

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 17 DECEMBER 1884

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.*Wednesday, 17 December, 1884.*

Motion for Adjournment.—Petition.—Crown Lands Bill
—consideration of Legislative Council's Message.—
Extension of the North Coast Railway.—Supply—
resumption of committee.—Message from Legislative
Council.—Adjournment.

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

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to call the attention of the House to a matter that concerns the colony very seriously, and I suppose I had better do so by moving the adjournment of the House. I desire, as we have the assurance of the Premier that the session is very near its close, and as there will not be another opportunity of referring to the subject for many months, to call the attention of the House to a subject that interests this colony, and all the Australian colonies, but Queensland more particularly. I allude to the action taken by the French Senate in passing a Bill for the deportation of criminals to New Caledonia, by a majority of 136 to 36, quite regardless of the wishes of the Government of Great Britain and of the Australian colonies as well. On this subject the language of the Intercolonial Convention was very concise and clear. I think the 6th clause in their report is the one that particularly refers to it. In introducing that Bill to the French Senate, it was advocated on the plea of economy, and it was stated that when the récidivistes were landed they would be treated as free men, so that there would be a great saving in the conduct of the business necessary in connection with a penal establishment. But when the Under Secretary was speaking on the measure, and he was reproached for his conduct in bringing it in, he

defended his action by saying that very strict supervision would be exercised, so that there would be no chance of the criminals escaping. We know that strict supervision means great expense, and therefore the Bill, on the plea of economy, should have been abandoned. The French Government abandoned the leading principle of the measure—that of economy—and ought therefore to have abandoned the Bill. We know what is the expense of looking after convicts. It has been proved by our figures that each convict annually costs the Government £38. In England, the cost of supervising the gaols amounts to £21 per head for the prisoners, and in France it would be a great deal less. So that on the score of economy the French Senate would have acted wisely for themselves in withdrawing the Bill, and probably they would have altered their decision if proper representations had been made to them. The Government of France were also mistaken in their idea that by the course they were pursuing they were founding a French colony. Their principal idea seems to be founding a colony by criminals, or what may be termed penal colonisation. The fact is that there are only about 300 men settled on the land in New Caledonia, although there are 13,000 convicts on the island, and they are not tilling the land, but simply earning a little to find them in rum and rations. The French, however, see that these colonies have been successful, and they think, according to the reports that come from France, that by deporting their criminals to New Caledonia they will found a colony that will rival the colonies of Australia. No doubt their action is the result of jealousy of these colonies. The protest sent from the Convention was plain and clear, and all the colonies protested at that time against the deportation of récidivistes to New Caledonia. The answer they got from the French Government was that the matter was one of interior or domestic control. The French themselves have, however, given us numberless precedents in modern history for our protests against their action. They are far more sensitive than we have been in this matter. We have a perfect right to protest, and we have also a right to remonstrate with them; and the question is whether we have not also a right to legislate and protect ourselves from what must be the siftings of their criminals. The Governor of New Caledonia has testified that the colony will not hold any further contingent of those criminals, that the colony is already full of them, and that there is a feeling amongst the colonists against deporting any more to New Caledonia. The subject is one in which the whole colony is interested, and I just draw the Premier's attention to it now, as the danger is looming out larger than ever. We find that German colonies are being also settled in New Guinea. At least, cablegrams state that it is rumoured that Germany intends establishing colonies in New Guinea, New Britain, and New Ireland. What will those places be as centres of contamination if they are made the receptacles of criminal outcasts? The French have shown themselves very anxious to get rid of their criminals by sending them out of the country, and I think we in Australia should be equally anxious to keep them out of the colonies. Hon. members in this House will, no doubt, understand the action taken by Victoria in 1854, when the Legislature of that colony passed the Criminals Prevention Act. I am not aware of the circumstances which led to the passing of that measure, but I have no doubt that they are known to many hon. members. I believe that the dangers to which we are exposed will warrant us in passing such a stringent measure, and I have not the slightest doubt that the Imperial Government would sanction any

Bill we might pass for the protection of ourselves in this matter. I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker,—I suppose any hon. member is entitled to move the adjournment of the House if he thinks circumstances require it; but I fail to see, from anything the hon. member has said, to what the motion is *apropos* on the present occasion. We have no right to interfere with the French Parliament; and we do not propose to declare war with the French nation. They are not yet sending their récidivistes to New Caledonia, and we have very good reason to hope that they will not send them there. All that can be done in this matter has been done, and it is believed that the steps taken will bring about our desire. One thing is certain, that it will take the French Government some time before they can get their récidivistes to New Caledonia, and before any of them get there we shall have no difficulty in passing a measure to prevent them coming to Queensland. A measure for this purpose was drafted some time since, and would have been introduced this session, but considering the condition of the negotiations on the subject it was thought that it would be better to allow it to stand over until the necessity became absolute. As I have said, all that can be done has been done. I believe the French nation has been a good deal irritated by what I cannot help thinking were unwise things said by persons in connection with this matter. There are two ways of saying and doing a thing, and I think that what has been said in some portions of the Press, and in other places, has really caused the French Government to insist on passing the Bill for sending récidivistes to New Caledonia. They felt bound to press the measure for their deportation, because something like threats were used towards them. Of course, a nation does not like to be treated in that way. I have every reason to hope that the representations which have been made by the Imperial Government will be successful.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said: Mr. Speaker,—Instead of replying as he has done to the hon. member for Burke, the Premier ought to have thanked him for calling attention to this matter. I consider it is a matter of the greatest importance, and I do not think this House believes that everything that could be done has been done; in fact, from what the Premier said, nothing has been done except to express the opinion given by him that everything has been done on our behalf. I think we have good reason to mistrust the Colonial Office in its charge of our affairs so far as other nations are concerned. They have assured us that our interests would be protected, and yet we are getting more alarmed every day. It is not altogether a matter of the additional number of criminals that will be sent; but it is a fact that they are being sent now—and have been sent for years unknown to us—at all events, to the extent that it has been carried on. I have always insisted that we ought to take steps to protect ourselves. I do not know why we should always leave ourselves in the hands of the Colonial Office. I think a great deal more active steps might be taken to protect ourselves; and we have sufficient provocation in what is going on at the present time. It is a nice thing to console ourselves with the reflection that our interests are in good hands, and that the Colonial Office is looking after them; but they are not looking after them. With all their bounce that they would consider it an unfriendly act, and with an intimation, given almost as plainly as it could be given, that they would go to war in our protection if any foreign nation annexed any part of New

Guinea, we see the Germans going behind that, and doing what the Colonial Office declared would be considered an unfriendly act. And all that is being done quietly, while the Premier here tells us to console ourselves with the fact that the English Government are looking after our interests. There is a strong feeling in the colony that the English Government are not looking after our interests, and that we ought to look after them ourselves. That is the opinion of the most sensible men I have met with.

Mr. NELSON said: I would like to ask the Premier whether he has seen an official report presented to the French Assembly and published in the *Times* on the 5th August last, in which Queensland was cited as an instance of a colony which had been founded on the basis of convictism, and that it was very desirous of getting convicts at the present time, but was prevented from doing so by the other colonies. I saw that Mr. Hemmant, the Acting Agent-General, wrote a short letter to the *Times* contradicting the statement; but I think some further notice should be taken of such a gross report as that, especially as it was presented to such a body as the French Assembly.

The PREMIER: I do not remember any correspondence on the subject at the present moment.

Question put and negatived.

PETITION.

Mr. KELLETT presented a petition from a number of electors of Stanley in favour of the proposed railway to Laidley Creek, and moved that it be read.

Question put and passed; and petition read by the Clerk.

Mr. KELLETT moved that the petition be received.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Is this a petition simply because it ends with the words "ever pray, etc."? It simply says that a previous petition that was presented to this House was signed by certain individuals from interested motives. The 194th Standing Order says that every petition must contain a prayer at the end.

The SPEAKER said: The House will observe that the petition is not addressed to the Assembly at all. It is addressed to "The Honourable the Speaker," and not to the members of the Legislative Assembly; so that even on that ground the petition is informal. But, besides that, the 194th Standing Order has not been complied with. The petition therefore cannot be received.

CROWN LANDS BILL—CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S MESSAGE.

On the Order of the Day being read for the consideration of the Legislative Council's message on this Bill, dated the 16th instant—

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—As I intimated last evening, it is proposed to ask the Legislative Council to agree to a free conference on the subject of the amendments in this Bill still remaining unadjusted. I need not explain further the proceedings of a free conference. The object of course is that members representing the dominant views in each Chamber should meet, with the view, if possible, of arriving at a mutual understanding. The form is, that the House having the Bill in its possession, as we have at present, should ask the other House to a free conference, and should name the managers whom we appoint to represent us on that occasion. I

therefore move that the following message be transmitted to the Legislative Council:—

MR. PRESIDENT,

The Legislative Assembly, having considered the Legislative Council's message of date the 16th instant, intimating that they insist upon certain of their amendments made in the Crown Lands Bill, request a free conference with the Legislative Council, with a view of arriving at a mutual agreement with respect to the said amendments.

The Legislative Assembly have appointed Mr. Griffith, Mr. Dutton, Mr. Miles, Mr. Jordan, Mr. Kellett, Mr. Donaldson, Mr. Kates, Mr. Aland, Mr. Grimes, Mr. Macdonald-Paterson, Mr. Ferguson, and Mr. Foote to be the managers to represent them at such conference.

Hon. members will observe that the number of managers has been increased. I understand it is considered imperative in some quarters that the number of members representing the Upper House must not be more than one-half of the number representing the Lower House. We only proposed to appoint eight managers in the first instance, and that would have restricted the Upper House to four, which might, perhaps, be inconvenient. It was the practice of the House of Commons two centuries ago, and was followed by this House on the last occasion. For that reason I have added the additional names.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: This will be another illustration of the old adage that "Too many cooks spoil the broth." I cannot see why the hon. member should have adopted an old arrangement which has obtained in the House of Commons for the last two or three hundred years, the idea of which was that that House should be represented at a conference by twice as many members as the House of Lords. I think, myself, it is simply ridiculous. If we were to send four members of this House—four good men—to meet four members of the other House, they could settle the whole affair in five minutes. As it is, it will be a case of jabbering for some hours I suppose, and even then they may not settle it at all. I hope the Premier has made arrangements by which our representatives will be treated with proper respect, also according to the practice of the House of Commons; and that they will show to the Lords that respect which is due to them.

The PREMIER: I am tolerably well acquainted with those formalities, which are more honoured in the breach than in the observance. My own opinion is, that the rule which provides that this House shall have double as many representatives as the other, is a foolish and ridiculous one; but I find that in certain quarters it is considered an imperative rule that must be carried out. Therefore, that there may be more than four members representing the Upper House, there must be more than eight members representing this House.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: What are those "certain quarters" to which the hon. gentleman refers? I do not believe they exist.

Question put and passed.

EXTENSION OF THE NORTH COAST RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles), in moving—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the North Coast railway from 6 miles 66 chains 30 links, on the Sandgate Railway, to Caboolture, 24 miles 63 chains 70 links, as laid upon the table of the House on Monday, the 15th December, 1931.

2. That the plan, section, and book of reference be forwarded to the Legislative Council, for their approval, by message in the usual form.

—said: The proposal contained in the resolution is that the line shall start at a distance of 6½ miles from Brisbane on the Sandgate Railway,

and shall be continued as far as Caboolture. There have been several surveys in connection with this line, but after due consideration the one now proposed has been adopted. It will give accommodation to the districts in the neighbourhood of Zillman's Waterholes, Bald Hills, South Pine, and North Pine, and in fact will accommodate a large number of settlers. This part of the country is very densely settled, and although three or four routes have been pointed out which the people claimed should be adopted, this being a portion of the main coast line it is desirable to keep it as direct as possible. It is utterly impossible to accommodate all the farmers in the locality by taking the line in a zigzag direction. It will, of course, go as direct as possible, and will be about 24 miles 36 chains from the junction of the Sandgate line to Caboolture. The gradients will be 1 in 50, and the curves of a radius of ten chains. I believe the line has been surveyed from the junction of the Sandgate line to Gympie by the coast, but there is still another line under survey which goes by what is called the Blackall Range. There are now two parties of surveyors at work, but they have not yet completed the survey, and until that is done it will be impossible to come to any conclusion whether the coast or inland line will be adopted. However, this section will not interfere in any way either with the coast line or the Blackall Range line, and I am sure hon. members will consider that the coast line is one which ought to be carried out as soon as possible. It will eventually connect the capital with, I hope, the northern towns of the coast very shortly. At all events, provision is made on the Loan Estimates for it to reach Gladstone; and although the hon. member for Port Curtis complained last night that there was not sufficient money put on the Estimates for the line, I hope that we shall find money enough to carry on the work by the time the amount on the Estimates is expended. I think it desirable to keep this line as direct as possible; and although, no doubt, some discontent will be caused in the locality, I think we ought not to lose sight of the fact that all through lines should be kept as far as possible in a straight line.

