductive, and must necessarily decrease the interest on the whole of the southern lines. Hon. members should pause before they allowed the Government to launch into such extravagant expenditure as some of the items showed they wished to do. The Laidley Creek branch was a line he should like to hear something in support of, because he had been unable to find anyone who could give any sound reason why an expenditure on a line of that sort should be made at the present time. He thought the duplicate line to Ipswich was very necessary on account of the large amount of traffic, but when it came to £500,000 for a duplicate line from Ipswich to Warwick, and £250,000 for a line from Warwick to St. George, and when they remembered that that three-quarters of a million was only on account—for he understood the lines were to cost about £2,000,000 to complete—he would like some hon. gentleman—the Minister for Works, for instance—to give them some information. Was the colony at present in a sufficiently prosperous condition to justify what was yet an unnecessary duplicate line to Warwick? No doubt in five or six years, when better times came, it would be a practicable and a useful line; but there was no reason why the colony should be bound down to construct what must be a most expensive line, long before it was wanted. He found a vote of £200,000 for “buildings and sidings generally,” which he presumed was to be spent by the Government for the time being in any place they liked. His idea of Estimates was that they should know where the money was to be spent before they voted it. That was a far too large sum of money for Parliament to entrust the Government with the uncontrolled expenditure of. He would like to know what could be said in favour of the Maryborough and Gayndah line. As far as he knew, it passed through some of the worst country in Queensland, where there would never be any settlement, and yet there was £250,000 put down for it. He did not know whether they would be told that there was timber on the line, but he knew it was not likely to add to the revenue derived from the railways of the colony. Then there was another £30,000 for the line, Bundaberg to Mount Perry. Did hon. members forget what a dead loss that line had been to the country? What was the use of taking it any further? It did not open up any better country, and the further it was taken the greater would be the loss. He was told that it was not for an extension; but if he was in error he could only blame the Government for not supplying plans so that hon. members might know what it was they were asked to vote. Then there was £300,000 for a line from Cloncurry to the Gulf of Carpentaria. He did not suppose three members of the Committee knew anything about that: he did not think the Treasurer himself knew anything about it. Those votes were simply thrown out as sops to the Northern constituencies. That was a line which was not yet even surveyed, and they did not know where it was going to. It was one of the undefined lines, and they were asked to give the Government £500,000 so as to lead the people up there to believe they were going to get a railway; that was what it amounted to. The line would certainly not be constructed for

the next five years; and he was not at all certain whether, if it became necessary to have a railway, the proper way would not be to take it from Hughenden. He had been very much interested in a report about the different ports and harbours, which had been laid on the table; and after reading the description of the miserable country for thirty or forty miles inland from the coast, he would ask what justification there was for spending £500,000 on a railway from the Gulf to Cloncurry. It was a line in favour of which something might be advanced later on, but at present the colony did not require it, and could not afford it. He had already remarked on the absurdity of the line from Bowen to the coalfields, so that it would not be necessary to say any more about it till they came to it, by which time he hoped the Minister for Works would have found out where the coalfields were, and what he would do in the event of no suitable coal being discovered there. It seemed to him that, if they voted the £100,000, and also transferred the £150,000 which had been already voted for the railway to Haughton Gap, the money was likely to lie idle. He saw amongst the vote for Harbour and Rivers an item of £60,000 for harbour improvements at Mackay. Although that referred to his own electorate, he thought the Government were not sincere in it, because they knew that £60,000 was not more than half enough to make any reasonable harbour improvements there. He was not going to be put off opposing the Estimates because there was £60,000 down for Mackay, unless the Government could show that that sum was going to do some good. The Colonial Secretary knew that £60,000 was not half enough to do any material good to the place, and as they were not likely to have another Loan Estimate for five years he was not at all satisfied with the vote. It was one of those cases in which money was put on the Loan Estimates whilst the Government had no intention of expending it. He assumed the Government had got some reason for putting in the votes for buildings, but there was one item which he thought very suspicious, and that was £100,000 for buildings generally. Where were they to be? Had the Government any idea where they were going to erect those buildings, or which were to be the favoured constituencies? He never heard before of a lump sum being left under the control of the Government and entirely beyond the control of Parliament, to be expended anywhere the Government liked. And then there was the vote for bridges on main roads, £100,000. That was another vote where the Government would have the “hang on.” Did hon. members remember how the last vote of £15,000, passed last session for bridges on main roads, had been distributed? It had been divided amongst the divisional boards, which got £168 each. He would like the Minister for Works to say whether he intended to divide the £100,000 among the divisional boards in the same fashion?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

Mr. BLACK: Well, they had got a precedent for it which the hon. gentleman had established when he got into difficulties through the number of deputations that waited upon him. And the hon. gentleman got out of those difficulties by satisfying them all and giving them £168 each. The thing was ridiculous. It defeated the object the Committee had in view when they voted that £15,000, and he (Mr. Black) thought that the Committee, before they entrusted £100,000 to any one department, should have some assurance that whatever works were going to be erected the money should not be voted until the plans had been laid before Parliament and Parliament had given sanction to the

expenditure. The same remark applied to the £250,000 for water supply and storage. That, he believed, was the best vote in the whole of those Estimates. That was a vote that he could thoroughly approve of. The only thing he thought the Committee should be assured of was that the expenditure of that money should be under proper supervision, and made in such a way as to benefit the water supply of the colony in the interior—a matter to which the Government had not hitherto paid sufficient attention. He was opposed to the principle on which those Loan Estimates had been framed, and he maintained that until the Treasurer could show them how the interest was going to be paid, the Committee would not be carrying out their proper duty in passing the Estimates. But if the hon. gentleman could show that he had any reasonable expectation that he could pay the large extra expenditure entailed on the colony by the votes, then the Loan Estimates were entitled to a much more favourable consideration than he could give them in present circumstances.

Mr. PALMER said that the hon. member for Mackay had made some remarks as to the quality of the country near the shores of the Gulf. He (Mr. Palmer) would not enter into the question, but refer the hon. gentleman to the report laid on the table of the House during last session. But he would say that the returns from the district of Burke showed that the revenue within the last twenty years had been a quarter of a million, and that the amount of money expended on public works was £17,000. He thought that spoke volumes for the justice that was dealt out to the district of Burke and the Gulf generally. Whether it should come in for a railway or not was for the House to decide.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that the hon. member for Mackay wanted to get information as to how the Government proposed to carry out that vote. The object which the Government had in view in framing their works policy was to do justice to all parts of the colony.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Government Benches: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not as when the previous Government were in power, when they simply constructed works to suit the constituencies of their own supporters. The present Government took another view altogether of the subject, and meant to do ample and equal justice to all parts of the colony—no matter whether a member sat on the Government side or not. He would like to know how it was possible for any Government to frame a works policy unless they borrowed a large amount of money—considering the large extent of country they had to deal with. The hon. member for Mackay complained about not having a sufficient sum of money put down for harbour works at Mackay. But that was not the only sum of money put down—or at all events to be expended at Mackay. Why, there was a bridge across the Pioneer River, tenders for which had been called at something like £20,000! The hon. member forgot that, and if he (the Minister for Works) thought that if the Government had had the slightest intention of holding back or doing a wrong to Mackay they would not have sanctioned that bridge across the Pioneer River. That was, he believed, a thorough answer to the hon. gentleman. The Government intended to deal out equal justice to all parts of the colony. The hon. gentleman also particularly wanted some information about why the Government were asking to transfer the sum of money which had been voted some years ago for the purpose of making a railway

from Bowen to Houghton Gap. When that sum was borrowed it never was intended to build that railway; or if it was, he thought whoever made the proposition was a fit subject for Woogaroo. It would have been to build a line of railway 150 miles to compete with another railway that was already in existence, and that carried all the traffic to the seaboard. The only thing that would have justified that railway would have been that it ran through agricultural country with close settlement. But there was not a single acre of agricultural country in it—notwithstanding the statement of the hon. member for Mackay—with the exception of a small portion of land where there was water communication, or nearly so. The whole of that land on the Burdekin had water communication, and it would be the height of folly to build a railway where they had a line of water. With reference to the coalfield on the Bowen River, he looked upon it as one of the best in the colony; and if the hon. member would turn up Mr. Jack's report he would find that there was no part of the colony of which Mr. Jack spoke more favourably than the Bowen Coal Field. But not only was there a coalfield there, but it was land well adapted for close settlement.

Mr. BLACK: Where?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: On the Bowen River. Perhaps the hon. gentleman had been over it. But the railway would not stop there. It would go further ahead.

Mr. BLACK: In which way?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would reach the interior of the country; and that was exactly what the people of Bowen wanted. They wanted to be connected with the railway for the purpose of getting some portion of the traffic of the interior, but no Government in their senses would build one railway to compete with another. Where that line would be connected with the Northern line would be about thirty miles from Townsville, and it was not a likely thing that anyone would send goods 150 miles to Bowen when they could reach Townsville in thirty miles. The hon. gentleman went all over the railways, but he was prepared to take them as they came. The Government proposed to let each railway stand by itself, and not lump them all into one vote; and that, he thought, was the proper way. He was perfectly certain hon. members would not object to the extension of the main line westward; but some exception was taken to the route. His opinion was that it would not be taken exactly in the direction that was indicated. It would go from Charleville to a little the south of west; but he had little information as to the exact route. In talking about the Northern line, the hon. member for Townsville before he left office gave instructions to survey a line from Hughenden to Winton, and the result would have been that the Central line and the Northern line would have made a loop-line, and he did not think that the present Government would commit such a blunder as that. The proper way to deal with the railways was to deal with them as they were down there, and if hon. gentlemen opposite were sufficiently strong to successfully oppose any one of them it would have to go. The hon. member for Mulgrave said he did not know how all the money was to be got. They all knew that the system proposed by the Government was not the one which the hon. gentleman would have adopted. He would rather have seen a large company undertaking the work on the land-grant system. The present Government did not intend to carry out that system, but intended to make provision for all portions of the colony. With reference to the line to Normanton,

survey was being made to find out which would be the best point to start from, and he had yet to learn why the hon. member for Mackay should come to the conclusion that the Government had no serious intention of carrying out that line. It would be very hard indeed to propose lines which would suit the Opposition, and they did not intend to try it. They never intended to consult them as to the works policy of the Government. The Government had done what they thought was right and would stand by their decision.