Mr. NORTON said: On one or two occasions before to-day, members of this House have had to complain of the meagre information the hon. member always gives us on railway matters. We have received no information at all about this railway, and the hon. member tells us nothing of the country, or the gradients, or curves, or cost of the line.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have given the gradients.

Mr. NORTON: Why did not the hon. member say something about the cost? We ought to know something about that. There was a proposal to make the line commence near Sandgate; but by starting it from about six miles out of Brisbane it is considerably lengthened.

The PREMIER: No; it is shortened.

Mr. NORTON: I say we add to the distance, and also make the line more costly to work, by starting it from the proposed point. It cannot be worked into the Sandgate line, but must be worked as a separate railway. I believe, from what I have heard from those competent to judge, that the line should have branched off from the Sandgate line just near Sandgate. I do not know what country the railway is going through, or what settlement it will serve, but the House ought to know that. It is quite impossible to say anything about the line, because really the Minister gives us no information at all. He intended to give it, I believe,

but he forgot to read from a paper which he held in his hand. I am sure hon. members would like to know more with regard to what fell from the hon. member about the line being extended. I hope his expectations will be fulfilled, and that by the time the sum on the Estimates is expended there will be more money forthcoming. But how long will it be before this money is expended? That is what the people would like to know. If it is expended, and more money is to be forthcoming, I shall not complain; but I hope the hon. member will give the House some fuller information than he has already given us.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON said: The plans of this railway, a distance of twenty-five miles from the Sandgate branch, have been placed on the table of the House some time earlier than I anticipated. I had no idea that the surveys were so far advanced as to enable the Government to be in a position to place the plans on the table of the House so soon. In carefully looking over them yesterday and the day before, I find that the route almost unanimously adopted by the various residents and settlers in the vicinity of the North Pine River has not been adopted. I refer to the desire on their part to have the railway running from the South Pine crossing upwards to the North Pine on the western side of Sidling Creek which falls into the North Pine River. I have introduced a number of deputations to the Minister for Works with regard to the Caboolture and Brisbane Railway, and none of them were more important than two having reference to the desirability of adopting the Sidling Creek route. The first deputation on the question so impressed the Minister that he promised he would give it consideration. Subsequently the Samford Vale people and others met and agreed to a compromise; the Samford Vale people wanted it higher up, and the others lower down the river; but finally Sidling Creek was agreed upon by nearly the whole of the inhabitants as the point to which the railway should be taken. Subsequent to that, a very influential deputation waited on the Minister for Works, and laid before him such facts as induced him to say that he would give instructions to the engineers to explore the route, and would also visit it himself before coming to a decision. I know the hon. gentleman has had no opportunity of fulfilling that promise; I am bound to say that up to the present moment it has been hardly possible for him to go up to the ground; but I am informed by him that he has taken every precaution to get the fullest information in regard to this question. Although he has not been able to go over the ground personally, he is satisfied that the engineers have taken the route as near as possible to the point desired by the farmers in the locality. The people in my electorate know that the railway is to be taken by as direct a track to Gympie as possible, but they were also promised that any deviation which would not be too great would be made if it took the line in the vicinity of agricultural settlement. I must say that I am not entirely satisfied with these plans, but at the same time it is quite likely that if I had more information from the engineers and a little more time to talk with the Minister for Works on the subject, it would be found that the best route has been chosen. At any rate, I am perfectly satisfied with the hon. gentleman's assurance that he has done his best to suit the views of all the settlers in the locality to which I have referred. My constituents have been anxiously waiting to see the Minister from day to day; but as they understand he has not been able to go they will be glad to know that their interests have not been lost sight of. From the

information I have received I think the Sidling Creek route should have been adhered to, and the reason for its non-adoption by the engineers should, I think, have been explained by the Minister to-day. I know that there are hundreds of agriculturists who are disappointed at the adoption of this route by the Government without some reason being given for the abandonment of their suggestions. Of course, if the railway only goes as far as Caboolture in the meantime, I have nothing further to say on the subject. There is an advantage in having the route defined so far, because it will enable those interested to focus their ideas and confine the discussion within the smallest possible limits. I am quite sure the Minister for Works will be asked to reconsider the route from South Pine to North Pine River; and that I believe can be altered by special authority hereafter. As I said before, it may appear that the route recommended by the engineer is the only route that would be practicable under all the circumstances. It is only proper, however, for me to say that my constituents will not be satisfied with the route between those two points, and the Minister will probably hear from them between this and the time the permanent working plans are adopted.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Those are the permanent plans.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I mean the working plans.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I think this is an appropriate time for bringing before the House a matter to which I gave a good deal of consideration about twelve months ago, and which I then intended to bring forward—I mean the gauge of the railways in this colony. Now that we are about to increase our railway construction to a considerable extent, it is an appropriate time to consider whether we should not retrace our steps, and adopt a gauge which will enable us to work our traffic more conveniently, more safely, and more economically. I think it is admitted now that the adoption of the 3 feet 6 inch gauge was a great mistake. At a time when our colony was much smaller than it is now, engineers of reputation approved of the 3 feet 6 inch gauge, and in a hasty moment it was adopted. We have learnt our mistake, and that mistake is getting greater and greater every day. For instance, we are now approaching the New South Wales border, where our railways come into direct competition with the railways of New South Wales with a 4 feet 8½ inch gauge; and we find at once the disadvantage we are at, because we cannot haul a ton of goods so cheaply on a 3 feet 6 inch gauge as on a 4 feet 8½ inch gauge. Well, we are feeling that now, because the competition with New South Wales for the trade of the border and the Western country must involve a great loss to use while working with an imperfect instrument. In the next place the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge would give us a great advantage in the rolling-stock. The best and longest railways in the world are on that gauge. If we adopt that gauge we shall always have the advantage of the latest improvements. Of course some of the improvements made on the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge can be adapted to the 3 feet 6 inch, but many valuable improvements cannot be adapted. And if we adopt the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge there can be no question that we shall be put in the position of having access always to the latest and best improvements that can be used on all the smaller gauges. Our engines are as good as can be made, but they are not as perfect an article as can be made for the larger gauge, nor can they haul goods at the same cost per ton per mile. It is important for us to consider this matter now for

the reasons I have given. I had an intention to ask the sanction of the House twelve months ago to an approval in the break of gauge, by commencing all new railways on the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge. I think that can be done well and without much inconvenience. Why I bring this question forward now is that we are commencing a new scheme of railways, and a 4 feet 8½ inch gauge would cost very little more—in fact, the increase would be quite inappreciable. Then, besides the advantages I have enumerated, we shall have the additional advantage of free communication with our neighbours, who are coming closer, and whose traffic will be constantly blocked by the break of gauge all along the line. The proper time to make the alteration is now. It may be done without much inconvenience. All those lines that are going out west may be commenced to be made on the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge, and the additional cost per mile would be very small, especially there. There will be at first some inconvenience by the change of the goods into different trucks, and in some other arrangements until the change is gradually made towards Brisbane. My proposition is to make all the new continuations on the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge and then as the rails got worn out to have the line remade in sections on the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge back to Brisbane. The Engineer-in-Chief has got the whole of the papers in his office, and if I remember rightly the cost of changing the whole of the railways of the colony from 3 feet 6 inches to 4 feet 8½ inches would be something under a million of money. I know it did not reach a million. From the great advantages that we would attain, I think the cost should not be reckoned at all. The estimate was made closely by Mr. Stanley, and I think we ought to face that addition to the cost. Of course there will be inconvenience for a certain time, on certain lines, but we can face that for a short time, in order to get over the immense difficulties the 3 feet 6 inch gauge presents to the traffic throughout the colony in intercommunication with New South Wales. The advantages of the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge far outweigh the disadvantages, and the whole arguments are in favour of the change. I believe myself in it, and I will give every assistance to the Government, if they will look favourably on the proposition. I have referred more to the advantages, so far as money or economy is concerned; but I can go further, and say that there is no question but that the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge is a far safer one to travel by. We can travel sixty miles an hour on a 4 feet 8½ inch gauge with perfect safety; and I do not think you can on a 3 feet 6 inch gauge—at all events not on ordinary lines. We have then greater safety, greater comfort, and greater economy, with the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge. We shall be able to work the railways at less cost. The disadvantages are having to spend a million of money to make the change, and the inconveniences while the change is going on. But if the matter were properly brought before the House, and an impartial consideration given to it, I am sure that the House would come to the conclusion that the time has arrived when we ought to break the gauge of the railways in the colony, and make it the same as the railways of New South Wales. If we make a change at all we are limited to the choice of the New South Wales gauge. Victoria has a 5 feet 3 inch gauge. That I believe is the best gauge, speaking as an engineer. At the same time, as there are more railways in New South Wales than in Victoria, I believe that ultimately the result will be that Victoria must change to a 4 feet 8½ inch gauge. And an argument for that being done would be that Queensland had changed her gauge.

The result will then be that people will be able to travel all through from one colony to another without breaking the gauge. I may say that there would be no inconvenience now if we started to lay down a 4 feet 8½ inch gauge line right through to Gympie. The inconvenience would not be felt until we came into contact with the Maryborough line. All the branches could be made on a 4 feet 8½ inch gauge with very little inconvenience if proper arrangements were devised. It could also be done on the Sandgate line without stopping the traffic for more than a week. The line could be widened without difficulty—but for the bridges—in three or four days by putting on many gangs of men. I think the House would be astonished at the little inconvenience which would be caused; and we should get as cheap and far better lines.

The PREMIER: It appears to me, Mr. Speaker, more a matter of money than anything else. I have no doubt that a 4 feet 8½ inch gauge is better than a 3 feet 6 inch gauge line. It is also much more costly. The hon. gentleman says if we convert our lines from a 3 feet 6 inch to a 4 feet 8½ inch gauge it could be done with little inconvenience. It might in some places; but we could not lay down a 4 feet 8½ inch line on the Rang

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: Yes.

The PREMIER: No; for the bridges are not able to carry the heavier engines; and the rails are not heavy enough. The rolling-stock would all have to be renewed; and to lay down a 4 feet 8½ inch gauge there would have to be new sleepers new bridges, and sharp curves would have to be round-d. Indeed, we should have to reconstruct the line altogether. I do not think we could afford it. If we are going in for luxuries of that kind and for superior work of that sort, we shall have to content ourselves with a smaller quantity. We may get a higher quality; but we must content ourselves with a smaller quantity, and I presume that that was the reason that guided the House in 1862, when it was determined to adopt the 3 feet 6 inch gauge. If the other gauge had been adopted we should not have had so many railways as we have. In respect to the line under consideration, of course there would be no difficulty in making that on the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge; but it would be very inconvenient to have merely the line to Gympie on that gauge, and then the rest of the line to Maryborough would have to be reconstructed; otherwise, in a distance of 160 miles, we should have one-half on one gauge and the other half on another. As to the hon. member's suggestion that we should extend our lines westward from Charleville and Hughenden on the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge, I think it would be nonsense to adopt it. It would be the very opposite to what was done in South Australia, where they have the broad gauge in the more populous districts, while in the remote districts they have contented themselves with a more economical gauge. As to the particular route of this line, I have not a very intimate knowledge of the country, but I know something about it, and I believe it is the best one that could have been selected. The construction might have been less expensive if the line had started from the other side of Cabbage-tree Creek, and if the Sandgate line had not gone so far out of its way that route might have been adopted. But considering this is part of the line by which people will, before long, travel from Sydney to Rockhampton, it is unnecessary to put in extra loops like that and cause a waste of time and inconvenience. I do not think this line could be worked with the Sandgate line, which must always be worked as purely a suburban line. As to the crossing over the North Pine River, I have spoken to many

people connected with the district, and I have reason to believe that the place selected is the best for the crossing. I think that the line follows nearly the present main road, and it will certainly be found the most convenient way.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: I wish to say just a few words. The hon. member did not listen to my argument, or he would not have given the reasons against the change of gauge that he has done. He said that the sleepers upon the Main Range would not do. My suggestion was that we should wait till the old material was worked out, and when it had to be replaced it could be done upon the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge.

The PREMIER: I referred to the curves.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: It would be an inconvenience for some time. We shall require to lay new rails some day, and then we can make the change. The only difficulty will be that there will be a considerable expense in regard to the tunnels. As to the sleepers, that is a matter of very small expense. The curves will answer just as well for the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge, or they can be altered at little expense.

Mr. MIDGLEY said: Mr. Speaker,—I have taken a considerable amount of interest in the construction of this line, and I think there are certain objections to be urged against the route it is intended to take. I believe that the original intention was, and the understanding until quite recently was, that the Sandgate line was to be the first part of the line to Gympie. I know that that idea was prevailing until quite recently, when the announcement of the intention to take the line from Toombul instead of Sandgate was received with astonishment and incredulity. Anyone looking at the map, and laying a rule upon it and measuring it, will see that there is a triangle from Sandgate to where it is proposed to cross the North Pine River, and they will find that if the line were constructed on from Sandgate there would be a saving of about three miles. That is a thing which ought to be taken into consideration to begin with. There would be a saving in the construction amounting to some £10,000 or £12,000, and I think that the Government are going to commit a mistake similar to that which was made in the construction of the Sandgate line in the beginning. They are going to leave away on the right the population which has proved to be so payable a traffic on the Sandgate line, merely for the purpose of going through a district which already is in very close proximity to a railway. I notice that there is an item upon the Estimates for the continuation of the present line further into Sandgate—that is, towards Cabbage-tree Creek and Shorncliffe. I am not going to say anything against that, but it is as certain as that to-morrow's sun will rise that that kind of thing that they are going to do with regard to Shorncliffe will very soon have to be done with regard to the esplanade and Brighton. As sure as they are proposing to construct this line to Shorncliffe, so sure will they have to make provision for the construction of a line towards Brighton, because the population will settle in that part more than anywhere. It is there that the land has been sold, and it is there that the room is and where the people are building. If this line were taken, as it was supposed it would be taken in the first instance, into Sandgate somewhere from the back of Brighton—and I believe they have some rough surveys of it in the office—it would meet all the requirements of the Brighton traffic to begin with. The Government intend, it appears, to leave that traffic out of the question—not to consider it at all. It has been proved beyond doubt that it was a serious error to construct the Sandgate line so as to leave out in this

coldest the Valley people, and we are having to pay the penalty for that to-day in the proposal we see to construct a line from the termination that is to be, in Edward street, right round to Bowen Hills. There will be then almost a circle of railway in order to meet the traffic that they might very easily, with any ordinary amount of foresight, have anticipated and provided for when the Sandgate line was being constructed. The Minister for Works, in countenancing this route, is departing from the principle which he has laid down intelligently enough in other matters when he has refused to start the construction of a line within a few miles of the present terminus. He refused to entertain the idea of constructing a line from the south of the Peak Mountain because the remaining part of the line, from the Peak Mountain to Harrisville, would necessitate the maintenance of a separate staff. This line will be just in the same position with regard to the traffic between Toombul and Sandgate. There will be a short distance of from four to six miles which will have to be worked separately and distinctly from the main line. I really think if a little more consideration had been given to this matter, and it had been carefully ascertained within what distance settlement would be, this plan which is proposed now would not have been adopted by the Government. The Minister for Works has already intimated to deputations which have waited upon him that they may probably get a branch line from the Sandgate station round by Brighton some day. Well, that will just be a repetition of what we are doing now with regard to the Sandgate line. If that branch line is constructed in future, there will be another circle formed by a second construction, which might easily be avoided if the line is taken in the proper direction now. It is important for this House to remember that we are to consider the possibility of a line paying. It has been proved that no traffic has paid so well as passenger traffic on the Sandgate Railway. If that is a fact, and all the indications are that the passenger traffic will be largely increased by the extension of the line in the direction I have suggested, as I believe they are, these circumstances should, I think, receive the careful consideration of the Government.

Mr. BEATTIE: Mr. Speaker,—I perfectly agree with the hon. member when he says that if the passenger traffic has increased on any particular line we should be justified in extending that line; but the hon. gentleman forgets, in condemning the proposed route to Gympie—which I believe has been very carefully considered, and is acknowledged to be the most direct route—that a very large farming population was ignored in the construction of the Sandgate Railway. The requirements of those people have now been taken into consideration in deciding upon this direct route to Gympie. If he will only reflect on the matter for one moment, the hon. gentleman will see that by carrying the Sandgate line so far to the eastward Zillman's Waterholes was utterly omitted, and there is a large farming population there who, immediately this new line is constructed, will bring their trade direct to Brisbane. The route the hon. gentleman proposes, and which he says the people of Sandgate expected, is a very selfish one indeed, and that is that it should go to Brighton and Humpybong and round about there. The fact is that speculators have sold land there with the expectation that the line would go in that direction. But I do not think the Government would be justified in constructing a railway through any land simply for the purpose of enhancing the value of that land. I do not think that would be fair to the rest of the colony. There is no doubt that when his line to Gympie was considered it

was always intended to have a branch to Sandgate and other places in that neighbourhood, as they became settled. The hon. member for Fassifern has told us that no trade is better than passenger trade. We all know that is the case, and the chief reason is that there is so very little expense in handing passengers in and out of trains. But in constructing a line to Gympie I think there are other matters to be taken into consideration besides the passenger traffic to Sandgate. There is, as I have already pointed out, the farming populations in the districts which the line will traverse. A large quantity of land will be occupied and cultivated as soon as this direct railway to Gympie is commenced. I believe that it will encourage settlement all along the route, and that ultimately it will result in bringing a large amount of traffic to Brisbane. I do not like to say that the Sandgate people are selfish in their desires, but really I can scarcely arrive at any other conclusion, because it is most unreasonable to expect a line to Gympie to run into Sandgate and go out again in a north-west direction. In determining upon the route for this railway the Government have taken into consideration the needs of the farming population which were neglected when the Sandgate line was constructed. I believe that if the Gympie railway were taken a little further westward it would better provide for the inhabitants of South Pine and Cash's Crossing, but from conversations I have had with people living on the Pine River there are some difficulties in the way. The people of North Pine are provided for by this route, but the requirements of the South Pine would be better attended to by taking the line round by Samford. I believe it is the duty of the Government to make the line as direct as possible, and where country is occupied, and they are satisfied that trade will be increased by making cheap feeders to the main line it is their duty to provide them as soon as possible. I am very glad indeed to support the extension of this line towards Gympie, because I believe it will be a very great advantage to Brisbane and to the colony generally. I hope to live to see the time when this line will run to Rockhampton, and perhaps further north, so as to connect the various ports of the colony with Brisbane and New South Wales. It would, I am sure, be a great gratification to us all to see this accomplished.

Mr. SMYTH: Mr. Speaker,—As this line is going towards my electorate, I wish to say a few words upon it. I do not know much about the country between Brisbane and Caboolture, but I have been given to understand for some considerable time past that a survey was going on from Toombul to Caboolture. I hope that the people of Sandgate and others who have been agitating about this line will not stand in the way of its being carried out as the people up north have done in regard to the Herberton railway, because they cannot agree whether it should go to Mourilyan Harbour, Port Douglas, or Cairns. I believe the route chosen in this case is the proper route. The people of Gympie do not want to come to Sandgate. They have got a better watering-place than Sandgate, which is about the worst watering-place I ever saw. It is not a watering-place. It is all very well to go there for "a sniff of the briny," but it is not a place for pleasure. The hon. member for Fassifern makes a mistake when he says the route he proposes is three miles shorter to Gympie.

Mr. MIDGLEY: I did not say that. I said it would save three miles of construction.

Mr. SMYTH: I cannot see that it will save three miles. I have looked at the plan on the table, and I think the line will be one easy to

construct. I hope that when the survey is completed the line will go by the valley of the Mary, because the land is so much better there. There is an immense quantity of timber on the Blackall Range and in the valley of the Mary; whereas if the line is taken along the coast there is any amount of poor land there. I should like very much to see hon. members support a line to Gympie, because there are a great many settlers along the route, and I do not think there will be a better paying line in the colony. There is some of the finest timber in Australia between Brisbane and Gympie—all kinds of the richest timber can be found there—pine, cedar, ironbark, and many other kinds—all of which will be available if the line is constructed. For that reason I would like to see some notice taken of what fell from the leader of the Opposition as to the width of gauge. In New South Wales it is 4 feet 8½ inches; and that gauge has been adopted by Act of Parliament in Great Britain, where, after there had been great differences of opinion on it, it was decided to regulate the width of gauge. In having that gauge New South Wales has an advantage in its railway stock, the patterns being the same as those used at home. I hope the same gauge will be adopted in this colony on some of the new lines. As to the line between Maryborough and Gympie, it could be done there, because I understand it is decided that a heavier class of rails ought to be put down, and the present ones will have to be pulled up. As to the cost, it would not be a great deal, because only one side of the cuttings would have to be touched, and perhaps the bridges made a trifle wider.

Mr. KELLETT said: From the information I have, I believe the line now proposed by the Government is the most advisable one, and will go through a most populous part of the colony. However, I rise principally to allude to the remarks of the leader of the Opposition as to the alteration of our gauge to 4 feet 8½ inches. I have considered the matter for a long time, and I have taken a good deal of trouble to get information as to the difference in the expense between the two gauges, and as to what would be the advantages if the alteration were made. The first time I thought of it was when the Government considered it desirable to put on the Loan Estimates a sum for a direct line from Warwick to New South Wales. I thought then that it might be advisable to make that line on the same gauge as the New South Wales lines, and therefore I made a good many inquiries on the subject with a view of ascertaining the difference in the expense. The duplication of the line between Brisbane and Ipswich is only a question of altering the cuttings—that is the principal part of the expense—and also widening the bridges. From the information I have obtained, I think it might be advisable to proceed with the duplication, with the view of eventually adopting the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge. The necessary sleepers might be laid down, although it might not be advisable for a time to alter the gauge; the rails and the banks to be got ready, so that the alteration might be made as soon as the Engineer-in-Chief thought it desirable. Of course the railway from Warwick to New South Wales could be proposed on the wide gauge, and in the meantime it might be decided definitely that the line should be so constructed on that gauge. I believe it would be a great advantage to the colony to have the wider gauge. We should be able to run heavier loads, and consequently our traffic would be better managed; while we should be able to compete with the New South Wales lines as far as Glen Innes and Tenterfield. I certainly think it would be worth while the Minister for Works considering the matter, and endeavouring to

arrive at some definite conclusion on it. I think the hon. gentleman might consider whether it would not be advisable, before starting the direct line to New South Wales, to ascertain the extra cost of adopting the wider gauge, and whether that extra cost would not be well recouped by the advantages that would accrue from the change. I believe, from the information that I have obtained, that the cost would be something like one-third more, at the outside, than the 3 feet 6 inch gauge. For the lines into the interior we might continue to use the 3 feet 6 inch. I think for those railways it is better than the wider gauge, because they run long distances over level country, and it is easier to take large loads over such country. The more I have inquired into the subject the more desirable does it seem to me that we should adopt the wider gauge for some of our lines. I think the Minister for Works should ask the Engineer-in-Chief to give an estimate of the difference in cost in the duplication of the Brisbane and Ipswich line on the wide and on the narrow gauge, and bring it before this House as soon as possible. In that way the House could consider the subject in connection with both lines. Now is the right time to consider the matter. We are now in a position to say whether the line to connect with New South Wales shall be on the same gauge as that adopted there.