Mr. BEATTIE said he had not intended to have spoken upon the question until they got on to the vote for railways; but seeing that the discussion had become general, he thought that it was necessary he should say something. He was one of the members on the Government side who had been taunted by one or two gentlemen opposite with not having spoken, when the fact of the matter was that they monopolised all the talking themselves during the afternoon. Seeing that the immigration vote was on, he considered that he would not be justified in saying what he had to say until that was settled. He had no serious objection to the first seven items on the vote for railways, and he was not one of those who was very anxious to impress upon the Government the desirability of constructing a railway to please himself. The line he would refer to was the extension to Fortitude Valley, and the first thing he knew about it was when he saw the plans laid upon the table yesterday. He would take the opportunity, previously to the money being voted, of saying a few words upon it. It was proposed, according to those plans, to remove the central station to the westward of the Normal School in what was called the school reserve, between Edward street and Creek street, and it was intended to be simply a passenger station. To get from the lower end of the city it would be necessary to resume a portion of the land from the school grounds at present occupied by some of the girls' schools, and the approach to the station from Adelaide street would be on the gradient of 1 in 16, which would not be very convenient for an approach to a passenger station. The extension from there to Fortitude Valley was proposed to start from Creek street, and if it went through a tunnel it would come out somewhere in Boundary street. It would then go down to the Water Reserve, and across Gotha street, Gibbs street, and Brunswick street, and a passenger station was placed at Ballow street. After passing Constance street it diverged suddenly to the westward, and went towards the Exhibition Buildings. He knew the locality well, and knew that it would be a most expensive line to construct, and that the benefit to the people of Fortitude Valley, so far as it would enhance the value of property there, would not be very great from having the station there. The distance from the station on the western side of Ann street to the north end of the station in Fortitude Valley was seventy-two and a-half chains, and he believed that the construction of that piece of line alone, including the purchase of property that would be required, would cost from £80,000 to £100,000. The passenger station in that locality was within five or six chains of the municipal boundary, and the whole district to the north of the municipal boundary would not be accommodated by that railway. He had been considering the question very seriously for a long time, and a petition had recently been handed to him with reference to the making of a line to Fortitude Valley. As he had said before, he knew nothing about the proposal of the Government in the matter until the previous day when the plans were laid on the table of the House. He was certainly very

much astonished when he saw them, because he did not think the line was the best that could be chosen to increase trade, and encourage the mercantile community and the people of Fortitude Valley. That constituency was one of the most populous in the colony, its population at the present time being 12,000. Therefore it required some little consideration in the construction of railways. The people had been very quiet, and had not asked the Government to expend money there for their particular benefit. But the Government seeing that the mercantile community and the district itself required some consideration had now proposed the scheme which would be to-morrow submitted to the House. He wished to say that they had made a great mistake in the plan they had decided upon, as it would involve a very heavy expenditure and would not be of much advantage to the locality generally or to the mercantile community, which demanded railway extension. He would suggest an alternative scheme which would secure all the advantages he had enumerated. At present it was proposed when the line left the station at Constance street to make the necessary connection with the Sandgate line by a downward curve. If the Government would only make that connection with the Sandgate line there instead of going down to the water reserve, and make a station just on the municipal boundary, they would secure all the advantages which their scheme would give to the people in that district, because they would only have to go five or six chains further down to get to the railway station. By adopting his suggestion, the Government would save the expenditure of a large sum of money which would be necessitated by the plan on the table for the resumption of land and the purchase of property; they would be able to construct the line for £60,000, instead of spending £120,000 as they proposed. If his statements were correct, and he believed they were, the Government ought, he thought, to seriously consider the matter. He believed it would be to the advantage of his constituents, and to the advantage of the country, if his suggestion were adopted. He simply made those few remarks now as the line was down on the Estimates, but he intended to refer more fully to the subject to-morrow, after he had another opportunity of looking at the plans. He asked the Committee to seriously consider the matter before consenting to an expenditure of £175,000 for the extension to the city and Fortitude Valley. He would point out that immediately on coming out of the tunnel at Wharf street the line would drop into the Valley between Leichhardt and Wickham streets. All the property in that locality was occupied by working tradesmen who had accumulated their little savings and settled down in homes of their own. If the railway was taken down there it would destroy those two sections of land from Wickham street to Brunswick street, as he noticed from the plan that a resumption of land two chains wide would be necessary in some places. He would also point out to the Ministry another matter which they had probably not taken into consideration, and that was that tenders had been let by a private company for the construction of a tramway in that particular locality down to where the station would be in Constance street. He hoped the Government would consider the circumstances he had referred to. He believed they could make the line so that it would prove a greater convenience to Fortitude Valley and a greater advantage to the colony than would be afforded by the present scheme. No advantage was afforded to the people on the eastern side of Fortitude Valley by having a station at Constance street. If the station were made somewhere about the present police-station they would touch nothing in the

shape of private land. He was looking forward, as the Minister for Works knew, to the time when the mercantile community would have the necessary accommodation to get from that point to the edge of what he looked upon as the best reach in the Brisbane River for the accommodation of large ships, and that was the Bulimba reach. He was of opinion that before two years were over they would see a network of wharves from Newstead very nearly to New Farm, and it was the duty of the Government to devise such measures as would encourage traffic on their railways and involve a minimum of expense. He hoped, before the matter came on to-morrow, the Government would consider the matter very seriously. He saw that a large expenditure in different parts of the city was proposed, and he was not going to object to it, because he thought the trade of Brisbane was so increasing that it was necessary for the Government to make provision for it. With regard to the proposed direct line from Ipswich to Warwick, he had been making inquiries, and he believed the Government had obtained all the information possible with reference to that work. The information he had was that the line would be a great advantage, and that it would save a large expense for the duplication of the Toowoomba line. But he doubted whether it was possible to construct it. It would have to go from Harrisville or from somewhere on the Harrisville line, but he was told that if a line was carried to the New South Wales border it would be a much simpler way of getting over the difficulty. He would suggest to the Minister for Works—who he knew was anxious to see those works carried out in the cheapest possible manner—whether a line from that particular branch to Warwick, by going on the other side of the New South Wales border, would not be more easily constructed. They could buy the land from New South Wales; and if the information he had was correct, it would be the cheapest line; and if the land was of the character that had been represented to him, then he believed it would be a judicious plan for the Government to buy what was necessary. He was told the other day by a gentleman that he had seen four large teams come down from the route of the proposed line to Harrisville, each with five tons of cedar on. The road could not be bad if that could be done. He thought, therefore, that the difficulties of railway construction in that direction were not so great as many people imagined. He had no doubt other hon. members were anxious to speak; and therefore he should reserve any further remarks he had to offer until they had expressed themselves.

Mr. NORTON said that the Minister for Works had told them a short time before that the Government had endeavoured to do justice to all parts of the colony. He was glad to hear it; but how had they done justice to Port Curtis? Did they think that justice had been done by putting down a line from Bundaberg towards Gladstone? Was there any justice in that? He wondered whether, if the Government were hungry, they would be satisfied with the smell of a red herring; if so, then that proposal would satisfy the people of Port Curtis. What would be the effect of that proposal? Probably there would not be another loan vote for the next six or seven years. The Treasurer seemed to think that capitalists at home were wanting to rush at him with their money and to put all their spare cash into his pockets. He did not think the hon. gentleman could have read what had appeared in the papers in Great Britain on that subject; because if he had he would know that every paper of any influence, and which might be considered a

reliable authority on the subject, had directly opposed the large borrowing now talked about by Colonial Governments. He quite admitted the force of what the hon. member had said in referring to Westgarth's circulars with regard to the greater inclination of capitalists in England to lend to the colonies because of the action of the present Imperial Government; but in spite of that, all the reliable papers spoke in a tone condemnatory of the large borrowing proposed by the colonies. As he had already said, he believed the effect of passing that Loan Bill would be that they would not have another Loan Bill for six or seven years; that was to say, if the money was to be expended as proposed. Of course, if any of the lines were treated in the same way as the Haughton Gap line, it was quite possible that they might have to ask the English capitalists for another loan within a reasonable time, but if all that money was to be borrowed and expended, then he saw no chance of another loan for the next six or seven years. The effect of that would be, so far as his constituents were concerned, that they would derive no advantage from the loan at all. If he was not right when he understood the Minister for Works to say that the Government proposed to carry out the line from Bundaberg to Gladstone, then he was sorry for it; he certainly drew that conclusion.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is a very easy line.

Mr. NORTON: It was a very easy line. He thought the intention was to construct a line from Bundaberg to Gladstone, as it ought to have been, and not from Bundaberg towards Gladstone. The only benefit which his district derived from that loan vote was, that it was proposed to expend a small sum in deepening the Narrows. As far as Gladstone was concerned, until the railway was actually continued to it, it would have the effect of taking the trade to Bundaberg. As the line extended towards Gladstone the people who lived near the end of it would naturally get their goods from Bundaberg, as being easier of access by rail than Gladstone by vehicle. Consequently some of the traffic which went to Port Curtis would be taken from it. The present action of the Government would prevent that line from being completed for seven or eight years. With regard to the railway from Bowen to Haughton Gap, the Minister for Works said it was never intended to carry out that line when it was proposed, and that a man must have been a madman to have proposed such a line with the intention of carrying it out. If that was so, why did not the hon. gentleman rise in his place in the House and protest against it at the time it was sanctioned? The vote was allowed to pass, and then when the hon. gentleman came into office he said the line when completed would compete with that from Townsville, and he did not intend to build competing lines of railway. That was a very fine statement to make, but were not the Government building competing lines of railway? What about the direct line from Ipswich to Warwick—would not that compete with the present line?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It requires a double line.

Mr. NORTON said all the traffic between Toowoomba and Warwick could be conveniently carried on one line, and even between Ipswich and Toowoomba all the traffic could be carried on a single line without danger as long as there was enough rolling-stock for the purpose. In fact, in proposing that direct line to Warwick the hon. gentleman was doing the very thing which he condemned the late Govern-

ment for with regard to the railway from Bowen to Haughton Gap. Then the hon. gentleman said the present Government were not going to make loop-lines. Surely the hon. gentleman did not remember the items on the Loan Estimates before him! What would the city extension be but a loop-line? It was indeed one for which there was little excuse; for if it was to go on into Fortitude Valley, it ought to go to some place where it would be useful to the Valley instead of being taken to make a loop with the Sandgate line. In its proposed form it was a loop-line and a competing line. Then there was that extraordinary little line from Toowoomba to Drayton, which cut off a corner and saved eight miles on the route to Warwick—what was that but a loop-line? The Warwick people seemed to be getting more than their fair share of the good things that were going about. They were to have a direct line down the Range, a line to St. George, and a little loop-line which would save them eight miles between their town and Toowoomba. And yet loop-lines and competing lines were the very things which the hon. gentleman most loudly condemned. He must confess he failed to follow the hon. gentleman's reasoning. He could only say again that he had great reason to complain of the neglect shown to his constituency. It was certainly an advantage to have the coast line carried so much nearer to Port Curtis, but it was an advantage of which they would not reap the benefit for many years. In that sense they derived no advantage from the proposal as it stood. There were other details to which he intended to refer, but he would refrain from doing so until they were brought forward in the usual course. He wished to know whether the Government had formed any idea, even approximately, as to proportion of the vote asked for which would be required to bring out indented immigrants? He presumed the Government had not forgotten that they were encouraging, or professing to encourage, planters and others to bring out indented immigrants to work on the plantations; and as the Committee were now asked to vote a large sum of money for immigration, it would be useful to know about what amount would be required for that purpose. It would also be useful as a guide to the number of ordinary immigrants who could be brought out under the vote.

The PREMIER said the Government were not able to give much information as to the probable number of indented immigrants. Up to the present time they had received no satisfactory information on the subject from any intending employers in the colony. He had had a further communication from the Mackay planters since he had informed them of the views of the Government, but it was of a very unsatisfactory character, and he had been obliged to let the matter drop for a while. With respect to the planters in the Bundaberg district and the Maryborough district, he had had no satisfactory information from them. So far as he could make out, they were not prepared to take any steps in the matter. They wanted the Government to make all arrangements for them—to find and engage the labour, to make the contracts, and to ship the labourers and deliver them at their doors. The Government were not prepared to do that; they did not feel justified in taking steps of that sort. Under those circumstances it was impossible to say how much of the vote would be required for that purpose. He presumed the planters would make some definite proposals, and he was much surprised that up to the present time they had not done so.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said his recollection of what took place between the

Mackay planters and the Colonial Secretary was this: They made a definite proposition—in fact the proposition was criticised by the whole House as being very explicit and very clear, and it was agreed to; but the low wages were dissented from. That, he understood to be the view taken by several hon. members on both sides; but the only answer given to the planters was that the Government could not agree to the terms proposed. Well, having proposed those clear and definite terms, it was the duty of the Government to say what part of the proposition they dissented from. He should like to know now, from what points they dissented, because unless the employers and the Government met and arranged matters, it was quite impossible that they could expect that a fair trial could be given to the system. That was as evident as possible—that no man would go to the expense of indenting labourers unless he knew on what terms the Government would approve of the arrangements made. The only communication he had heard of from the planters were from Bundaberg and Mackay. The Mackay planters stated their proposals very clearly, and he should like to know what correspondence had passed between the Bundaberg planters and the Colonial Secretary. He was asked by some planters to forward their interests by communicating with the Colonial Secretary, but it was not his business to do anything of the kind. The matter lay entirely with the Colonial Secretary, but he should like to know what part of the proposals the hon. member objected to; because he was quite sure from the communications of the Bundaberg planters to him that there was not the slightest desire on their part to do anything but try and give a fair trial to the Act. They were willing to do that, but their terms of payment were as low as the Mackay planters. What part of the conditions asked for did the Colonial Secretary disagree with, or did he see any feasible plan that he could suggest for employers to come to terms with the Government?

The PREMIER said, with respect to the Mackay planters, the proposition that they made was discussed in the House. He informed them that the Government could not assist in introducing labourers on the terms named, because they were such as to inevitably cause dissatisfaction and failure of the scheme. He did not conceive that it was the duty of the Government to frame an agreement for the planters and tell them that on those terms, and no others, they would introduce labour. He did not conceive it to be the duty of the Government to regulate the labour market in that way, nor did they propose to assume any such functions. He had replied to the planters and pointed out that the proposal made was likely to be unsuccessful, and he received a reply which, in effect, bid the Government defiance. The only reply he made was, that he regretted to receive such a communication, but that it appeared to be useless to offer any suggestions until they had further considered the matter. If a body of men approached the Government in the manner the Mackay planters did he simply said, "Until you are prepared to approach the matter in a more reasonable manner I have nothing further to say." That was how the matter stood at present. He had been very anxious all through to assist the planters in any way in his power, but the negotiations must be conducted in a proper manner. There must not be insults on one side and every possible concession on the other. That was not his way of doing business. With respect to the Bundaberg planters he could only speak from recollection. They first said they would require a certain number of persons, and that they were making inquiries

as to the persons who would desire to indent, in order that they might make arrangements for the appointment of an agent to engage the labourers. The last communication he received he had scarcely read, not having had more than an hour within the last ten days to do departmental work. The letter was lying on his table, and he would attend to it as soon as he could. He remembered pretty well what was in it. It was to the effect that they had only received, in reply to their circular, an answer from one person who wanted ten labourers. He had not yet answered that communication, and did not know what the nature of his answer would be; but he would reply to it as soon as he was let alone for an hour or two.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said he would leave the hon. member alone for an hour or two, but it would be well for the hon. member not to interfere with other members by incessantly talking when they were. That would be a style of letting alone which would be appreciated by some members. He would like to have some more information upon the subject. The hon. member told them that the last letter from the planters of Mackay was insolent, and bid him defiance. How the correspondence reached that point he did not know. The correspondence he had seen in the newspapers did not lead to that. The planters published a pamphlet that was thoroughly commended in the House. It was supposed to be clearly written, and all the terms were reasonable, except the wages that the indented Germans were to receive. In reply to that pamphlet the Colonial Secretary simply said he could not consent to the indenting of those men on the conditions proposed. That was simply a way of shelving the question. Had he desired to assist the planters in coming to a decision, he would have pointed out the conditions with which he agreed or disagreed. If the wages were too low he ought to have said so. If the accommodation was not sufficient he should have said so. They possibly would have been prepared to meet him on those points; but whether or not, the hon. gentleman should have said where he differed from the planters. Those were facts that he declined to disclose, and now it seemed that they had got to insults over the question. That was a conclusion which the hon. gentleman brought about himself, as by his action he had reduced the Mackay and other planters to a depressed state. He proposed to remedy that by putting the country to the expense of indenting cheap European labour for them, but he saw very well that the colony would not stand that. The people had expressed their opinion in that way clearly and decidedly, and the hon. gentleman saw now what the Opposition predicted would take place. He found that the colony would not agree to the introduction of cheap European labour, and he was putting every obstruction in the way of men who honestly intended to carry out the Act. They had gone as far as they possibly could to induce the hon. gentleman to show how they could possibly carry out the Act in an equitable way, yet he had declined to do so. Why was that? The reason was as plain as possible. The hon. gentleman did not want the Act brought into operation. He saw that if it were brought into operation it would bring an odium on the Government that they thoroughly deserved, because they had arranged to bring a cheap kind of labour into the colony to compete with the very people whose money was spent in bringing them. Now the hon. gentleman himself was putting every obstruction possible in the way of the planters.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman had said the same thing twenty or thirty times during

he present session, and he was not going to answer him any more. The hon. gentleman might have the last word, like an old woman. What he had always said, and still said, was that he was prepared to meet the planters in the fairest possible way, but he was not prepared to constitute the Government a labour agent to bring the labour to the doors of the planters. Until the planters showed some desire to help themselves, the Government could do nothing. The Government in no way receded from the position they originally took up.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said that, whenever the hon. gentleman was cornered in an argument, he always got angry. The hon. gentleman said he had repeated the same argument a dozen times. Possibly he had done so, and he thought it had had the effect of making the hon. gentleman understand that the Act he had passed would not have the operation he expected. The hon. gentleman himself had been the obstructionist. He passed the Act in spite of warnings that he should not expend the money of the working classes in bringing out cheap European labour to compete with them. He insisted on passing it as a remedy for the South Sea immigration, which he professed to deplore, and he predicted great things of it; and yet he was now found to be the chief obstructionist. The hon. gentleman was so done up with his business that he could not answer the Bundaberg planters; he could not find time to be even civil to the planters at Mackay. They had written sensible letters which demanded replies, and the correspondence so far had not reflected much credit on the Colonial Secretary, because it showed that he intended to make his own Act a failure.

The PREMIER said he could only say the intention of the Government was not to make the Act a failure, but to make it a success. That depended, however, not on the Government, but on the persons who desired the labour. The Government were willing to show them where they could get labour, and assist them in getting it, but they were not prepared to constitute themselves labour agents to bring the labour to their doors. As to the Government being obstructionists, the hon. gentleman, as he had said before, used terms in a very singular manner. If he found a man doing all he could to assist another, that was what the hon. member called obstruction and annoyance; and if he saw a man trying to annoy another, he called it assistance. He was quite prepared to be called an obstructionist in the peculiar sense in which the hon. gentleman used the term.

Mr. BLACK said he would like the hon. member to give a single instance of the planters having asked him to engage labour and bring it to their doors. The pamphlet that had been referred to distinctly pointed out how the planters themselves would engage the labour, and it was sent to the Colonial Secretary for him to make any suggestion he considered necessary in connection with any point the Government might not entirely approve of. The pamphlet was returned with a most insulting reply. The Mackay planters were most anxious to do all they could to give the Act a fair trial. As a further proof that the Act did not meet the difficulty, they had the fact that it had not been taken up either at Maryborough or Bundaberg except to a very limited extent. He knew pretty well what correspondence had taken place between the Mackay planters and the Government, and he could state that the obstruction had been on the part of the Government, who not only refused to indent the labour as suggested by the pamphlet, but



refused to make any suggestion at all. If the labour was to be brought out, it could only be made a success by a good understanding between the Government and the planters. The hon. Colonial Secretary expressed a desire that wiser counsels would prevail with the planters, but what wiser counsels could prevail? They had framed their Estimates on what they thought they could afford, and it devolved on the Government, seeing they disapproved of those propositions, to make suggestions as to what points were to be modified. It was perfectly true, as the hon. member for Mulgrave had said, that the Government were doing their best to prevent the Act being brought into operation for the benefit of the sugar industry of the colony.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman frequently made the mistake of supposing that Mackay was the colony. He had not told the hon. gentleman that the Mackay planters had made the proposition he referred to, but some other planters. The hon. gentleman not only seemed to think that Mackay was the whole colony, but that the Mackay planters were the only planters in the colony. He could assure the hon. member and the Committee that the Government were prepared to give every assistance to the planters that they could reasonably and honestly give in the interests of the country. If the planters insisted on having either what they could not have, or nothing, they must accept the latter alternative.

Mr. STEVENSON said he did not understand what position they were in now—whether it was any use discussing the Loan Estimates at all. The hon. Colonial Treasurer told them some time ago that the passing of the Loan Estimates depended on the passing of the Land Bill, but now it seemed they were to be passed whether the Land Bill passed or not. He was glad of that, but he would like the hon. member to explain the position, and show them how the interest on the loan was to be paid by increased rents if the Land Bill did not pass. The hon. gentleman had compared the hon. member for Townsville to an old lady who used to prophesy, but whose prophecies never came true. The hon. member for Townsville was drawing rather a gloomy picture, and the hon. gentleman was trying to draw a bright one, and was looking for better things. When the hon. gentleman was in office he was in a chronic state of having to look either to the past or to the future for prosperity, as he never managed to carry it along with him. He generally tried to stem the tide, or rather some of his colleagues did, and put him in the not very desirable position of having to find the money to do it with. He (Mr. Stevenson) quite agreed with the Colonial Treasurer that the colony was not in a very prosperous state at the present time, and he hoped, with the Treasurer, that it would be before long. But he would remind him that when he came into office he found it in a very prosperous state both as regarded the pastoral and the sugar industry. In fact it was too prosperous. The hon. gentleman and his colleagues seemed to think that the people were prospering too much, and they could not let well alone. The hon. Premier wished to be let alone now, but he could not let well alone before. He thought the sugar planters were making too much money, and he first put a check on the prosperity of that industry. And when the pastoral industry was prospering he thought it necessary to do something to check that prosperity also. He thought the squatters were making too much money. Perhaps for the very first time in the history of Queensland the pioneer squatters had had the chance of seeing their way to receive some result from their labour. That

was simply due to the flow of capital from the southern colonies; and because squatters were able to sell their stations at a fair price and were making a little money, a Bill was immediately brought in by the present Government to check that flow of capital, and so check the prosperity of Queensland. It was avowed by the Minister for Lands that the Bill had been brought in to check the flow of capital from Melbourne, and do away with Melbourne syndicates which brought in the capital to the colony. He (Mr. Stevenson) would remind the Treasurer that he was not likely to see the colony prosper generally, unless he was satisfied to see every class prosper; and if he saw one class too prosperous and thought it necessary to check it, he would find that the colony would never be generally prosperous. The drought had been bad enough, but the hon. gentleman and his colleagues had done as much as the drought to check the prosperity of the pastoral tenants and to check the flow of capital to the colony, and it would be a very long time before such a flow would be seen coming again from the southern colonies, as when once people lost confidence in a place it was not very easy to regain that confidence. There was no doubt that there had been a willingness on the part of people to bring capital into the colony, and such a flow had never before been experienced; but immediately the present Government came into power they seemed to think that it was a proper thing to check it. They were told that the interest on the ten-million loan was to be raised by the increase of rent from the pastoral tenants. Now he would like to know how that increase was to be got? At the present time many of the squatters were in a state of ruin; some were particularly so. Some of those who had managed to get over present difficulties were so situated that it would take ten years to put them in the position they were in when the present Government came into power, and when the drought commenced—even without any rise in rent. Of that he was perfectly satisfied, and hon. gentlemen who knew anything about squatting, knew that that was the case. If the hon. gentleman would go back twenty or thirty years, and take one year with another, and the whole experience of the colony, he would find that far more squatters had come to grief—aye, ten times more—than had made money. And those who had made money had done so pretty much by a fluke, and by being able to sell out at a time when the colony was in a particularly prosperous state. He wished to point out what he considered the utter hopelessness of thinking of paying interest on the ten-million loan from the increased rental of pastoral lands. If the hon. gentleman thought he was going to succeed in that, he would find out it was an utter failure. The hon. gentleman had told them that had the leader of the Opposition had his forces well mustered and moved a vote of want of confidence, he would have found them—his supporters—well satisfied with the Loan Estimates. He (Mr. Stevenson) doubted that. He was not one of those happy individuals who had got anything at all put down for his constituency. He found there was £35,000 to complete a railway, but he believed that money was all spent; and no new money had been put down for his district and no new works of any description whatever. He considered that a great many of those lines on the Loan Estimates were almost unnecessary, and that there were other portions of the colony entirely neglected, where railway lines would have been of some service. For instance, the agricultural lands along the coast from Rockhampton to Mackay might very well have been utilised if a railway went through them. And if it had not been for the collapse almost of the



sugar industry, he would have taken a good deal of trouble in agitating for such a line. He had been really thinking once of going to the Minister for Works and asking him to have a portion of the money put down for a line from Rockhampton to Mackay, *via* St. Lawrence. His argument would have been based on the fact that those lands were fit for growing sugar, but the hon. gentleman would have turned around and said the Government had determined that the sugar industry should be burst up. He was satisfied that had the sugar industry been allowed to go ahead as it had been going, the whole of the land between Rockhampton and Mackay would have been under sugar in two years, or a great portion of it. A great portion of that land was well suited for sugar-growing, and if that industry had gone ahead, he was satisfied that the line from Rockhampton to Mackay, through the rich agricultural lands, would have paid very well. He did not intend to discuss all the lines just then, but wished just to make a few general remarks, as he could discuss the different railways as they came on. Some of them were quite superfluous, and others that he had a great objection to were those which were put down for the purpose of being dangled before hon. members for the next five years—those with the undefined routes. He strongly objected to them, and he thought that no money should be voted for lines unless those lines were distinctly specified. If hon. members on the Opposition side failed to fix the Government to that, he trusted that hon. gentlemen on the Government side would see the desirableness of forcing them to state where the lines were to go.