Mr. FRASER said: I know a good deal of the country between Brisbane and Gympie, and I certainly do not agree with the hon. member for Fassifern. He stated that the Sandgate line was originally intended to be the main line to Gympie, but if this proposal is adopted it will be a branch line from the main line. As it is proposed to take the line, it will go through some of the finest agricultural country in the colony, though perhaps not so extensive as in some other districts. Certainly, in the neighbourhood of the Bald Hills and the South Pine River, there is some of the finest agricultural land we have in the country. The result of following the advice of the hon. member for Fassifern would be this: that instead of the people going to market with their produce in as direct a line as they possibly could, and at less expense, they would have to go round the loop at Sandgate, and travel an additional distance of three or four miles.

Mr. MIDGLEY: The Bald Hills people want it.

Mr. FRASER: I think it is desirable that people should be able to carry their produce to market in as direct a line and as cheaply as possible. With respect to the coast line beyond Caboolture, it is not a question for discussion at the present time, but I have no doubt that it will receive due consideration both from the Government and their Engineer. With respect to the question brought before the House by the leader of the Opposition, I may say I think it is a matter that deserves serious consideration at the hands of the Government. We may be satisfied that it is only a question of time when circumstances will force us to adopt a corresponding gauge to that which our neighbours have. It has often been pointed out that we are at a great disadvantage in our carrying capacity and our rates of freight on our narrow-gauge railways as compared with our neighbours in New South Wales; and as a matter of self-defence that is the course which we shall be compelled to take. Such being the case, the sooner we give our attention to the matter the better, and I hope we shall see it receive the serious consideration of the Minister for Works and his engineering staff.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I believe the alteration of gauge is only a question of time,

and I certainly think this is a very good time to make the alteration. We have already sanctioned a line from Stanthorpe to the border, tenders for which will be opened in the course of a few days, and a commencement will be speedily made to connect with New South Wales. I hope the House will give us authority to build the direct railway by way of Warwick and the double line to Ipswich, and then within two or three years we shall have a direct line from the border near Tenterfield right on to Gympie. I am further of opinion that within the next twelve or fifteen years no more narrow-gauge railways will be laid down; all the lines will be built on the broad-gauge system. The difference in cost of construction is not very material. The hon. member for Port Curtis complained that I did not give him sufficient information. I should not like to supply him with all the information he wants. The fact of the matter is there is not very much information to give about this line, because it goes through a thickly settled portion of the country. It has been settled for years and years with a farming population. I could not tell the House that it is going to open up a large territory for settlement, because the people are there already. I might tell the hon. gentleman, however, that the bridging on this line will cost £1,700 a mile, and that there are 6,800 cubic yards of earth to be removed.

Mr. NORTON: What is the total cost per mile?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is put down here at £5,000 a mile. Whether it will cost that amount or not I cannot tell, but Mr. Stanley certainly always puts down his figures high enough. The total length of bridging required on the line is 6,354 feet; the estimated cost being at the rate of £1,760 per mile. Of private land 125 acres will have to be resumed, for roads 5 acres more, and of Crown land 475 acres. With regard to the question of route, I have taken the greatest pains to come to a correct decision. Each of the rival routes had its advocates, and each said that theirs was better than the other. Such being the case, I sent out Mr. Phillips, the surveyor, with instructions to ride over the country and find out the truth. One result of Mr. Phillips' inquiries was that every man wanted a railway to his own door. We determined then to make the line as direct as possible; and I came to the conclusion that the one now proposed would accommodate the largest number of people, would be the most direct, and could be constructed at the least cost. Taking all these matters into consideration, I decided that it was the proper route. A deputation from Sandgate waited upon me on that subject—I do not know whether the hon. member for Fassifern has landed property there or not—and when I asked them why they wanted the route to go by way of Sandgate all they could say was that it was a good place for people to camp there for the night, so that it would be good for the hotel-keepers and lodging-house keepers. They wanted to carry the traffic by way of Sandgate for the same reason that the hon. member for Toowoomba wants to carry the traffic to Warwick and the border by way of Toowoomba. No matter where it goes, they must have their share. Indeed, I believe the people of Sandgate would like a railway to all the nooks and corners of their salt-water creek; but this is a coast line, not a Sandgate line, and my object is to make it as nearly direct as possible.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said: It is always a difficult matter for a Minister for Works to select a route for any railway, and I have no doubt he has in this instance selected the best route from the information he had, and also with the

object he had in view. I am rather surprised at the Engineer's estimate of cost for this portion of the line—£5,000 per mile. I know something of that country, having been across it twice from Brisbane to Caboolture; and I am positively certain that if this portion of the line is to cost £5,000 a mile, the amount on the Loan Estimates for the entire line—£488,000—will have to be supplemented with an additional £150,000. The country going over the range bears no comparison with that between here and Caboolture with respect to cost of construction.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I may tell the hon. member that I have come to the conclusion that the line can be constructed for much less than £5,000 a mile, and if I am in office I will see that it is done.

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY—RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into Committee further to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty by way of loan.

Question—That the sum of £3,140,000 be granted for Railways, Southern and Western District—put.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Committee wanted some more information, and surely the Colonial Treasurer did not intend to ask them to vote £3,140,000 without giving some explanation as to the new lines. They did not want so much information about the extensions of the original lines, but they wanted full information about the new lines. That was a large sum to be passed without discussion.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he gave all the financial explanation last night, but he would repeat it if hon. members thought proper. His hon. colleague the Minister for Works would be prepared to give information respecting the individual lines. If the hon. gentleman wished, he would go over again what he said concerning the estimated expenditure and the amount of money at present in hand.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: It is not the amount of money we want information about; it is the new lines.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the information upon any of the lines, if the hon. gentleman would mention them, would be supplied by his hon. colleague the Minister for Works.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he should like some information why the Southern and Western line was to be extended 120 miles, the Central line 120 miles, and the Northern line only 100 miles? It was always understood that those railways would be extended *pro rata*; that if one mile was extended on one line, another mile should be constructed on another. That had been departed from. He next wanted some information about the double line to Ipswich, because he did not think the money put down would be half enough. He would not discuss the Brisbane to Caboolture line, because they had just dealt with it. Then there was Brisbane to Cleveland. That was a new line on which they wanted information. It was not a question of the amount of money put down. That might be sufficient or not; but it was more likely to be too little than too much. Then there was the Valley extension from the city. Information upon that line was absolutely necessary. There were several little lines that wanted explanation. They would like to know something about the Drayton branch, and then they would want a

very great deal of information about the lines from Ipswich to Warwick, and Warwick to St. George. Those lines would require to be discussed very minutely, because they would certainly cost a great deal of money, and far more than the sums put down for their construction. If they multiplied the sum by two, they would then be a little short of the amount required to make the line from Warwick to St. George. He had intimated quite enough points upon which the Committee were bound to receive information, and he would wait now until it was supplied.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he understood the hon. member to ask why the Southern and Western line should be extended 120 miles and the Northern line only 100 miles. Well, the reason of that was that the line from some portion of the Gulf to Cloncurry would intervene, and it was thought that in the meantime carrying the Northern line 100 miles further on would be sufficient until they saw what direction the Cloncurry line would take. It might be very possible that the Northern line would connect with the Cloncurry line. That was the reason. The hon. member did not want any information about the line from Stanthorpe to the border, because it was already approved of and authorised. The doubling of the Brisbane and Ipswich line had become a necessity. It was utterly impossible with the increased traffic to get along with a single line; and not only that, but in the event of an accident the whole line became blocked. The doubling of the line was not going to be very costly, as a great portion of it was double already. There would be no land to resume, because the double line would be laid down within the fences, and he was perfectly satisfied that before it was constructed it would be even more necessary than at present. Brisbane to Cleveland was the next line, and the hon. member seemed doubtful about its being a good undertaking; but he could refer him to the way in which the Sandgate line had worked. They had been told that line would never pay, but they saw now the result, and he was satisfied that if the Cleveland line was agreed to it would pay as well as the Sandgate line. The population was increasing, and people were always very anxious to get down to the seaside. The extension to the city and Fortitude Valley was put down to correct a blunder made by the hon. member himself. He took the line away from the population, and now the mistake—he would not call it a blunder—had to be rectified. Then with the South Brisbane line also he thought the hon. member had made a blunder, because he placed the passenger station in a little corner between the dock and some private houses where there was really no room for it. Now that the line was being carried out to Beenleigh—and they hoped to take it to Southport—they expected a considerable passenger traffic, and it would, therefore, be absolutely necessary to provide additional accommodation. Then there were great complaints about the want of wharfage, and a sum was put down to extend the railway wharves at South Brisbane. There was a sum of £15,000 down for a double line to the Junction on the Sandgate line; he thought that would be acknowledged to be necessary; indeed he did not know whether it would not be necessary to duplicate the line all through to Sandgate. Then there was the Brisbane Valley Branch: the hon. member knew enough about that, because he had given them a long story about it the other night. He would take the opportunity of informing the hon. member for Blackall that he had carried out his (Mr. Archer's) instructions to the letter. He went on Saturday to visit the line,

and found that it was not quite so bad as the hon. member for Blackall represented. Beyond that he was not going to say anything more. Next came the Fassfern Branch. He supposed hon. members would be perfectly satisfied that that was a line which was likely to be remunerative. It was going into an agricultural district that could not be excelled by anything on the far-famed Darling Downs; and when the extension was completed it would lead to something better for the revenue. Then there was the Laidley Creek Branch, ten miles. They had had a petition in favour of that and one against it, but he did not pay very much attention to those petitions. There was a village not far from the railway station, and of course the people there objected to the line being carried out as proposed. He generally disapproved of those short lines, because they were expensive to work; but in this case there was an engine and staff always there for the purpose of helping extra goods waggons over Little Liverpool, and that would come in to work the branch. The Beauwaba Branch, sixteen miles, would, he believed, be one of the best paying branches constructed. It ran through a large agricultural settlement, and as there was no land to be resumed it would not be very expensive. The Drayton deviation was also to rectify an error perpetrated long ago, though he did not know if any hon. member present was responsible for it.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: You are; you were in the House then.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he forgot all about it. Anyhow, it was thought desirable now to remedy it. The next line was from Ipswich to Warwick. He looked upon that as the most important line in the list.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Government benches: Hear, hear!

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member said "Hear, hear." He did not care whether the hon. member did hear or did not hear. All he could say was, that if they were to have communication with New South Wales it was absolutely necessary that that line should be constructed. People would not go fifty or sixty miles round about simply for the purpose of coming to Brisbane. If hon. members would look at the map they would see that it was a national work; it was almost a direct route. He knew the hon. member for Toowoomba was very likely to object to it in a dog-in-the-manger style.

Mr. ALAND rose to order. He wanted to know which of the members for Toowoomba the Minister for Works referred to?

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Both of you—dogs in the manger.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he thought he had given the hon. member for Townsville all the information he asked for. Whether it was satisfactory or not to the hon. member he did not know. If there was any further information he could give, he should be very glad to give it.

Mr. ALAND said he would suggest to the Minister in charge of those Estimates whether it would not save a great deal of time if they were to take the loans item by item. There were a lot of them that would pass, no doubt, without discussion, but some would lead to a great deal of discussion. They were now talking at random without coming to a conclusion, and if they were to pass the Estimates quickly it would be better to take them as he had suggested.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. member might take up and discuss any item he liked.

Mr. ALAND said he had done that once, and found he could not go back to a certain item. He was not going to be "done" again.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the Minister for Works had intimated on the previous day that he was going to take up the proposed new railways line by line. But afterwards the Premier came in and said that they must take them as a whole.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that what he stated was that he would give explanations in regard to any lines that were wanted.

Mr. NORTON: No, no!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. gentleman wants to move them item by item he can do so.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said they all knew that; the Minister need not have risen to tell them that.