Mr. ISAMBERT said it was amusing to listen to the outcry when anything connected with the sugar industry was mentioned, notably cheap labour. Up to a certain point in the history of the sugar industry, the cry was not cheap labour but reliable labour, and when the Government had sought to provide reliable labour, the cry was cheap labour. The Labour question, and anything connected with the sugar industry, reminded him of a porcupine. When a porcupine was disturbed it curled up, and wherever it was touched it was full of prickles, and so was the sugar question. It had been disturbed; and no matter how it was approached, it would sting the fingers of the most dexterous man. What they wanted really had been disclosed in the cases lately tried before the Supreme Court. Their object reminded him of the American sugar-planter who was praying for niggers without souls. Even the planters and cotton-growers who could buy the niggers for so much money were not satisfied, and they wanted niggers without souls, and that was what the sugar-planters here required. They said they did not want cheap labour, but reliable labour; and when the Government made it possible to have reliable labour, they wanted cheap labour. Even their own party passed an Act providing reliable labour, but they would not take advantage of it; and when the Premier brought in a slight amendment to that Act, so as to enable labourers to bring their families, the whole blame was attached to the present Government. So much for the labour question. With regard to the Loan Estimates, he was not quite satisfied with them, because there was no vote for a branch line through Rosewood; still he was bound to support them. Listening to the arguments of the leader of the Opposition, who was also Premier of the Upper House, if they did not know his antecedents, it would be really difficult to understand what he was driving at. First he asked where would they get the interest from? The Government based the Loan Estimates upon the passing of the Land Bill; and in other words the hon. gentleman

said that he had taken good care that the Land Bill should not pass; he had taken the necessary step as leader of the Upper House. Then he and his supporters found fault with the Loan Estimates, and said the amount was too much. £10,000,000 in one fell swoop! But they found by the Treasurer's statement that within the last four years the amount of loans contracted almost approached in magnitude the present one. If they studied the hon. gentleman's antecedents they would also find that he had been striving for the best part of his Queensland colonial life to introduce those transcontinental railway syndicates, and, through the patriotic action of the present Premier, those schemes had been frustrated. He remembered when he pleaded that his scheme was frustrated, he said in effect, "I have done everything I could for the contractors; I can do no more." That would be fresh and green in his (Mr. Isambert's) memory so long as he lived. The hon. leader of the Opposition and Premier of the Upper House thought he had made due provision for blocking the Land Bill, and consequently the Loan Estimates; and he stigmatised the proposal to borrow £10,000,000 as gigantic and revolutionary. It had been proved by the Colonial Treasurer that their past contracts were almost similar in magnitude; and if in the past they had been borrowing to such a large extent, how much more were they justified, always supposing that borrowing were correct, in making reasonable loan proposals and reasonable works proposals? Not proposing small matters here and there, for they had made discoveries of minerals, etc., in the North; and their obligations and resources had so much extended that, if a loan four or five years ago of £3,000,000, of which the leader of the Opposition boasted so much, were justifiable, a loan of £10,000,000 was equally justifiable now. They were also equally able, in fact more able to pay the interest on the loan. It was not to be supposed for one moment that, when a man put an object before him which he considered was worth while striving for, whether rightly or wrongly did not much matter, he would be easily thwarted or would readily give up his project. It was therefore reasonable to suppose from the present obstruction from the other side of the Committee that the construction of railways on the land-grant principle was still a cherished hope of the leader of the Opposition. The railways proposed by the hon. gentleman to be built on that principle were the Warrego railway and the transcontinental railway. The total length of the two lines was about 1,600 miles, and they involved the alienation of from 12,000,000 to 15,000,000 acres of land. The Loan Estimates before the Committee covered about 1,600 miles of railway, so that the loan proposals of the Government in respect to railways did not exceed the railway proposals of the leader of the Opposition. The difference between the two proposals was that the present Government would build the railways themselves, and at the same time pay due regard to the people in the interior by extending the trunk lines; while the late administration would have handed the work over to a company and given them grants of land. The present Government did not neglect the districts where population was settled. The extension of the trunk lines into the interior would not be justifiable at the present time if it were not necessary to secure the colony against the possibility of being betrayed into the hands of grasping speculators. When once the line to Cloncurry was built, however, such a fearful proposal as that entertained by the late Government would be impossible, and that was what the present leader of the Opposition and Premier of the Upper House was afraid of, and why he wished to frustrate the Ministry in their

railway proposals. He (Mr. Isambert) believed they could borrow sufficient money to construct their railways, and that they would be able to meet the interest on the loan by an increase in their land revenue. If a syndicate or a small handful of people, holding what were called foundation shares, which entitled them to one-fourth of the profits of the company in which they were shareholders, could borrow money for the construction of 1,600 miles of railway on the security of land obtained from the Government, how much better could the Government borrow the required amount on the security of the whole of the lands of the colony? In advocating borrowing for the purpose of carrying out their railway schemes, he did not say that he approved of borrowing money. He only approved of it comparatively, because he believed that the building of railways on the land-grant principle would be far more injurious to the country. He must say at once that he did not approve of borrowing. Where would it lead to? That was the question he had heard so often. It was like trusting to Providence to relieve them of a difficulty which was sure to arise if they went on as they were doing. In saying that he was not speaking of the Loan Estimates before the Committee, but he was speaking against the borrowing mania in the whole of Australia. The borrowing system of the whole of the colonies was bad. In proposing the nefarious scheme of building railways on the land-grant principle in this colony the late Premier was not guarding the honour of the people or the honour of the country. He tried his very best to spoil the credit of the colony by proclaiming over and over again that their borrowing powers were exhausted. While he wanted to use those exhausted borrowing powers for carrying out railways in the populous districts, he advocated that in the interior where there were not so many engineering difficulties the lines should be built by syndicates or companies who wished to batten on the country. That the Land Bill would afford an increased revenue and provide the interest on loans was perfectly correct, and he (Mr. Isambert) approved of the measure, but he would like to see the Treasurer take the next step and increase the revenue much more by revising the tariff. They could then construct their railways out of their own money, and if they had to borrow, then he was sure they would be so well off and have such a flush of money that they would be able to borrow all they required in the colony without going home. The late Premier also told them, when he tried to frighten the colony into accepting his land-grant policy, that the colony was resting on a volcano. It was still resting on a volcano, and that volcano was the borrowing madness. It was strange that in a country where land speculators became so rich, they should have to borrow every shilling for public works; it did not denote statesmanship in any of the colonies. He had spoken rather severely on the borrowing policy, and he should condemn it still more. In doing so, he should employ the words used by the Colonial Treasurer. When addressing his constituents, he told them that the country had borrowed £18,000,000, but that nearly £2,000,000 had been used for the redemption of debentures, so that the present debt was sixteen and a-half millions. Of that sixteen and a-half millions, the hon. gentleman said that only £1,900,000 in actual cash had come to the colony; the rest, the Treasurer told them in that House, had been spent at home for goods sent out to the colony. Now, he (Mr. Isambert) had always been under the impression that they could not have their cake and eat it too; and if they borrowed money and spent it at home, how was it possible to spend it in the colony?

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Hear, hear!

MR. ISAMBERT: He believed that was a question which even the leader of the Opposition had not well studied; at all events, if he had, he had never expressed it. They had, as he had said, only received about £2,000,000 in actual cash; that was, that about one-eighth of the money borrowed actually came to the colony.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: No.

MR. ISAMBERT: If they had borrowed sixteen and a-half millions, and only two millions came here, that was about one-eighth.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: How much goes the other way for interest?

MR. ISAMBERT: He would come to the interest by-and-by. He always noticed that the more money the colonies borrowed, the more did they find themselves under the necessity of borrowing. The Treasurer had made a very damaging and fearful statement, and he was very thankful to the hon. gentleman for the enlightenment he had given him about it. The hon. gentleman had stated that out of the last £8,000,000 that were contracted, only about £100,000 had come out to the colony in actual cash. Now, if on their total debt they had only got one-eighth, and if out of that £8,000,000 they only got £100,000, how much of that £100,000,000 were they likely to get if they received it in the same decreasing ratio? That matter of introducing foreign capital by means of borrowing was very strange—surpassing strange. The Treasurer told them that the money was spent in the home country for goods, and when he said that to his constituents at Red Hill, a plain working man called out, "That is the money we want here." So he (Mr. Isambert) said. He believed that if that £10,000,000 was borrowed and expended in reproductive public works it would send the colony far ahead on the path of progress and prosperity; but if they did not get the money into the colony how could it be spent on reproductive works? The Treasurer told them that the money did not come out, and yet public works were contracted for and the money spent. Where did the money come from? He would tell them. The loan was raised, and it was written to the credit of the colony in the banker's ledger. Consignments of goods were sent out. A bill was hypothecated to the banker, and it was written to the debit of the colony. The importer who received the goods got a bill out; he accepted it, and in due time he had to meet it. But it did not go into his pocket. He sold the goods to the small storekeepers, and got bills from them to cover them. The storekeepers sold the goods to the public, and were like suction pumps—better pumps than ever any engineer discovered. They pumped the people out of the money, and sent it to the importer, and the importer sent it home, or rather paid through his bank into the Treasury. In that way the money that they imagined was borrowed was actually stolen from the people and paid into the Treasury. The Government—not the present Government, but all the Governments of the Australian colonies—were too great cowards to face the people with proposals for public works, and tell them they must tax themselves; because if they did not tax themselves they must rob themselves. The Government was not game enough to tax the people, but they made the importers pickpockets to pickpocket all the people around. That was what the Governments of the Australian colonies were doing—they were converting the commercial men into pickpockets to pickpocket the people. What was involved in that borrowing? They were now paying over £700,000 a year in interest, and when the