Mr. BEATTIE said there was one item that he would be happy to get some information upon—"Brisbane—Extension of Terminal Station and New Offices for Engineers, £50,000." The other day he had taken a walk up Edward street towards the railway station, and was having a bird's-eye view of the improvements going on, and had been very much astonished to see a lot of work proceeding there. On making inquiries as to what was the intention of making the large cuttings and excavations in the centre of the land to the northward of the Brisbane station, he was told that that was the extension of the terminal station. Looking at it from an economic point of view, he thought to himself that there was a very great waste of money in those cuttings on the north side. He noticed that a new street was being formed in a line with the office of the Engineer of Existing Lines, to come out at Albert street, a little below the municipal market reserve. He could not see any great advantage in that. And when he looked to the frontage down to Roma street he asked himself how on earth the engineer who had charge of that particular portion of work could go on making a large cutting into the centre of the place without utilising the whole frontage of Roma street. Somewhat degree of judgment ought to be shown in the protection of property belonging to private individuals in the locality. He maintained that the works now in hand tended very much indeed to depreciate the value of property in Roma street. If they were going to extend the terminal station, why not have brought it down to Roma street, which was the widest street in Brisbane? But instead of that there was an immense cutting and a huge embankment—which, from a common-sense point of view, was a very large waste of land and waste of accommodation. He thought the engineer, whoever he might be, who had charge of that particular extension of the Brisbane section might have utilised the whole of that land, and not left it in the state it was in at the present moment, thereby depreciating the value of property in Roma street. There was an office cocked up on a high embankment and a new street made where there would have to be a very expensive retaining wall. Some little idea of economy ought certainly to permeate the minds of individuals who had charge of works of that description. If the colony was in a good position they ought not to spend money needlessly in works of that character. He believed there would be a great deal of saving in the works at the terminal station if the Minister for Works just looked at them and made some suggestion to those professional men in charge of them; for he (Mr.

Beattie) often found that common sense in carrying out works of that nature was better than professional opinions. Therefore, if the Minister for Works would just take a common-sense view of the matter, and the waste of property in connection with that cutting, he would take care that the land was utilised in a manner which would place the landowners of Roma street in the position in which they ought to be placed—that was, that their property, instead of being decreased in value by the fact of the terminal station being there, would be increased. Those people had paid high prices for their land, and he did not think it was to the advantage of the railway authorities to have that large amount of land lying idle at present. He was sure the Minister for Works would come to the conclusion that he (Mr. Beattie) had come to.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that there was £50,000 upon the Loan Estimates for the Extension to the Terminal Station and New Offices. The Railway Department had no offices whatever at present. The officers were all located in the old Grammar School, which would have to come down. They would not be required exclusively for the Engineer, but for the whole staff. He did not think he quite knew where Roma street was; but he believed it was the street where the corporation were erecting the new market-shed. He did not see how an excavation going on at the railway station could interfere with that street at all, as it was inside the railway reserve. The Government had built a line from the present station into the market reserve, and beyond that the streets were not interfered with.

Mr. BEATTIE: I did not say that they were.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he was very glad that the hon. gentleman had drawn attention to the matter, but he did not know what good could be done, particularly now that the work was in progress and nearly completed. He had frequently looked with astonishment upon that work, especially as regarded the opening up of another road which was to divert the traffic from the channel in which it had hitherto gone, into a street where there would be no private property. The object was to take traffic from the present terminus along a back street. If Roma street and George street had been incapable of carrying all the traffic it would have been a thing which ought to have been done. But Roma street was one of the widest streets in Brisbane. It was busy sometimes, but well able to carry the traffic; and George street was a good street too. He was interested in property in that neighbourhood, and there was a very strong feeling on the part of some people, which he did not share, who feared that their property would very much depreciate in value through the road being made. He did not think due consideration had been given to those who had invested money in that neighbourhood; and all that would be saved by the making of that new street would be the short side of a triangle from the railway station to the gates. Was it worth while for the country to go to such an expense in that excavation? and was it a fair thing for those who had invested their money to open up a road to save such a little distance?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he forgot to state that there would be a bridge over the cutting.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked what item they were discussing. They must go upon some system. He had been trying to follow hon. members, as he felt an interest in the matter since the Minister for Works had said that he did not know where Roma street was.

Mr. BEATTIE said the item was the vote of £50,000 for the Extension to the Terminal Station, and Offices.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said there were many important items before that.

Mr. STEVENS said he thought it would be far better to take the items *seriatim*.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would point out that, before they could discuss the item intelligently which the Minister for Works and the hon. member for Fortitude Valley were referring to, they should have plans before them. It was impossible for any member of the Committee to understand the explanation of the Minister for Works, or the criticism of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, without some sort of plans.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he was sure that the hon. gentleman would make greater progress if he stuck to his original intention of moving the items *seriatim*, than he would if they were to discuss them all together. There was a matter of £3,140,000 being taken in one item.

The PREMIER said if it were the general desire of the Committee the items could be taken *seriatim*. It had not been the general custom to do so; but, of course, the Government would like to do whatever would facilitate the passage of business. He was anxious to know which way would be the best; he should have thought that the way proposed by his hon. colleague would have been the best.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that plan would not do where such a large amount of money was involved. The Minister for Works proposed that they should be taken item by item, and then that proposition was changed. On the Immigration vote, the Minister for Works said that the items should be taken one by one; but the Premier came in and changed the whole thing. If one hon. member wished to discuss what he considered the most important matter, he could go on to the fifteenth or sixteenth item, as had been done in the present case. There was never a time in the colony when they did not take the items *seriatim*.

Question put.

Mr. ALAN said he would like to know how the Government proposed to take that vote. He thought before they went down to tea it was understood that they were to take it line by line. He was quite sure that would be the simplest and easiest way of passing the vote. If that plan were not adopted they would be going on for the next hour or two talking, so to say, at random, first going to a line at the bottom of the page, and then to another at the top, and then to one in the middle. If, however, the lines were proposed *seriatim*, they would come to a definite conclusion on them much sooner, as he believed hon. members would confine the discussion to the particular line before the Committee. He hoped the Government would tell them plainly what they intended to do.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he thought it was time they settled down to the services if they were disposed to regard them at all. They were submitted the previous night *in globo* with the view of allowing hon. members an opportunity of discussing any one or more of the Estimates. However, he was willing to meet the views of hon. members in order to expedite the business before the Committee, and if the Committee would allow him he would withdraw his motion for £3,140,000 with the intention of moving each railway separately. In doing so he hoped that hon. members would address themselves to the respective services proposed. He might say, too, that that action of his was simply taken with the view of inducing

the Committee to get through the vote more quickly than appeared probable at the present time, and must not in any way be construed as showing a desire on the part of the Government to forego any part of the services. They entertained the opinion that every one of those services was equally urgent and equally necessary for the country. He simply submitted each line separately with the view of having the vote dealt with more expeditiously. With the permission of the Committee, he would withdraw his present motion.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £422,000 be granted to complete the railway from Roma to Charleville, and for the extension westward 120 miles. He assumed that the Committee would allow him to propose those two items together, as they referred to the extension of the same line. As he had gone into the financial aspect previously, he did not think it was necessary to say any more now.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that when that vote was submitted earlier he asked the Minister for Works why that extension westward was 120 miles, and the extension of the Northern line was only 100 miles. The hon. gentleman gave him an answer which certainly was a long way from being intelligible. He said that the Cloncurry line would probably meet the line from Charleville westward, and that it was not necessary that the Charleville line should be extended the same distance. Did the hon. gentleman mean to say that by an extension of 120 miles the lines would overlap? If so, of course it was intelligible. It had been thoroughly understood by the House that the extension of the lines westward should be at the same rate, and that had been done for several years past, and he knew no reason why it should be departed from now. If hon. members looked at the map, they would see that from the end of the Northern extension there was 150 miles to go to Cloncurry. Why should not an additional 20 miles be put on to make the extension the same as that of the Southern and Western Railway?

The PREMIER said he did not think the people of the North had any reason to complain. They of course were perfectly aware that they had the start already of 200 miles nearer the west, and if they got an extension of 100 miles the line there would be a great deal nearer the western border of the colony than any other line. In the same district it was proposed to make another railway a distance of about 230 miles, so that he thought the people in that part of the colony had nothing to complain of. What he had understood to be the principle up to the present time was that every part of the colony should be within 100 miles of a railway; and with those proposals carried out, every part of the colony except the extreme south would be within 100 miles of a railway. They knew, of course, that the line would some day go on to Cloncurry—he had not the slightest doubt of that; that was the proper objective point, and he thought it might be taken for granted that that was the policy of the House. At the present time the Government asked for an extension of 100 miles. Was there anything fairer than that?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that the hon. gentleman had stated that because the Northern line was to be extended further westward by 100 miles, while the Southern and Western line was to be extended 120 miles, the people in the North had no reason to complain. The people of the North were to be punished because their geographical position placed them further west

than the city of Brisbane. There could be no other reason. Why, the Southern and Western line was built from Brisbane almost to Roma before the Northern line was begun; there was no talk then about being nearer the West; but simply because Townsville lay a number of degrees further west than Brisbane, therefore the Northern line was not to be extended so rapidly. Just as if it could do the Southern and Western line any injury! It could not possibly do that line any injury to extend the Northern line the same distance. The principle which it was understood that House had acted upon with regard to those extensions westward was, that each line should be extended the same distance. He could see no reason why the Northern line should not be extended 120 miles, other than that the Government would not do it. The argument that the hon. gentleman applied to the extension of 120 miles would apply to no extension of the line at all. Why did he not stop at Hughenden? Hughenden was as far west as Roma. But the hon. gentleman's argument was no argument at all. It was simply a plea for the Government, that they would not do it. He thought the people of the North had a great deal to complain of. He did not intend to move any amendment on that item, because he desired to see the line extended even still further west; but when they came to the item for the Northern Railway he would see if he could not get it further extended.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £82,000 be granted by way of loan for the construction of the Southern Railway from Stanthorpe to the border, a distance of 21½ miles.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Will that amount complete the extension?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £85,000 be granted by way of loan for the construction of a double line of railway from Brisbane to Ipswich.

Mr. PALMER said the proposed duplication of that line was a very expensive item, and one which the circumstances of the case did not warrant. A far larger amount of traffic was carried on single lines in New South Wales. The traffic went from Parramatta, which included Mudgee, Richmond, and other places with a large coal and iron trade; and the extension to Bourke was carried on a single line. The line from Granville, which took the whole of the Melbourne and Deniliquin traffic, was a single line, and yet they never heard of accidents on those railways. The line to Parramatta had only been doubled within the last three or four years.

The PREMIER: Longer than that.

Mr. PALMER: I resided at Parramatta, and saw the work done.

The PREMIER: I do not remember that line as a single line.

Mr. PALMER said he saw them double the line between the Junction and Parramatta less than three years ago. Between the Junction and Sydney there was a double line, but there was not the slightest talk of doubling it further west than Parramatta, notwithstanding the immense traffic upon it. When he heard that particular item of the Estimates first talked about he had no idea the Government were serious about it. The amount of traffic on the line did not warrant such an expenditure, when there were so many parts of the country hungering for want of a single line.

Mr. ANNEAR said the hon. member was in error on one point: A contract had been let for the duplication of the line from Parramatta to Penrith, and the work was now under construction.

Mr. KELLETT said it was quite time the line between Brisbane and Ipswich was duplicated. The traffic on it was increasing every day; and the coal traffic itself was enough to keep a single line of rails employed. The number of branch lines which ran into it made it unsafe to use it much longer as a single railway. He was pleased to hear the Minister for Works say the time was at hand when the railways of the colony would have to be run upon a wider gauge. Now was the right time when they were going in for railway construction on a large scale, and extending their lines to the borders of New South Wales, to get an expression of opinion from the Committee on the subject as to whether their future railways should be built on the basis of the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge. Such an expression of opinion would greatly strengthen the hands of the Minister for Works. A start might be made on the line now under discussion. The line might be so constructed that it could be altered into a broad-gauge line as soon as it was deemed advisable to do so. If that was done now the work would not have to be done over again at some future time. He should like to hear an expression of opinion from the Committee on the subject.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the time had now arrived when the line between Brisbane and Ipswich should be doubled. If any accident happened upon it now it blocked the whole of the traffic. The trains were running under staff regulations, and if one delay took place all the trains were delayed. With reference to the question of change of gauge, the present afforded a very favourable opportunity to, at all events, lay down a line that would be suitable for a wider gauge. The additional cost would not be very excessive, and when the time came it would be easy to shift the rails to a wider gauge. It would not be a bad thing to commence with the line they had sanctioned that evening. Eventually the gauge on all the lines would have to be altered, and in the meantime it might be advisable so to construct the tracks as to make provision for a wider gauge when the time for that arrived.