ten-million loan was contracted they would be paying over £1,100,000. What was the good of borrowing money to spend on public works when they had to pay that interest? Actually they were borrowing money to pay interest at home, and they never got a farthing out of it. He had no wish to take charge of the Treasury, but if the Government would give him the key of the Custom House for one twelve months he would make the Treasurer's heart burst for joy. Out of all the loans they had contracted the colony had got barely £2,000,000, and they had paid £7,000,000 in interest for it up to last December. Was there not a problem in that borrowing which it was their duty to fathom? And when they had found out where the evil lay, was it not their duty honestly and boldly to face it? He thought he had proved sufficiently from facts that the more they went into borrowing the less actual money they got. The more they borrowed the more money was required, and if they had to leave over a million in England of the money they borrowed, how could it be spent in the colony? He did not believe in miracles. The days of miracles were passed. Everything that happened was based on natural laws, and what they could not understand they called a phenomenon—a word to cover their ignorance. Borrowing money in Europe was nothing but “thimble-rigging.” Australia, with its immense treasures of gold and other minerals, ought to be the money market for the European countries to borrow from; then they would pay into their own pockets instead of into the pockets of people outside the colony—he did not care where, whether in England or in Germany. The British money-lenders knew very well that they did not send money out to the colony. If they sent actual money he ventured to say that their loans would not realise 50 per cent. If Queensland raised £5,000,000 in one year, it did not press the money market so much as if Victoria, which was a far richer country, raised only £2,000,000. Why was that? Because Victoria, taught in the hard school of adversity, had adopted protective principles, had encouraged arts and manufactures, and manufactured a great part of her own goods which Queensland had to import. People at home knew that they could not send out to Victoria Manchester rubbish; they must send out actual gold. When some time ago England had actually to send out more gold to Australia, what a hullabaloo was raised about it! One would have thought that England was going straight to destruction. Nothing excited the commercial world so much as sending gold to Victoria. That proved that Queensland did not get money for its loans; it only got obligations and Manchester rubbish. If the ships which carried those goods were sunk to the bottom of the sea the colony would profit by it. Instead of the money they borrowed being spent in the colony it was spent in England. Where was the man who would show enough statesmanship to borrow money in Australia, with its immense resources of gold and other valuable minerals? That he was not wrong was proved by the experience of the other colonies. New Zealand had contracted a public debt of £30,000,000, and paid away annually over £1,000,000 of money. If borrowing money would cause prosperity, then surely New Zealand would be prosperous, but she was on the verge of bankruptcy. It was all the same whether the debt was contracted by the Government or by private parties; it was a debt owing by the country. The debt of New Zealand, as he said, was £30,000,000, and to that had to be added £5,000,000 of money lent to public bodies, besides which about £40,000,000 was owed privately. Just imagine a debt of £75,000,000! Where was that to come from, and how could a colony prosper with such a mill-

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stone round its neck? It was impossible. As a proof that goods were forced on the colony, he had heard a statement made by several importers, that it would be a good thing if all our ports and harbours were blockaded by an enemy, and then the surplus stock could be got rid of. The whole of the Australian colonies and New Zealand, taken together, owed about £250,000,000, and was that not a frightful burden and a tremendous sum on which to pay annual interest? The negotiation of loans did not introduce capital into the colony, but gave a license to merchants to extract the last penny from the people, and thus actually a worse oppression than was practised in Turkey and Egypt was brought about here. Now, was it not the height of absurdity to speak seriously of borrowing money so long as they read in the public manifestoes about so many hundred thousand sovereigns being exported to England, and that about eight months ago only a million's worth of sovereigns were imported into Victoria? Was it not cowardly to refuse to face the subject of taxation, but to rely on borrowing? They had a very striking example in America, where alternately they adopted the principles of protection and freetrade. When they adopted protection prosperity reigned in the country and money was plentiful, but whenever they adopted freetrade money became scarce, their own industries were closed and they had to borrow money; but when they returned to protection prosperity was again in the country, their industries progressed, and not only could they supply the money for their own public works, but they paid off the national debt. The late Premier tried to persuade them that their borrowing power had become exhausted, and when that gentleman went home last year he (Mr. Isambert) sincerely hoped in his heart that he would be able by certain schemes to succeed in ruining the credit of the country. If he did that he would have earned more orders and honours than his broad and capacious chest would have room to bear. He hoped the hon. gentleman's last effort in engineering had ruined the Land Bill, so as to make the borrowing of money under it unsuccessful. He wished him every success in that way. Thus, by ruining the credit of the colony in the eyes of the British public and the British money-lender, which would open our eyes to see how rich we are, then he would have done the greatest service he could render to the Australian colonies. He had a great deal more to say, but as he had occupied the attention of the Committee for some time he would now conclude.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said, after the lengthy financial statement they had heard, which at least had the virtue of novelty about it, the Treasurer ought to withdraw the Loan Estimates. He hoped the hon. gentleman understood the hon. member for Rosewood, and that he would digest thoroughly what the hon. member said, and find out some means of borrowing money without paying interest.

Mr. ISAMBERT: We are rich enough.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said if the Treasurer could not do that he should give his place up to the hon. member for Rosewood. Before the Estimates were withdrawn, however, he had a little to say about the immigration vote, and he wanted to take the Minister for Works to task for a little ignorance he displayed in playing the Pharisee as much as he had done. He told the Committee—“I am not like the members of the Opposition; I do not make railways for my friends. I make railways all round the colony, but you Opposition sinners—you are not half as good as I am.” He really thought the hon. gentleman was a little bit pharisaical, and did not deserve

quite so much credit as he gave himself. He wanted to ask the Colonial Treasurer whether the Estimates were to be put item by item or in lump sums. For instance, they had a lump sum of £3,140,000 under the heading of "Railways, Southern and Western;" was that to be put in the lump sum or item by item, as he understood from the Minister for Works? He would also draw the hon. member's attention to the immigration vote. If the whole loan vote were spent in five years, that would be £2,000,000 a year; and as the average loan expenditure in the past had been a million and a-quarter, the hon. member would see how much greater the population must be to carry out the increased expenditure. They must have an increasingly larger population, and he would ask the hon. member how it was he had only put down £750,000 for immigration. At £20 a head, that would simply give 37,500 immigrants, and that number spread over five years would be 7,500 a year—a very small number indeed. Besides that, of course, there were a good many bounty immigrants, but supposing they reached 12,000 altogether, that number would be insufficient to meet the demands for labour which must take place on the spending of £2,000,000 a year in addition to the carrying on of the ordinary industries of the colony. Now, the last year the previous Government were in office they brought out 26,000, and they were absorbed as fast as they came; yet they were only spending a million and a-quarter, and every industry was more or less prosperous, some of them certainly more prosperous than now. He would ask the Colonial Treasurer how he was going to meet the demand for labour by spending only £750,000 in five years. The loan vote might be spent in three years—that would be over £3,000,000 a year. It was impossible to understand the matter. Immigration would have to be trebled, and that sum would not do it. Something had been said about the amended Immigration Bill. No answer had been given to the question of the hon. member for Port Curtis whether the amount asked for immigration was to include the expenditure on indentured labourers. The Colonial Secretary raised a side-issue by attacking the planters instead of answering the question, and he was still in ignorance whether the expenditure on indentured labourers was to come out of that vote or not.

The PREMIER: Yes, of course.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Then in that case the amount was much too small; and that made his argument still stronger—that it was not enough to provide labour sufficient for the expenditure of £10,000,000 in five years. Besides, he would point out that when the hon. gentleman brought in the Act he prided himself upon it as a panacea for the labour market. He stated that he had a scheme in his head to supply the market with labourers, but he had not done so yet. The labour market the hon. gentleman meant to supply was, in fact, in a worse state than before. It seemed to him that the hon. gentleman had taken up a wrong position. If the planters did not understand the Act the hon. gentleman should explain it. When the late Government passed the Divisional Boards Act they knew very well people would not understand it, so they took the trouble to print an explanation of it. If the planters did not understand the Immigration Act it was the hon. gentleman's duty to point out where the misunderstanding arose. There could be no arrangement made where both parties dealt in generalities; they must come to particulars to understand each other, and he thought the person who should come to particulars was the Colonial Secretary. If the hon. member did that, he had no doubt

the planters would take advantage of the Act, and bring out labourers so as to give the system a fair trial. It was only an experiment, and one which he thought would not work; but nevertheless it should have a fair trial. They might be mistaken in thinking it would not work, and the only way to prove they were wrong was by encouraging the employers of labour to give it a fair trial. The way to do that was to come to particulars and point out deficiencies; and if they did not choose to amend those deficiencies the onus would rest with them. As to immigration, he thought the Colonial Treasurer should answer what he had stated regarding expenditure for five years. As to what the Minister for Works had said, he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) had said in the beginning of his speech that the hon. gentleman had been playing the Pharisee too strongly altogether, and had claimed for himself the position of the fairy in scattering happiness and pleasure all over the colony indiscriminately, and without distinction of friend or foe. Well, he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) would as soon have in office a rogue as a fool. People could watch rogues, but nobody—not all the combined wisdom of that House—could watch fools. And he said that the hon. gentleman in making the statement he did about impartiality, and more especially the statement he had made concerning the Bowen line and everything connected with it, showed that he was ignorant of what he took in hand to explain. In the first place, the hon. gentleman had stated that the line from Bowen was 150 miles through a valueless country. It was only 70 miles long.

The PREMIER: No, no!

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said, that it was only seventy miles from the point of junction, and that ninety miles would take it to Townsville altogether. He meant taking the line to what was usually called Houghton Gap.

The PREMIER: Sixty-five miles long!

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said, sixty-five miles to Houghton Gap, and ninety-five miles would take it to Townsville itself. The hon. gentleman had expatiated against taking the railway in that direction because there was no good land there. He admitted that there was not very much good land at the Houghton Gap end of the line, but there was passable land at the Bowen end. But if the hon. gentleman did not choose to take the railway to Houghton Gap, why not have made it one of the connecting links of the coast line of railways, which both sides of the House agreed should be constructed? Why not have made it from Bowen *via* Ayr, where there was some of the best land in the colony; or taken it from Bowen to Mackay, which would have been one of the links in the coast line. But he actually took it in a direction where the people did not want it, and said it was being taken to one of the best coalfields in Queensland. He would read to the hon. gentleman a few words from Mr. Jack's report, to show how much he knew of Mr. Jack's report or of the country.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have been over the country.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had been over the country before the hon. gentleman became a Minister, and he said that there was some good grazing land in that district, but only in small patches on the banks of the Bowen River. Mr. Jack stated that there was coal there—a good many seams—but that it had been already burned. It could not be used twice over. What was the use of trying to extract coal that had actually been burned by an overflow of dolerite? Mr. Jack said so himself in

his report, and recommended to the Government, if they were going to make an experiment, that they should bore at least 1,000 or 1,200 feet, to see if they could not find a better class of coal at that depth. There was one seam, known as Macarthur seam, dolerite, next burnt coal, next grey shale, and then burnt coal again, then a hard grey ferruginous sandstone, then a burnt shaley coal, then grey-brown sandstone, next grey shales, darker shales, with coaly laminae one-quarter inch thick, then a bituminous coal—tolerable it was called by Mr. Jack, but it was only one inch thick! Then there was grey sandstone again, and a coal crumbling, with shale—the coal laminae of fair quality, 15 inches thick. That was one seam; there was another: Dolerite, the lower part white trap 25 feet; then there was a gap of 10 feet before they came to burnt coal, partly columnar, somewhat caked in part; veins and pockets of white trap in upper part; concretions of iron-stone in vertical and horizontal joints; nodules of decomposed pyrites; then there was black shale, next burnt coal and black shale, and burnt coal again, and more black shale and burnt coal! That was the coal which the hon. gentleman had assured the Committee was the best coal in Queensland!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So it is.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that was ridiculous. That was the Daintree seam, which was one of the largest. Another seam was the Rosella, which, like the Daintree, had the misfortune to furnish coal that was already burnt. The Garrick seam promised somewhat better than the Daintree. It contained layers of shining coal alternatively with dark coaly shale. It required a strong wood fire to keep it burning and left a good deal of brown ash! That was the coal to which the hon. gentleman was going to take the railway! As to the Daintree seam Mr. Jack said:—

"A sheet of intrusive dolerite rests on this seam, where its outcrop is visible on the left bank of the Bowen River. The lower part of the dolerite has been converted into "white-trap." The topmost 6 feet of the coal have been destroyed by the trap, which wanders through it in veins and 'pockets.' Seven feet of the underlying coal are less injured, and a 3-inch band near the bottom presents no visible sign of having suffered from the heat radiated from the intrusive igneous rock."