Mr. PALMER said the Minister for Works had not adduced any arguments to show why the line should be duplicated. All he had said was that if an accident occurred on a single-line railway it would block the entire traffic. The hon. gentleman did not inform them what traffic there was; but he believed that five times the amount was carried on single lines in the other colonies.

Mr. FERGUSON said he quite agreed that the line should be duplicated. The Committee were to be asked to vote over a million of money for railways, the entire traffic on which would come into Brisbane by way of the line under discussion. The traffic was increasing so rapidly that it would have to be done, and they might as well vote the amount at once.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member for Eurke certainly made a mistake in saying that there was a double line no further than Granville on the Parramatta railway. It did not extend further at present, but a contract had been let for doubling the line as far as Penrith. There was no comparison between the amount of traffic on that line and our line. The line had been doubled to Granville for a long time, but it was chiefly for suburban traffic. The trains were running every five minutes. He was not

going to say a word against the proposed duplication of the Ipswich line, although they could carry easily three times the amount of traffic on the single line that existed at present. Still the work would have to be done some time, and he did not see why it should not be done now if it could be carried out for the amount of money—£85,000. Was that the Chief Engineer's estimate or had the amount been put down by the Cabinet? It seemed very small considering the amount the railway originally cost. It cost on the average £20,000 per mile, and provision was now made for duplicating at a cost of £3,000 only per mile. All the cuttings would have to be widened, and the bridges would also have to be altered.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he believed £85,000 would be ample to double the line. A considerable distance was already doubled, and one or two bridges had double lines on them. He might say that he was endeavouring to follow in the footsteps of the hon. member and keep down expenses.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said when the bridges were widened provision would have to be made for the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge, and although there might be some bridges wide enough to carry a double 3 feet 6 inch line, they would not carry a double 4 feet 8½ inch line.

Mr. JORDAN said he thought the suggestion of the hon. member for Mulgrave, about widening the gauges throughout the colony, would commend itself very strongly to the judgment of the greater number of hon. members. He was delighted to find there was a disposition on the part of the Government to fall in with the suggestion. He was disposed to think that a double line to Ipswich on the commencement of the through line to the border should be provided with sufficiently long sleepers to admit of the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge being adopted. He was strongly in favour of that view of the case.

Mr. NORTON said he thought it was desirable to double the line to Ipswich. It was a matter that had been discussed a great deal, but it seemed to him that the amount provided would not cover expenses. He would ask the Minister for Works whether he had any idea of the cost of widening the gauge—the cost per mile.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had not got the information the hon. member required, but he did not think the work would be costly.

Mr. NORTON: We can all think.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had no estimate, but the additional width would only be about 14 inches.

Mr. NORTON said all the tunnels would have to be widened. Not one of them was wide enough to carry the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he had no intention of opposing the vote, because in proposing his Estimates three years ago he said that the work would be required. Although he considered with the hon. member for Townsville that the line was sufficient for the traffic, still they would have to do the work at some future time. He understood, however, that in submitting the plans and sections for approval the Government would have them drawn so as to make the line suitable for the adoption of the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge. The engineers would get instructions to make the line sufficiently wide to take a double 4 feet 8½ inch line?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was not in a position to make the hon. gentleman that promise, but he would endeavour to impress on his colleagues the necessity of giving the

matter serious consideration. He thought the present was a very good time to commence and lay down lines suitable for the wide gauge. Of course, sleepers could be laid down so that the rails could be shifted to the proper width when they were in a position to use them.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he understood the Minister to say that he would give instructions that the plans submitted should provide for the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge. He understood that not to be the individual opinion of the Minister, but the opinion of the Ministry. If not, the Committee ought now to have an expression of opinion on the point. Why should they commence doing a work now that they would have to do over again at great expense? Why widen the line to carry a double narrow gauge, and not a double 4 feet 8½ inch gauge?

The PREMIER said he thought that in laying down the double line to Ipswich it should be so done that it would be available for the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge. He thought, however, that the additional length of sleepers which would have to be provided would have fallen into decay before they could be used.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said it was not necessary to make the sleepers longer, because they would have worn out before the gauge was widened, and they would in any case have to be taken up. The question asked by the member for Townsville, whether £85,000 was the Engineer's estimate, had not been answered. Was the estimate that of the Engineer-in-Chief? He saw that the surveyors had been on the line taking levels, and no doubt they had minute particulars about the cost of the work. They had been engaged in surveying for two months past, if not longer, and from the investigations they had made, had they come to the conclusion that the line could be widened for the amount put down on the Estimates?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Engineer-in-Chief was asked to report on the line, and he had come to the conclusion that the work would cost more than £85,000. Engineers always liked to have a large sum to work upon, but it would be better, if necessary, to come down at a future time for another £20,000 rather than vote too much at the present time. His own opinion was that it could be done for the amount on the estimate.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he understood the Engineer-in-Chief had reported that it would cost a good deal more, and his estimate had been reduced by the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said he advised the Minister to look closely after the estimates given by Mr. Stanley. He advised him to get from Mr. Stanley an estimate of the cost of every line before he started it, because if he examined the past career of Mr. Stanley he would find that he had exceeded his estimates to an extent not justifiable in the work of any engineer. He would also find that for a great part of the work there was no record in the office as to the Engineer-in-Chief's estimate, and Mr. Stanley was always in a position to say, "I never said it could be done for so-and-so." Every railway company where there were shareholders looking for profits obtained an estimate, and it should not be neglected on the part of the Government. The hon. gentleman should take care to get estimates and make the Engineer-in-Chief responsible.

Mr. KELLETT said he would like to ask the Minister for Works why none of the Railway Department officials were present to give him information on subjects which he did not know himself? It was the usual practice,

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Works what was the extent of the double line between Brisbane and Ipswich at the present time?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he could not tell exactly. There were a number of sidings which would no doubt come in. He would point out to the hon. member for Port Curtis that he did not think the tunnels would require to be widened.

Mr. NORTON said, if that were so, the Engineer was wrong; for he distinctly said they were not wide enough.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. member must not think that if he got double lines he would not require sidings. He would want them all the same.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes; but not so many.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER, in moving that a sum of £488,000 be granted by way of loan for the line from Brisbane to Caboolture and Gympie, said that, as the plans and specifications had been adopted that afternoon, he presumed it was not necessary to make any further remarks.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he wished to ask the Minister for Works two questions. The first was, whether in making that line he would provide that it should be of the width required for the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge, the same as in the case of the line to Ipswich. The second question was whether the £488,000 was the Engineer's estimate for the line.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was the Engineer's estimate, but of course if the line was to be made wide enough for the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge it would be increased. However, he thought it would be well to increase it, and widen the line to make provision for the broader gauge.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member for Mulgrave had advised the Minister for Works to get an estimate for every line from the Engineer-in-Chief, and hold him responsible for it. He would give the hon. member another bit of advice. He would find that, if he got an estimate from the Engineer-in-Chief with the intention of holding him responsible, the Engineer-in-Chief would provide him with a very large estimate, leaving himself a good margin.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said a great deal depended on the labour market. They knew that contractors had taken works and had not been able to carry them out with profit to themselves. They tendered for works while labour was tolerably reasonable, but within the last two or three years labour had gone up considerably, and almost every contractor had completed his work at a loss. It would depend a good deal upon the labour market whether the lines could be carried out within the estimate of the Engineer.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said it was the Engineer-in-Chief's duty to know the state of the labour market as well as the contractors. The labour market after all did not make such a difference as the hon. member supposed. The cause of the cheapness of construction for some years past was the competition between contractors, who were actually cutting each other's throats. It was not because labour was low.

Mr. STEVENSON said that, as a constituent of the Colonial Treasurer, he would like to ask whether that line was the one which the hon. gentleman was supposed to have promised his constituents should go by Enoggera. He had naturally supposed that it was the line, but he

found it was going by a different route altogether. He noticed the hon. gentleman had several advertisements of land sales in the papers, and one of the inducements offered in those advertisements was that a line was to be carried to Enoggera. But there was no word upon the Loan Estimates of any line to Enoggera at all. The hon. gentleman must know that it was a very short distance between Normanby and the Enoggera sale-yards; and the hon. gentleman's constituents had their lives endangered by cattle going to the sale-yards. The hon. gentleman ought to tell them whether the Government had refused to allow him to carry out his promise to his constituents, or how he stood in the matter.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he had never advocated a line to Gympie *via* Enoggera; he had always advocated the coast line. He believed the present line would serve a large section of his constituents, who were small farmers. He might say that he had certainly applied to his hon. colleague the Minister for Works in regard to a line of railway to Samford, but he was sorry to say that he found him very obdurate, and he had only been able to get half a promise for a survey. He had never represented to his constituents that he proposed a line to Gympie, going by Samford and Enoggera.

Mr. STEVENSON said he should have thought that the Treasurer had more influence with the Minister for Works, and that if he wanted a short line of a mile or mile and a-half for his constituents he was in that position in the Government to have received more than half a promise for a survey. He (Mr. Stevenson) only hoped the hon. gentleman would have a little more regard for the opinions of his constituents than to be satisfied with half a promise for a survey. He thought that was a line very necessary to be made, for at present there was great danger indeed from the cattle going to and from the sale-yard, and he believed that the suburban traffic would justify the making of the line.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked why that railway was put down as from Brisbane to Caboolture and Gympie, when the survey commenced at Toombul. Was a double line to be made from Toombul to the terminal station at Brisbane?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the money would only be expended from the junction at Toombul to Caboolture and Gympie.

Mr. KELLETT said the Minister for Works had told the Committee that he would advise the laying down of new lines on the wide gauge. Now tenders had been called for the railway from Stanthorpe to the border of New South Wales, and in a day or two the time would expire for opening them. He thought it would be desirable to consider whether that new line should be altered to the wide gauge, so as to prevent it being made over again—before the tenders were opened. That would only cause a short delay, and it would be a pity to go on with that line on the narrow gauge.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the tenders for the line from Stanthorpe to the border would be opened on Friday. Perhaps the better plan would be not to open them, and to invite those who had sent in tenders to put in fresh ones for the greater width. It might be accomplished in that way, but he did not think, if they were to have a wide-gauge line, it would be fair to open the tenders for the 3 feet 6 inch gauge.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he understood that the Minister's determination was to bring the broad gauge of 4 feet 8½ inches

up to Stanthorpe. Of course, now that they had adopted the broad-gauge policy they could not commence it too soon. The traffic would be worked much more conveniently, and it would be a saving to commence making all the new extensions on the broad gauge. There they would find the convenience of it at once, because the broad-gauge line from New South Wales could be worked right through to Stanthorpe, and it would not interfere with the junction. In fact, the junction could be made at any point, and it would be a very easy matter to arrange with the New South Wales Government to work the traffic through to Stanthorpe. He was glad that the Minister for Works had made up his mind to the broad gauge. The Engineer could, of course, advise him whether it was not possible to accept the tenders which had been called for. It was a schedule of prices contract, and where the prices were provided for there would not be much wrong in accepting the tenders and arranging that the additional quantities should be paid for at the schedule prices. The important thing to know was that the broad gauge was to be carried from Stanthorpe to the border.

The PREMIER said he could not admit that the railway policy of the colony was to be changed in consequence of the conversation that afternoon. The hon. member had assumed that the colony had now adopted the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge for lines from so-and-so to so-and-so. The colony had done nothing of the kind. All that had been agreed to was that the Government would take care that they would not spend money which would be wasted in the event of the colony adopting the broad gauge of 4 feet 8½ inches.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he understood quite differently. He had understood the Minister for Works to say that the line from Stanthorpe to the border would be made on the broad gauge. The Minister had not committed himself to laying down the rails, but he had committed himself to making the road itself and all the bridges and culverts for the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge, and to lay down the rails whenever they chose to do so afterwards.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he would point out that to adopt the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge for the lines would alter the whole complexion of the Loan Estimates.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he thought the idea of a broad gauge was very good if practicable, but many questions would arise which had not been fully answered. Take, for instance, the expensive bridge across the river at Indooroopilly. He thought that bridge was not calculated to carry a roadway of 4 feet 8½ inches, and even if it were he was not certain of its stability to carry a heavier traffic. As his hon. colleague the Premier had said, he thought the conversation that afternoon could be regarded as little more than indicating an opinion of hon. members of the desirability of introducing at some time a change of gauge. But if they insisted on it now the whole of the Government works of the colony would be delayed for an indefinite period. He trusted that the works would be provided for, and that as far as possible the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge would be introduced where convenient. He hoped it would not be understood that the works were to be delayed, and the money expended solely for the construction of railways of 4 feet 8½ inch gauge.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said it was useless their proposing that they should take down the Indooroopilly Bridge at present. As for the cylinders, they would stand a double line on

the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge. He did not think it was a very desultory discussion since the Minister for Works had actually consented to widen the line. It seemed to be pretty well fixed.