The report also said:—

"For the purpose of 'proving' the coalfield, I should recommend in the first place a deep bore (say 1,000 or 1,200 feet) commencing near the uppermost bed of the basin. The most suitable place for the bore would be along the axial line of the synclinal trough which runs parallel to the river on the south side. A site about one mile west of the north-west corner of Rudolph block would be in a favourable position, and have the advantage of being accessible by the Havilah-Byerman road. This place is seventy-eight miles from Bowen, by Eurie Hotel, Mount Pleasant, Sonoma, and Jack's Creek. A bore in this position may be expected to give a complete section of the upper or freshwater series, and to reveal such of the coal seams as do not show at the surface owing to the deepness of the soil and drift. It would also test the presence or absence of workable seams of ironstone, oil shale, or alum shale."

What was the use of the hon. gentleman trying to delude the Committee into adopting a vote of that kind? He hoped that if the hon. gentleman did try and pass it, it would be under a different heading, and would be appropriated to go, not to the goldfield, but either to the north or the south along the coast, making a link in the coast line. He did not care which of those directions it took; but he preferred the north. The hon. gentleman said the line ought to be carried out into the western interior. Did he know where it would go westward from where that supposed coalfield existed? It would go right into Charters Towers; so that the hon. gentleman really knew nothing about it. He was not going to discuss the railway proposals now as they were on the immigration

vote, and he would not have gone into the matter at all had it not been for the absurd assertions made by the Minister for Works; and he trusted that he had dissipated any ideas hon. members might have had in their heads about that being a payable line. He trusted that the Colonial Treasurer would thoroughly weigh what he had said about immigration.

The PREMIER: The amount of £750,000 will be sufficient to provide for immigration for the next three or four years at any rate.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I took the Treasurer's statement for five years.

The PREMIER said he did not intend to spend £350,000 a year. That was too much; £200,000 a year was a very fair amount to spend, and for that they should be able to bring as many people as were needed, as the bounty system was capable of very great extension. He did not propose that immigration should be increased at the Government expense beyond 15,000 a year, unless some unforeseen circumstances arose. Some of them would be fully paying and others partly paying, and many more than that would not be required for next year or for the year after. He anticipated large immigration from New South Wales and Victoria, and he fancied that the people who had gone South during the last few months would come back as fast as they went, and a great deal faster. The balance of immigration from the other colonies over emigration to them was in favour of Queensland.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: No.

The PREMIER said the returns showed that it was. The hon. gentleman would subtract two from five, and make the remainder six. Nevertheless it was three. The hon. gentleman also wanted to know whether the railway votes would be taken *seriatim*. The Government proposed to take them as the totals appeared in the margin.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he could tell the Premier something about the returns. It was not very long since he was in Sydney, and when coming back there was a gentleman on board with whom he had some conversation. He appeared to be a clergyman; but he did not know his name, so he looked down the passenger list to see if there was the name of any reverend gentleman there; but there was not. Of course they all knew the list was published usually on the morning after the arrival of the steamer. He read it right to the end, but did not see the name. At the end of the list he saw there were thirty-seven in the steerage, and he was positive that there was not a single passenger in the steerage. He could give the name of the steamer and of the captain, and the date, and the captain could bear him out that there were no passengers in the steerage.

The PREMIER: Of course the statistics are not made up from newspaper reports, but from Customs House returns.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: They are made up in a similar way.

Mr. BLACK said that as that vote was likely to be all that the colony could expect for the next three or five years, he should ask the Premier upon what conditions indentured labourers would be allowed to be introduced into the colony?

The PREMIER said he did not quite understand what the hon. gentleman wanted to know, and he doubted much whether the hon. gentleman knew himself. The Government were prepared to make arrangements for bringing out indentured labourers from Europe. The employers must indent the labourers, and enter into an agreement with them under the provision of the

Immigration Act, and that agreement was to be approved by an officer appointed by the Government here. The Government would provide the passages, the employers paying a deposit as required by law. The Government would also see that the men, when they were engaged, were informed truly as to the circumstances of the colony and the nature of the work they would have to do, and also what would be a fair amount of wages for them to receive. That was what the Government were prepared to do, and it was proposed that the same system should apply to the continent of Europe as had been in force in respect to Scotland or any other part of the United Kingdom. The Government were not prepared to say distinctly that the wages should be so much, or the rations so much, or deal with any matters of that kind, as they regulated the employment of kanakas; but they would receive any reasonable proposition employers made.

Mr. PALMER said the Premier had forgotten to answer the question he had put to him with reference to the immigration vote. That was whether it was intended to bring out a class of labour that would be useful for carrying out large public works? The labour which it was intended to indent under the Immigration Act was not at all a class that would be useful to contractors.

The PREMIER said it was impossible to say what kind of labourers would be introduced, but they were not likely to introduce navvies.

Mr. ISAMBERT said the sooner hon. members made up their minds that that forcing system was a thing of the past the better. He understood that the Government would give every facilities for employers to make legitimate offers for labour.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he would like to clearly understand the statement made by the Premier. Were they going to be asked to vote on each item? He understood that it was intended merely to take the items down the margin. If that was so it would be an exceedingly difficult thing for hon. members to treat the Estimates as they ought to be treated. He might agree with every item but one in a bunch of railways; and he would be placed in this position; that he would either have to vote against the whole of them or vote for a line he did not approve of.

The PREMIER said any hon. member could move that any particular railway be omitted. There were thirty items, and it was not necessary to have thirty debates or discussions. That was not usual nor was it desirable.

Mr. BROOKES said he had been struck with the fact that hon. gentlemen on the other side would not take a right view of the labour question. The sugar planters particularly seemed to imagine that people came out to the colony for their benefit; but that was entirely a mistake. He had heard the pamphlet referred to; and he really thought the hon. member for Mackay would have had a keener sense of propriety than to have referred to that again. The Government were blamed for their action with reference to that pamphlet, but what was it? The pamphlet was issued on the supposition that people could be inveigled from Europe to work for 7s. 6d. a week, half of which was to be held for twelve months by the employer, and might be withheld altogether from any cause. Really, they had had enough of that pamphlet. He considered that the Colonial Secretary had treated it more leniently than it deserved. How many times would it be necessary for hon. members to be told that the Labour question was the most important question that could come before that House; and yet a few people thought that they

ought to have the disposal of all the immigrants that came to the colony. They never seemed to awake to this fact: that people came to the colony to benefit themselves, not the squatters, nor the sugar-planters, nor employers of any kind; but unless they came out under a bad bargain they could not benefit themselves without benefitting their employer. There must always be two sides to a good bargain. Now, the sugar-planters in Mackay, the Johnstone, and Bundaberg had always had the idea that they could get any kind of labour. He therefore rose for the purpose of reading an extract from the *Spectator* of October 11. The article was a review of a continental work on "The Alimentation of the Working Classes." There seemed to be an idea that Germans introduced from the Continent would be quite cheap; so it stated in the pamphlet. He held that to be an entire mistake. Let them look at the philosophy of the matter. The extract he was about to read would appear in *Hansard*, and he fancied that when it was read it would go a great way to expose the hollowness and selfishness of the sugar-planters in what they were trying to do. The extract was as follows:—

"The efficiency of labour can no more be gauged by hours or minutes than its real value can be estimated by the price which it commands; one man may do more work in ten hours than another does in twelve; and the operative who earns 30s. a week may very well be a cheaper man to his employer than another who earns but 20s. It is not in the nature of things that an ill-fed should be a robust worker, and though a well-paid man may, through ignorance, carelessness, or other causes be badly fed, it is quite certain that low wages cannot procure good living. Hence the exceedingly cheap labour of the Continent may be anything but cheap in the long run; and though South of England farmers pay much lower wages than the farmers of the Northern counties, the effective cost of their labour is probably considerably more. An Essex hand at 12s. or 13s. a week is a far less profitable servant than a Cumberland ploughman at 11s. or 15s. and his keep."

He must enter his protest now against this trifling with the important question of labour. The immigrants whom they expected and invited should be free to engage in the open market, and if planters could not afford to give them fair wages they must go without their labour. It had been said that the Government had ruined the sugar industry. He might be repeating himself, and saying what had been said a hundred times, but he felt bound to say again that if the sugar industry could not stand on an honest basis—a basis agreeable with sound morality—it had better be ruined. They could not too often say that. But what had the Government done to ruin the sugar industry? The first thing they did was to check the atrocities connected with the South Sea Island labour traffic. Like everything of the kind, the moment the evils of that trade were touched, that moment it began to die out—it was strangled. The moment they attempted to have it conducted properly, they ruined it. The South Sea Island trade could not be conducted properly, and he would recommend the sugar-planters to abandon the idea of having a supply of South Sea Islanders for their work. Let them address themselves fairly to the subject. What was the use of telling the Committee about the depression in sugar. He read the other day an article on the condition of trade in England, and he found that it was worse than it had been within the memory of living men. Wheat was low there just as sugar was low here. The shipbuilding trade was ruining the persons engaged in it. On every hand, all over England, there was depression. Hon. members seemed to think that there was something unprecedented in the sugar industry of Queensland being depressed. If it was depressed, let them inquire into the

cause of it. The depression could not arise from the same cause as the depression in England, for there was a market in Australia for all the sugar the colony could grow. The fact was, that the persons engaged in the industry had not got hold of the right way of managing it. He had recently read an article in the *Fortnightly Review* in which the writer endeavoured to exculpate Queensland from the charges made in connection with the South Sea Island labour trade, on account of the enormous amount of money—£5,000,000—invested in the sugar industry. It was about time the House and the colony woke up to the fact that if, instead of £5,000,000, there were £50,000,000 invested in it, the sugar industry must be judged by the morality of the manner in which it was conducted, and in no other way. It must be conducted so as to be profitable to the colony and to the employes as well as to the planters—profitable, in fact, all round. It might be made an industry which would spread indefinitely all over those now unoccupied lands in the North, by the steady influx of people engaged for the work and who, when they had served their time, could go out upon their own land and form sugar estates of their own. Instead of that, the theory had been to have big estates, and big estates were a fraud upon the colony. They contributed nothing to the revenue, and might be a most dreadful political danger. He was not aware that big estates anywhere in the world were a source of comfort and prosperity to any place; they were being done away with in Germany and France, and the tendency in England was towards small estates. He trusted they would soon get over their foolish way of talking about the Labour question. The squatters used to think that their immense leased holdings were their own, and that everybody who came to the colony ought to be either a person who could supply them with any goods they wanted, or go shepherding for them. They fought to the very utmost, and were fighting still, to carry out that theory to push people from the land, and to get hold of it for themselves. They looked upon a farmer as an absurdity. He remembered once riding from Ipswich by coach, and there were two squatters on the box. They saw a man ploughing at Oxley Creek, and one of them said to the other, "Well, I wonder that people are such fools in this colony as to do that kind of work." He (Mr. Brookes) thought that a strange remark. They evidently thought that farmer ought to be following at the tails of their sheep. He trusted a better day was coming. With respect to that particular vote there was an idea running through his mind which no hon. gentleman on the other side had yet alluded to, and that was to establish some such system of immigration as they saw in the United States. If that was once fairly done they might look forward to the time when immigrants would keep coming in without a shilling of expense to the colony. Had any hon. member ever thought of that. Hon. gentlemen on the other side seemed to be afraid that the price of labour of those now in the colony would be reduced by the influx of immigrants to be brought out by that money. That was not an honest statement. It was humbug, and said for the purpose of imposing on people. The more people they had in the colony the better. The Land Bill, the loan, and immigration were three parts of one gigantic scheme. The loan—ten millions—seemed to be a large amount, but he ventured to say that in the course of even five years, Queensland would be the most prosperous—and with its prosperity established on the firmest basis—of any colony of the Australian group.