Mr. FOXTON said that, notwithstanding what had fallen from the Colonial Treasurer and the Premier, he sincerely trusted that when the construction of that line was proceeded with certain portions of it should be made to take the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge at some future time; that such portions as could not be afterwards altered without considerable expense should be laid down to receive that gauge—such, for instance, as bridges, tunnels, culverts, and matters of that sort. He understood from his hon. friend the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, that there was not the slightest difficulty in the way of having it done, even under the contract as it would be when the tenders were opened, owing to the fact of there being scheduled prices and it seemed to him that the mere matter of the increased width of bridges and culverts would not be such a serious matter as to render it likely that the Estimates would be very greatly increased. He might mention that there was an agitation going on immediately across the border, for the purpose of running the narrow gauge into Tentersfield, which was a very extraordinary thing, and they would take the wind out of their sails by constructing the culverts and bridges upon that particular section of the line so as to receive the broader gauge. That would settle the question of gauges as between the two colonies for all time to come. The question was, what would be the increase on the cost? He would point out that that was the only line in which the necessity existed for the increased width of gauge. No doubt it would be very desirable, as the hon. member for Townsville had pointed out, to have a wider gauge upon the railway to Gympie, but in the other case they were going to connect the New South Wales railways with their seaboard, and how could they do it better than by adopting the wide gauge upon that line? He would particularly request the hon. Minister for Works to give the matter his most serious attention.

Mr. BEATTIE said he could not understand hon. gentlemen asking the Ministry to consent to that without consideration. There was no doubt that it would entail an increased cost. He had no objection himself to see the culverts and tunnels on that line made sufficiently wide to receive that traffic; but there were other considerations. The Ministry would have to make provision for rolling-stock for the particular line, which was a very serious item. He could understand the argument of the hon. gentleman who last spoke, that it was desirable to have the gauge so that it could run into New South Wales; but he did not see any object in laying sleepers, etc., unless they were going to adopt the wider gauge at once. There was no doubt that when they were in a position to have the necessary rolling-stock upon that gauge they would have to put new sleepers down, and he hoped hon. gentlemen did not think it was the intention of the Committee to give the Ministry authority to run the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge from Stanthorpe to the border, because the break of gauge would take place at Stanthorpe, the same as it would now.

Mr. DONALDSON said he trusted that the day was not far distant when they would have a broader gauge than they had at present in Queensland. The rate of carriage upon the railways of Queensland was much greater than in any of the other colonies, and whenever application was made to the department for a reduction the request was always met with the reply that

their railways being of a light character—not able to carry heavy loads—they could not afford to take goods at a cheaper rate than they were doing now. For the information of members he had noted down a few items showing the difference in the cost of carriage in this colony and in New South Wales, for the same distance. The cost of the carriage to Mitchell—which was the furthest extension of the Western line—of galvanised iron was £8 1s. 8d. per ton. If they sent a single ton upon the New South Wales line for the same distance it would cost £4 16s. 10d.; and in the event of a single truck of six tons, it would be sent at £3 per ton, a difference of £5 1s. 8d. It did not matter what quantity was sent in Queensland, the cost per ton was exactly the same. Iron bars were £8 1s. 8d. per ton in Queensland, and £6 0s. 7d. in New South Wales. Fencing wire and netting, which were cheapest to send along Queensland lines, cost £5 2s. 6d. A single ton in New South Wales would cost £4 16s. 10d., and by sending a truckload of six tons it would cost £3 per ton. There were a number of other items. Flour cost £8 1s. 8d. in Queensland and £1 5s. 5d. in New South Wales. He would call particular attention to that item—the difference between £8 1s. 8d. and £1 5s. 5d. Tea cost £12 10s. per ton in Queensland and £8 8s. in New South Wales. Sugar was £8 1s. 8d. here, and £3 in New South Wales. There was a great difference indeed between all those things, and yet the railways in New South Wales paid much better than they did here. He trusted that the time was not far distant when they would have the wide gauge here, or at all events a reduction in the rate of carriage. He quoted those figures for the information of hon. members who might not be aware that they were paying a higher rate.

Mr. STEVENSON said he wished to know the decision that had been arrived at. Everyone seemed to be in a fog about what the gauge was to be in future. The hon. Minister for Works said that all future lines were to be made so that they would carry the rails for the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge; but he understood from the Premier that that was not to be the case, and from the Treasurer also. If the line were laid down for the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge, instead of the 3 feet 6 inch gauge, they were told that the Estimates would require to be altered. It was desirable that they should know from the Minister for Works what he intended. The Premier seemed to have a different opinion.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he spoke only for himself, giving his own opinion. He could not do as he liked. He did not think the cost of building the broader gauge would be so very great, as the Government of New South Wales got their railways constructed as cheaply as Queensland did. The question was not one of laying down the line but of providing the requisite rolling-stock, which would be a considerable item.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the cost of the rolling-stock was a good deal less in proportion to the amount of traffic that passed over the line. The more the Minister for Works investigated the matter the more clearly would he see that the only difficulty was in changing the gauge of the present lines.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was perfectly satisfied that they would not be able to compete with the other colonies until they had a broader gauge. The New South Wales Government could carry a load and a-half for every load we could, and could therefore carry goods at a cheaper rate. Many people complained about the freights in this colony, but with our light lines it was impossible to compete with New South Wales.

Mr. DONALDSON said he omitted to mention just now that the charge for the carriage of wool in New South Wales was 10s. for the same distance they had to pay 30s. for in Queensland. Hon. members must not run away with the idea that those were competing lines on which that rate was charged in New South Wales, as they were in the southern part of the colony. He wished to point out that if the wool was forced from Queensland into another colony through the high rate of carriage here, the whole trade of the south-western district would go with it.

Mr. NORTON said he did not wish to discuss the general subject of change of gauge, but he would like to know whether anything was settled in regard to the Stanthorpe line?

The PREMIER: We are on the Gympie line now.

Mr. NORTON said he was aware of that, but he wanted to point out that if the ordinary 3 feet 6 inch gauge was continued to the border it would lead to the formation of a township there, which would have the effect of injuring both Stanthorpe and Tenterfield. If the two lines were the same gauge, a small station would be sufficient there, and there would be no inducement to create a new township; there would be no necessity for the erection of costly station buildings.

The PREMIER said it was quite impossible to announce that evening an entirely revolutionary change in the railway policy of the country. The Government had undertaken to take the matter into consideration, and it required a very great deal more consideration than had been given to it that evening. They required a good deal more information on the subject. In his opinion the change of gauge would involve an expense of 50 per cent. additional. He had not the means of forming a conclusion on that subject now, as he had not sufficient information before him. The Government, however, undertook that in constructing future lines on which the broad-gauge rolling-stock was likely to run they would see that they were constructed in such a way that when they determined to change the gauge it would be done without much expense.

Mr. JORDAN asked whether the Gympie line would be made for the broad gauge?

The PREMIER said it was quite impossible to say that. It was possible that the result of altering the gauge on the Gympie line might involve an additional expense of £500,000 or £600,000. It might or might not.

Mr. JORDAN said he did not mean to ask whether the line would be built on the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge, but whether provision would be made for the broad gauge by constructing cuttings, tunnels, and bridges of a sufficient width.

The PREMIER said it was not a question of width of cuttings or banks. It was a question of curves. They knew perfectly well that in mountainous countries the 3 feet 6 inch gauge was adopted, because it could be built very much cheaper, the curves being made with so much less radius. There would be no difficulty, however, on that point, so far as the length of line authorised during the present session was concerned. By the time further plans were submitted to the House, the Government would be in the possession of more information than they had at the present time, and would also know whether the curves were such as would suit the broader gauge. He might mention that no question was deserving of more serious consideration than that of altering the gauge of their railways. In every other country such a question was

not decided without full discussion, full inquiry, and full information from all possible sources. It could not be determined that evening.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman greatly exaggerated the amount of money that would have to be expended when he suggested that the Gympie line might cost £500,000 or £600,000 more.

The PREMIER: I said 50 per cent. more.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he understood the hon. gentleman to say £500,000 or £600,000.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman misunderstood me. I said the cost might be increased 50 per cent.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman exaggerated the additional expense of making curves suitable for the broad gauge. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) understood that the Minister for Works was agreeable to have the line to Caboolture so constructed, so far as cuttings, bridges, and culverts were concerned, that it could easily be made to receive the broad gauge when it was determined to alter the gauge. That the House had not decided to adopt the broad gauge he knew, but it was suggested that steps should be taken in that direction, and to that the Minister for Works had agreed.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be granted by way of loan a sum of £80,000 for the construction of a railway from Brisbane to Cleveland, and said that line would probably prove as good a paying line as the railway from Brisbane to Sandgate.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Is that the Engineer's estimate?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Engineer had made no estimate. He might inform hon. members—

The PREMIER: This is the Engineer's estimate.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he found that that was the Engineer's estimate.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked whether the line went to Lytton, or in what direction did it go?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was not definitely fixed.

Mr. STEVENSON asked whether any survey had been made?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied that a survey had been made part of the way; but it had not been completed.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked on what information the Engineer had made his estimate?

The PREMIER said they all knew the country between Brisbane and Cleveland. There could be no difficulties about the line; there were no big mountains on the route. The country was nearly level all the way, so that it was not difficult to estimate the cost.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. member need not assume that bouncing tone. He could understand the Premier making an estimate of a railway from there to the moon. What he (Sir T. McIlwraith) wanted to know was on what the Engineer had based his estimate?

Mr. BUCKLAND said that in 1882 he moved that a sum be placed on the Loan Estimates for the survey of a line from Brisbane to Cleveland *via* Hemmant and Lytton. Mr. Macrossan, then Minister for Works, promised the survey, and it had been completed as far as Lytton,

Hon. members, during the discussion on the present Loan Estimates, had stated that that railway was promised at a banquet given to the Ministry by the people of Cleveland. He denied that. He maintained that the late Ministry led the people of the district to infer that they were entitled to the railway, and they carried out the survey which was now to be seen in the Engineer's office—that was for more than half-way to Cleveland. Although the same arguments had been used as were used in reference to the Sandgate line previous to its construction—namely, that it would not pay—he was convinced that if the Cleveland line was constructed it would pay as well as any line in Queensland—quite as well as the Sandgate line. He was not going into the question of gauge, but he was quite satisfied that the present gauge would answer all the purposes of that line.

Mr. STEVENSON: I should think so.

Mr. BUCKLAND: But he was convinced that in a few years they would have to duplicate the line. A great deal had been said with reference to the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge. He would point out that in England they had met the requirements of the narrow gauge in this way: The Great Western line was a 7 feet gauge, but they met the requirements of the mineral traffic in Wales by putting down an extra rail between Wales and the metropolis. To a large extent that could be done in Queensland where extra rails could be laid. His belief was that before long they would have to adopt the 4 feet 8½ inch gauge towards the New South Wales border. He had great pleasure in supporting the railway to Cleveland, and he hoped there would be no opposition to it.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. gentleman had made a statement with regard to the late Ministry that he was not justified in making. The extent to which they went was the survey to Lytton; but to have asked them to commit themselves to the line in the hope that some other Ministry would make it would have been just the means of preventing them doing it. He would tell the hon. member what he thought about the line, and that was that it was a pure piece of extravagance. He thought it was a free luncheon—auctioneer's line. Why in the name of common sense they should be asked to make a line to a place like Cleveland in the present position of the colony he did not know. If it was to suit some farmers, as a portion of the line would do, then it would be right enough; but to take it to a place like Cleveland was a different thing altogether. And then the idea of making a new pier there! Why, he had been there scores of times and had never seen a soul on the pier except when he stepped on to it himself. The only justification for making a pier at all would be if they had first made a railway.