Question put and passed.

Mr. BLACK: Adjourn.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it was desirable that the House should sit a little longer, because a message might be received from the other House.

Mr. NORTON: Will you adjourn then?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes. He would move that a sum of £3,140,000 be granted by way of loan for Railways. The vote comprised thirty services. The first one was the line, Roma to Charleville, to complete, £62,000. That was an additional amount to the sum of £390,000 on the Estimates of 1878-9 for the purpose of extending the line 130 miles west from Roma. The next item was for 120 miles west from Charleville, and for which £360,000 was asked. In regard to the vote to Charleville, to complete, he might say that the cost of the line from Roma was £368,500, and the mileage constructed from Roma up to the present time was 139 miles. The next line was Stanthorpe to the Border, £82,000. That represented the construction of 25½ miles from Stanthorpe to the junction, on the border, and the sum put down was in addition to the balance of £45,000 still available for the service. The next service was Brisbane to Ipswich, double line—£85,000, and he was sure hon. members would at once recognise the absolute necessity of the double line, on account of the very large amount of traffic which the single line had to sustain. They then came to a coast line, Brisbane to Caboolture and Gympie, £488,000, which, as he had stated, was the commencement of a coastal system of railways which they all hoped some day to see completed, extending from the Tweed to Cooktown. Everything could not be done at once, but they proposed to construct the line from Brisbane to Caboolture and Gympie as a beginning. The survey of the line as far as Caboolture was laid on the table by his hon. colleague, and the adoption of the plans would be moved to-morrow. The approval of plans for the first 25 miles would be asked for, leaving 91 miles to be constructed—the total length being 116 miles. Brisbane to Cleveland was a line which, as he had previously stated, was supposed would pay on account of its being a suburban line, and somewhat analogous to the Sandgate line. The extension to the city and Fortitude Valley was estimated to cost £175,000. The plans of that line also had been laid on the table, and would be approved of to-morrow. It was intended to bring the line to the city from Roma street to Edward street by the Normal School, and thence to carry it out to Fortitude Valley, connecting it by a loop line with the Sandgate Railway. The total cost would be £175,000, which was supposed to be ample not only for the construction of the line but to provide compensation for land resumptions. They then came to the South Brisbane Branch, to complete, for which £45,000 was asked. That was a supplementary amount beyond what had been originally voted. The estimated cost of the original works had been £54,000; land, £10,000; additional stations, fencing, etc., £17,000. With regard to the supplementary votes he might mention that they were intended to cover provision for permanent way material which had heretofore not been charged to the railway votes for construction. Construction balances to complete appeared to be very large, but hon. members must not understand that the Engineer's estimates had been departed from to that extent. The South Brisbane Railway Wharves would take £25,000, and hon. members would be aware that it was the desire of Government to encourage trade and offer facilities for shipping coal. For that purpose it was proposed to extend the wharves by 700 feet; and it was thought that that would relieve the complaint as to the



inadequacy of the wharves for shipping coal. The South Brisbane Branch Extension required £50,000. It had been found that the present site of the station was exceedingly cramped and inconvenient, and it must be borne in mind that the South Brisbane station would be the point of departure to the Logan, Beenleigh, and the South. The Beenleigh Branch, to complete, required £18,000. That was a branch to the Upper Logan for which no provision had been made on previous Loan Estimates. Beenleigh to Southport was a continuation of the Logan line, for which £150,000 was asked. They then came to the Upper Logan Branch to Beaudesert, for which £70,000 was required. That line would be twenty miles in length, and was estimated to cost £3,500 per mile. The Sandgate line to complete required additional provision to the extent of £25,000. It was in somewhat an analogous position to that of the South Brisbane line; the amount asked for being required for extra works, such as portion of double line at Lutwyche, level crossing, platforms, telegraph lines, and other services not included in the original estimate. An additional £4,000 was asked for the extension of the Sandgate Branch further into the town of Sandgate, as the present station was a long way from the heart of the town. The large amount of traffic on the line must have made apparent to every hon. member who had travelled on it the necessity for a double line. The Government proposed to construct a double line to the junction at Eagle Farm, which would doubtless relieve the line for the time being; though eventually it would probably be necessary to duplicate it throughout. The cost was estimated at £15,000. The Brisbane Valley Branch required £45,000 additional. The amount previously voted was £105,000, and the expenditure £59,000, leaving a balance of £46,000, which, with the amount asked for, would make £91,000 to construct twenty-two miles. That was also a provision for expenditure not included in the Engineer's estimate. The next line was the Fassifern Branch—extension to Coochin, £34,000. That also was in a similar position. There was a balance of £36,000 from the previous vote, which, with the amount now asked for, would make £70,000 available for an extension of seventeen miles. The Laidley Creek Branch, ten miles, was estimated to cost £30,000, and he believed it was a line very much required by the agricultural settlers in the district. Next they came to the Highfields Branch, extension to Crow's Nest, for which an additional £24,000 was required. The amount previously voted was £90,000, of which £42,000 had been expended, leaving a balance of £48,000, which, with the additional sum asked for, would give an amount of £72,000 to construct eighteen miles. That was also for permanent way material. Then there was the Beauaraba Branch, sixteen miles, estimated to cost £48,000. The Drayton deviation was estimated to cost £44,000. It would be eleven or twelve miles in length, and would effect a saving of from eight to ten miles on the journey between Warwick and Toowoomba. It would be a great advantage to travellers on the Downs, and would besides provide accommodation for a large population. The next item was the line from Warwick to Killarney, which required £65,000 to complete. The amount previously voted on account was £50,000, and the expenditure had been £60,000 up to the present time, so that the vote had been exceeded. The estimated cost was £4,300 a mile. He would remark that the supplementary votes in many cases had already been operated upon; so that the whole £3,000,000 was not for new services or in fact for works of new construction. It was absolutely necessary to spend the money before getting a Parliamentary appropriation,

or else discontinue necessary works. However, the loan expenditure was entirely connected with work which had received the sanction of Parliament, and therefore the overdraft was, he hoped, more justifiable than if it had been used for new works. The next item was Ipswich to Warwick, £500,000. That was a line that would bring the southern border more directly into connection with the seaboard than it was at the present time. The estimated distance was seventy-seven miles, and the saving between the seventy-seven miles and the existing route, *via* Toowoomba, was fifty-four miles. Such a saving in a journey of 166 miles was a very considerable item. The next item was the line from Warwick to St. George—£250,000. In his opinion, that was one of the most important lines in the whole Estimates. The Treasurer of the day would recognise its advantage in the immediate future, as it would act as a great incentive to trade between the capital and the southern portion of the colony. He hoped the time would come when the line would be extended considerably beyond St. George, running parallel with the southern border, and so keeping the trade and traffic in our own territory. They then came to buildings and sidings which were distributed over Brisbane, Ipswich, and Toowoomba. At Brisbane the buildings were for extension of terminal station and new offices for the engineers at a cost of £50,000. At Ipswich it had become absolutely necessary to erect a new station, and the Government had approved of the station being in Bell street, in connection with which was a bridge at Nicholas street and goods sheds, the estimated total cost of the whole being £30,000.

Mr. NORTON asked if the site had been fixed?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said his colleague informed him that the site had not been finally decided on. New workshops were required also, as the present accommodation was too limited for the growing requirements for the construction of plant. The workshops were estimated at £60,000. At Toowoomba a new goods station and additions and alterations were estimated to cost £26,000. Then there was a vote for buildings and sidings generally, which included deviations on the Main Range and relaying with 60 lb. rails. That vote, which was for £200,000, would be found very useful in providing for a considerable number of alterations connected with the existing Southern and Western line, which were required from time to time, and which were fairly chargeable to loan. He begged to move the item.

Mr. BLACK said he thought it was time the Committee should adjourn. He did not imagine the Government intended or expected that they should go through a three-million vote without very ample discussion. They had been for the last three months discussing and disposing of Estimates amounting to only two millions, and debating them down to items of £10 or £20; and the Committee should not be expected to pass a single solid vote for three millions without ample discussion. The items ought to be discussed seriatim, for it was impossible that justice could be done to the proposed serious expenditure in the way the Government proposed to take it. It was now a-quarter past 11, and the Committee should adjourn. There was not the least chance of the vote going through that night.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he trusted hon. gentlemen would address themselves to the discussion of the services. It was desirable that they should sit later to receive a message from the other House.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: That is the reason, is it?



The COLONIAL TREASURER said the Government had no desire to press the vote that night, but as it was desirable that they should sit to receive the message from the other House, they might address themselves meanwhile to the discussion of the services.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he did not see why they should remain there to receive a message from the other House. No reason had been given by the Minister why they should. If they were there to pass the time, why did not the Minister give them all the information he could on the Estimates? If he asked them to sit as dummies until the other House made up their mind on some matter, it was degrading the members lower than they had ever been degraded before.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said if there was any particular explanation wanted on any special item he would endeavour to give it.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said if the hon. member thought that they wanted him to talk against time he was mistaken. What were they stopping there for? If it was simply for the purpose of getting a message from the other House that the Committee was sitting, let the Government make a House afterwards; but if they would not, they should adjourn at once. He never saw the Committee so degraded before.

Mr. NORTON said he did not see why the message could not wait till to-morrow. He presumed if it came down the next day at half-past 3 o'clock it would be in time, and would not delay business more than half-an-hour.

Mr. ISAMBERT said it was not right that the leader of the Opposition should speak so disrespectfully of the Upper House. They should go on with the Loan Estimates.

Mr. ANNEAR said that from the vote he noticed a great deal of money was to be expended on railways in the southern part of the colony, especially on the Darling Downs. He was aware that that was a bone of contention on the part of some members with regard to the Warwick line. He might say he had carefully read the Loan Estimates, and he considered it was a very carefully prepared document. It seemed to him, from what he had seen, that the Loan Estimate gave almost universal satisfaction; but the hon. member for Port Curtis did not seem satisfied.

Mr. NORTON: Not at all.

Mr. ANNEAR said there was £150,000 down for an extension of the Bundaberg Railway towards Gladstone, which would be a great convenience to the people of the district, and no doubt Gladstone would become an important place. The Warwick railway would be the subject of great contention, but as he believed the distance it would save between Warwick and Ipswich would be an answer to the whole question, he should give his vote in favour of the expenditure of £500,000 in that direction. He had travelled over the country, and the line would go through splendid land, which would become thickly populated, probably by the people who would be brought out by the expenditure of the £750,000 that was voted for immigration. Another piece of line referred to in the estimate was from Toowoomba to Drayton. The Warwick line at present went *via* Gowrie, and when the other line was made the old part could be taken up and not used again. It was a great mistake to take the Toowoomba line out to Gowrie to go to Warwick; if it had gone through Drayton it would have saved ten or twelve miles, which cost a large sum of money. He also approved of the proposed railway to Cleveland, which would become a very important place when that

line was made. If the line could be made for £80,000, it should be at once constructed, and Cleveland would become one of the great outlets for the people of Brisbane, which was becoming more crowded every day. No one could deny either that the line to Southport would be a very important one. He saw by the margin that they were discussing a vote of £3,140,000, and he hoped that it would be passed in that way. It would not take hon. members very long to come to a decision upon the whole of the items contained in that vote. There was one that seemed to be an error. He visited Ipswich lately, and found that from one year's end to another there was between £35,000 and £40,000 worth of rolling-stock exposed to the elements. He believed that the vote included the erection of a large number of shelter-sheds to save the rolling-stock. The Minister for Works would no doubt answer that question. There was also a sum down for laying 60-lb. rails on the Main Range; but he believed that money was already spent. It gave him great pleasure, representing as he did a central constituency, to give his vote in favour of every item in that £3,140,000. He should certainly have opposed it if he had thought that £60,000 was to be expended in Ipswich solely in the erection of workshops. He trusted that the Government would never depart from that system which was initiated by their predecessors in letting out all the rolling-stock required for the colony by contract, as he thought that action had saved the colony about 30 per cent. of what the rolling-stock cost in former times, and there were now a large number of establishments erected by private firms for turning out the work. He never was a log-roller, and should not be upon that occasion; but he hoped that every item would be taken upon its merits. He trusted that Southern members would do towards the North as they expected Northern members would do towards them.

Mr. GRIMES said they had already had a long discussion upon that vote. He noticed from the speeches of many hon. members that they were not satisfied, because their electorates had not been set down to receive a sum of money. The hon. member for Port Curtis had complained that there was not sufficient money for a railway for Gladstone. The hon. gentleman's electorate was not the only one which had been left out. He could put in a claim equal to that of the hon. member for Port Curtis. The population was greater—

Mr. NORTON: No.

Mr. GRIMES said he was sure that the land was superior for general agricultural purposes.

Mr. ALAND: There are no goldfields.

Mr. GRIMES said the mineral resources of the district were as yet undeveloped, but he had no doubt they soon would be if there were facilities for cheap transit. The district he particularly referred to was Brookfield and Moggill. Hon. members might think because it was very mountainous country that there was not much agricultural land there. Even the tops of the ranges were excellent agricultural land, and many of the mountain-spurs had been once covered with scrub, which had been cleared, and the land was now producing excellent crops. Sugar-cane had been tried, and he had no doubt that a large area of land, despite the low price of sugar, would be devoted to that branch of agriculture. There was also a splendid quarry of freestone there and a slate quarry; but of course the cost of transit to Brisbane would interfere with their being prosperous. The inspecting surveyor had ridden over a portion of the route, and his report was favourable. There were

no engineering difficulties on the line, and it could be made for a reasonable sum. Besides that, along the route there were splendid building sites. It was well known that people in the city were pushing out to find healthy sites for residences, and, if there was railway communication the whole of that land would be speedily built on. He thought it might be worked in with the traffic on the Southern and Western line. The train could run as far as Indooroopilly, and then the line could easily run a few miles further on. Eventually he had no doubt that would lessen the distance up country. If it was joined on to the Brisbane Valley line it would lessen the distance to the city by something like seventeen or eighteen miles. He hoped the Minister for Works would give him the promise of a trial survey of the line; and, probably, if they did not get it out of that loan they would get it out of some other loan. He was confident it would pay as well as a good many of the lines on those Estimates.

Mr. NORTON said that if the Government wanted to get on with the business, and were prepared to give information, he was quite prepared to ask for it; but he did not see why they should put up their supporters to talk against time. The hon. member for Oxley had certainly been talking against time.

Mr. GRIMES: No.

Mr. NORTON: Well, he thought so. Both the hon. member for Oxley and the hon. member for Maryborough talked generally about the matter. The Committee had been discussing the question nearly all the evening; and if they were not to go on with the business, what was the use of sitting there?

Mr. GRIMES said the hon. member was quite mistaken in saying that he had been speaking against time. He was quite serious in urging the claims of his district to railway communication. He thought those claims were quite equal, if not superior, to the claims of the Port Curtis district.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. member was quite mistaken. There was 500 times more in the Port Curtis district than in the hon. member's district. If he had made a mistake in saying that the hon. member talked against time he apologised for it.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he thought the remarks of the hon. member for Oxley were deserving of serious consideration. He was not talking against time, and he thought the matter had a more direct bearing on the Estimates than hon. members thought. He had sometimes entertained the idea, and he had mentioned it in his electioneering tour, that he should be adverse to the construction of any double line where the same distance could be covered and new country opened by the making of a new line altogether. He remembered also having said some time since that he would support a line starting from North Ipswich down through the settled districts to which the hon. member for Oxley alluded. That was an idea which was worth the consideration of the Government. The farming district of Moggill was one of the oldest in the colony, and he thought such a line would be much better than having a double line running into the same district. It was too late for a suggestion of that kind to be entertained, but he thought the hon. member for Oxley was perfectly justified in bringing the claim before the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the proposition made by the hon. member for Fassifern could not be entertained. A deputation waited on him some time ago from Brookfield. He believed

it was an important locality; but it was like a number of others: a line like it would take a separate staff to work it, and that would add tremendously to the cost. A considerable portion of the line to Ipswich was now a double line; so that the cost would not be very large. With regard to the extension to Fortitude Valley, he thought that was very important, and that the line ought to have gone in that direction in the first instance. The line was badly required. The passenger station would be somewhere about where the fire brigade station was. In the first survey made, it was proposed to put it exactly where the Normal School stood; but it was found that would require that there should be a flight of steps to go up to it. To make a proper gradient would require an elevation of about thirty feet. That was altogether out of the question, and it was proposed to have the alteration in the school reserve, near the fire brigade station.

Mr. GRIMES said it was desirable to have a trial survey of the loop-line he had referred to, if only to reserve the land, which in a few years would be exceedingly valuable. There must eventually be a railway on that side of the river, and it would be as well that a trial survey should be made at all events.

Mr. T. CAMPBELL said he should like to hear some explanation from the Minister for Works with regard to the proposed line from Ipswich to Warwick. He had travelled from Ipswich to Warwick very often in from six to seven hours, and he wanted to know if it was the intention of the Government to reduce the time spent on the journey to two or three hours. No doubt the people at Warwick and Stanthorpe ought to have direct communication with the metropolis, but the scheme was premature. Other portions of the colony were languishing for railway communication, and they should be considered first. The amount put down for the work was half-a-million, but he understood that at least a million would be required before the line was completed.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Adjourn!

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that as additional information was required with regard to some of the items, and as the hour was getting late, he would move the Chairman out of the chair.

Question put and passed, and leave obtained to sit again to-morrow.

#### CROWN LANDS BILL—MESSAGE FROM LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received the following message from the Legislative Council:—

“Legislative Council Chamber,  
Brisbane, 16th December, 1884.

“MR. SPEAKER.

“The Legislative Council, having had under consideration the Legislative Assembly's message of date 11th December, relative to the amendments made by the Legislative Council in the Crown Lands Bill, beg now to intimate that they—

“Insist on the amendments in clause 1, in clause 4 lines 14 and 39, on the omission of clauses 75 to 79 inclusive, and on their amendments in clauses 121 and 139.

“Because it is doubtful whether an extensive destruction of the acacia forests may not decrease the already deficient rainfall in the interior, while it will certainly decrease the grazing capabilities of the country in seasons of drought;

“Because more effective provision for the experimental clearing of scrub is made by leases of grazing farms under conditions less likely to lead to evasions of the law.

“Insist on their amendments in clauses 6 and 7:

“Because if there has been any improper administration of the law it is a matter for executive reform, and not legislation;

"Because the Bill as amended does not entitle lessees under the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869 to claim any compensation for improvements on runs on being deprived of the use thereof, as the operation of the Bill only extends to leases issued under its provisions after the leases under the Pastoral Leases Act of 1866 have been surrendered and ceased to have effect ;

"Because it does not confer any right to purchase land ;

"Because the power to terminate a current lease by notice does not confer any power to abrogate any of the other conditions during its currency ;

"Because the Executive Government have full power to refuse to sell any land, the sale of which might in any way prejudice the public interests, and it is desirable that the claims of existing lessees should be equitably dealt with ;

"Because the amendment only protects existing contracts.

"Insist on their amendment in clauses 20 and 21, and subsection 8 of clause 27 ;

"Because it is expedient that there should be an appeal from the decisions of the board, who are to originate proceedings, adjudicate thereon, and finally decide on the validity of their own verdicts ;

"Because the functions of the board, which are to be subject to appeal to arbitration, are the same as those which have been subject to appeal to arbitration under the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869, which mode of appeal has worked satisfactorily for fifteen years, and, therefore, cannot be deemed to be impracticable ;

"Because if the determination of rents is to be placed under the control of an irresponsible board without any definite instruction, the amounts would not be assessed on any defined consistent basis beyond the opinion of the board ;

"Because the administration of the Crown lands on the basis of the amendment has been found practicable and convenient during the past fifteen years under the Pastoral Leases Act of 1869 ;

"Because it would not interfere with the public revenue, as the appeal to arbitration would only be for the correction of errors of judgment on the part of the board, and any amount assessed by the board in error would not properly be revenue.

"Insist on their amendment in subsection 1 of clause 28 ;

"Because it is necessary to render that part of the clause consistent with subsection 7, which makes different provision for the same purpose.

"Insist on their amendments in clause 43, in the 2nd paragraph of clause 51, and the 1st paragraph of clause 70 ;

"Because 960 acres would not be sufficient area in some districts, and the Bill gives power to reduce the maximum area in those districts where 1,280 acres might be deemed to be excessive.

"Insist on the amendment of clause 56, subsection 4, clause (f).

"Because it does not interfere with the public revenue, and only sets limits to contracts to lease Crown lands, in the management and control whereof the Legislative Council have co-ordinate rights with the Legislative Assembly under the Constitution Act.

"Agree to the amendments made by the Legislative Assembly on the Council's amendments in clauses 57 and 58.

"Insist on their amendments in clause 71, to which the Legislative Assembly have disagreed ;

"Because it is desirable to encourage *bonâ fide* settlement by offering reasonable facilities for the acquisition of freeholds, as this has hitherto been one of the principal causes of the rapid settlement of Queensland.

"Agree to the amendments made by the Legislative Assembly on the Council's amendments in clauses 99 and 120 : and do not insist on the other amendments to which the Legislative Assembly have disagreed.

"A. H. PALMER, President."

On the motion of the PREMIER, the message was ordered to be taken into consideration to-morrow.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER, in moving the adjournment of the House, said : The first business to-morrow will be to take into consideration the message just received from the Legislative Council, when I propose to ask the House to agree to a free conference upon the subjects remaining in dispute between us. I hope that that process will have the result it has often led to in other countries, of bringing about an agreement between the two Houses. I may state for the information of hon. members

who are not familiar with this mode of procedure, that the House which is in possession of the Bill, asks for a conference ; naming certain members as its managers. The other House, however, always appoints the time and place of meeting, which is usually a day on which both Houses are sitting, and both Houses suspend their sittings during the sitting of the conference. I anticipate that if this message is sent to-morrow the Legislative Council will probably be able to propose Thursday as the day for holding the conference, and on that day we shall know whether we can agree upon the matters in dispute. After that motion to-morrow the Minister for Works will move his second motion for the approval of railway plans, and we shall then proceed further with the Loan Estimates.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH : As the Premier considers that this motion for the holding of a conference will be purely formal, would he mind telling us who the managers will be from this House ?

The PREMIER : It is the usual practice for the managers of a conference to be members who will be likely to advocate the views of the House they represent. I propose that the members representing this House shall be Mr. Dutton, Mr. Miles, Mr. Jordan, Mr. Kellett, Mr. Aland, Mr. Kates, and Mr. Donaldson. Mr. Donaldson is the only member from the other side of the House, but he is understood to be a member who desires to see the Bill become law.

The House adjourned at seven minutes to 12 o'clock.