Mr. BUCKLAND said the pier or jetty was erected some years ago, and was in very bad condition now. It cost a large amount of money, and he believed that the leader of the Opposition, when at the head of the late Ministry, promised to put a sum on the next Loan Estimates for a new one.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: To whom did I make that promise?

Mr. BUCKLAND said he believed, though he was not sure, that it was to a deputation of residents in Cleveland. The line would give great facilities to many agriculturists and sugar-planters in the district, and he was sure the settlers there would reap a great advantage from it. In addition to that, many manufacturing concerns were being started between Hemmant and South Brisbane, and he was certain that those

industries would go a long way to make the line pay, in addition to the large amount of settlement which had taken place.

Mr. STEVENSON said that, in the present condition of the colony, the proposal to make a railway to Cleveland was not only a piece of extravagance but a sheer waste of money. Nothing had been said to show that the railway was wanted, nor had they been informed how many people there were at Cleveland. His own belief was that there were not enough to form a decent deputation amongst the lot. When they got to Cleveland it was only a mud-hole; it was not fit for a watering-place. Although it was of no use protesting against the line, still he could not help saying that while there were so many places in the colony where railways might be made that would be of some use to the people, it was a pure waste of money to make a line like that.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that when the Colonial Treasurer introduced the item he said the object of the line was to supply Brisbane with another watering-place. Had the line been intended to serve the purpose of settlers about Lytton there might have been something to say for it. But he could not understand the necessity for a line from Brisbane to Cleveland—a narrow peninsula with a mud-hole on either side of it. It was simply a line for the benefit of certain property-holders, and not for the good of the people. In fact there were no people there, and the line would be a waste of public money. He would support a line down to the farming districts which were not far from there, but he certainly could not support a line to Cleveland. Besides, there was another watering-place for Brisbane to be provided for further on—Southport—which he intended to support. The Colonial Treasurer's only argument in favour of the proposal was that because the line to Sandgate paid therefore a line to Cleveland would also pay. The Southport line stood on a different footing, because it went through a fair agricultural district. It was perfectly clear that the Cleveland railway was to be made purely in the interests of speculators in property, and not for the interests of the producing part of population in that particular district.

Mr. T. CAMPBELL asked whether the line would go direct from Brisbane to Cleveland, or whether it would go to Cleveland *via* Lytton?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied that the line would go direct from Brisbane to Cleveland.

Mr. BLACK said that after what they had heard, it was necessary that they should have some more information as to the probable traffic on that line, and as to where those factories were situated which were likely to considerably swell the returns. He had not been to Cleveland by land, but, viewing it from the water, it seemed about the most unsuitable place that could have been selected for a watering-place, especially when there was Sandgate on one side of Brisbane and Southport on the other. The Committee should not pass the vote unless good reasons were given as to the necessity for the expenditure, especially as, judging from other railways about Brisbane, the £80,000 would probably have to be increased to £100,000 before the work was finished. What was the amount of traffic likely to be? What number of people were there, and what vocations did they follow? Were there any reasonable grounds for believing that the line would pay? If a third watering-place was made near Brisbane the traffic of some of the others must fall off. It did not follow that because the Sandgate line was a highly

remunerative one, therefore a line to a third watering-place would be an equally remunerative one. The population of Brisbane was not likely to increase in the same proportion as the lines to watering-places. Therefore it would be desirable to know what probable returns might be expected from the line to Cleveland, or whether it was simply to be constructed for the purpose of enhancing the value of the property of certain property-holders at Cleveland, or on the road thither.

Mr. T. CAMPBELL said that as a Northern member he objected to the construction of that line, and he objected to it on fair and reasonable grounds. The line might be called a line of convenience, but considering that the western and northern portions of the colony, and especially the electorate which he represented, were languishing for want of railway communication, he felt bound to enter his protest against it. It seemed very much as if some outside pressure had been brought to bear upon the Minister for Works. He had enough confidence in the hon. gentleman's integrity to believe that had he been left to his own opinion he would have put his foot upon such a scheme; and he also believed that if the Colonial Treasurer had given his unbiassed opinion upon the matter he would never have said that the railway was required. He therefore asked the Minister for Works to state the reasons why the railway should be constructed. As far as he could see, there was not the slightest reason for making it, except for the benefit of a few property-holders; and as a Northern member he begged to enter his protest against it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that if the hon. member had been in the House when the Sandgate line was under discussion he would have used exactly the same arguments against it as he had used against the proposed line to Cleveland. The Government that built the Sandgate line were under the impression when they commenced the work that it would never pay. He (the Minister for Works) was fully convinced that the Cleveland railway would pay far better than the Sandgate Railway. There would be a large amount of passenger traffic. He hoped the hon. member would now be satisfied.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman said that members of the late Government did not believe the Sandgate line would pay. Well, some of them did, and some did not, but that was only a difference of opinion. The Cleveland line was to be twenty-four miles in length, and more than £80,000 was asked for it. Was that the Engineer's estimate? No survey had been made beyond Lytton, yet the hon. gentleman said the line was going direct from Brisbane. How, he would ask, had the estimate been arrived at? Anybody could guess at the probable cost of a railway, but it was only a mere guess. The line was estimated to cost £3,300 per mile, but he asked the Minister for Works who estimated that cost, and whether that included the cost of land resumptions?

The MINISTER: They are all going to give the land.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said, was there an engagement to that effect? If not, it would be found that the people would do no such thing as soon as they saw the contract was let. The late Government were disappointed in one or two cases in the same way, and from his (Hon. J. M. Macrossan's) experience, he would advise the hon. gentleman to have written engagements with the people who were going to give up the land. He should say, judging by the price of 16-perch allotments, that they would require very high prices for their land. Out of the

£80,000, stations, rolling-stock, and the usual accompaniments of railways would have to be found, and very likely the £80,000 would be increased to £110,000 or £120,000 before the line was opened. He did not think they were justified in spending that amount of money on such a line. It was too much to pay for a watering-place, when they were also providing for one at Southport; and because the Sandgate line had been successful, it must not be thought that that line was going to be equally successful. It must not be imagined that the whole of the three railways to the watering-places would pay, or that the traffic upon one of them would not dwindle away. He should oppose the motion, and hoped the Committee would not pass it.

Mr. JORDAN said he hoped the Committee would pass it, and he thought they would. He believed the line would pay quite as well as the Sandgate line. There was no accounting for taste. Some people thought Sandgate the most wretched place in the colony, and would rather travel twenty-four miles to Cleveland than half the distance to Sandgate. Cleveland had been graphically described by the leader of the Opposition as a wretched mud-hole, yet there were many persons who thought it the most attractive watering-place within fifty miles of Brisbane. He did not think the line would lessen the traffic on the Sandgate line. It would create traffic and would afford facilities to the 34,000 people of Brisbane and its suburbs to get away from the hot weather, breathe the fresh air, and recruit their health. No line that had been projected was likely to pay any better than the Cleveland line. He verily believed that if he asked the member for Townsville the question, "Do you think the line will pay $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.?" he would say "Yes." The hon. member opposed it because it was part of the Government scheme; but he (Mr. Jordan) would like to see that scheme carried out intact, and he hoped no hon. member on his side would help to break it up.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. member was labouring under a delusion if he thought the member for Townsville would say that he believed the line would pay $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. One matter the hon. member overlooked was, that the great inducement for people to go to Sandgate was that they could get backwards and forwards in the day, and live there without interfering with their business; but if it came to travelling twice the distance very few people indeed would undertake the journey in the day. He was sure that if the hon. member took the matter into consideration he would come to the conclusion that he was judging rather rashly, and that the Cleveland line would not pay anything like the percentage that the Sandgate line was paying. He (Mr. Norton) was not one who pretended to say that Sandgate was a beautiful place; but people when they had half-a-day could go down there with ease. They went on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, which they could not very well do in the case of Cleveland. He really thought the hon. member had not taken that view of the matter into consideration; that he was rather too sanguine and that his anticipations would not be realised. He was quite sure the Cleveland line would not pay $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was inclined to think that the line would be a very remunerative one indeed, and he did not think hon. gentlemen attached sufficient importance to it. It was a suburban line radiating from Brisbane, and would carry population throughout its course. People resided along these suburban railway lines, and the season tickets from residents along the lines were in themselves a very considerable

source of profit. He anticipated that the same result would be brought about as in the case of the Sandgate line. The whole distance between Sandgate and Brisbane was now very like a street with the people settled along each side of the line, and a permanent source of revenue accrued from the residents along the route. Well, the same would be the result with the Cleveland line. There was another feature of the case: that not only was it very good country for suburban residences and would no doubt carry a large permanent population, but the line would give very great facilities to farmers and others who were very thickly settled in Bulimba and Tingalpa; parishes which contained some very valuable agricultural land. Agricultural settlement on the Sandgate line was not inconvenienced at all by the railway. The Sandgate line was a marine line of railway and a convenience to suburban dwellers, but the people of South Brisbane, who formed a large percentage of the city population, would find Cleveland a more convenient resort than Sandgate. The line would also be a very great convenience to farmers and others in Tingalpa and Bulimba and the agricultural districts about Brisbane which had not yet been opened up by railway. The line had a great deal to recommend it, and he was convinced that no suburban line could in time fail to pay.

Mr. NORTON said that many of the people in the districts mentioned by the hon. member did not live on the direct line to Cleveland; they would be several miles from the railway. It would not pay such people to use the railway. When they had gone to the trouble of getting up a horse and putting it in a cart, they would drive right into town and not make use of the railway. He did not know much about the country, and he would not say there were no farms, or no good farms about there; but all the country he had seen in passing through was sandy.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member for South Brisbane seemed to think he was opposing the vote because it formed part of the general scheme of the Government. He was not opposing it on that ground, but because it was a line which he did not believe would pay. The hon. gentleman thought he (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) believed it would pay $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. If he thought it would pay 2½ or even 2 per cent. he would not oppose it. The line could not cost less than from £100,000 to £120,000 when completed, and did the hon. gentleman suppose it was going to pay $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on that, in addition to working expenses, especially with the Sandgate and Southport lines in competition? He did not intend to oppose any lines but those which were not required at present and not likely to be required for a long time to come. He threw the responsibility of the large loan on the Government themselves. They had a perfect right to put on any lines they pleased, but he had a right to vote against any lines he thought should not be made. He certainly did not oppose the line for the reasons supposed by the hon. member for South Brisbane—far from it.

Mr. T. CAMPBELL said that he thought it was his duty to oppose the making of that line. He was informed by the Minister for Works that the line was to go direct to Cleveland. There might have been some reason for it if it were to go by Lytton, because in the near future there must be a line to Lytton. If that line went direct there would have to be a branch line to Lytton: he was certain of that. He objected to the line being made at all, considering that the northern portions of the colony were at the present time languishing for railway communication; but if it were made there should be

a deviation to Lytton to suit settlement. For that and other reasons he had previously given to the Minister he opposed the vote.

Mr. PALMER said that when the Minister for Works had a paying line like that to Sandgate he should not take the bread out of its mouth, so to speak, by building a line which would cut the traffic away from it. Referring to what the hon. member for Cook had said, it would be a far better thing for the colony generally if that 24 miles were added on to the paltry little extension of 18½ miles on the Cooktown and Maytown line. That would be a more rational undertaking than making three watering-places for the town. The inhabitants of Brisbane must be very elastic and increasing if they could afford the Sandgate line, the Cleveland line, and the Southport line all together.

Mr. BLACK said he was determined to oppose the line. The Government had given no sufficient reason why it should be constructed. He had asked in vain for a list of the factories that were likely to send their produce to Brisbane; in fact, so far as he was aware, those factories were not in existence. There was no large amount of agricultural settlement in the district, and as Brisbane would be provided with two good watering-places—Sandgate and Southport—he thought that in the present condition of the colony that was quite as much as even the capital could reasonably expect. One remark which had fallen from hon. members on the other side had given him a very serious suspicion about the line. The land, it seemed, had been given to the Government. That convinced him that it was just a little job got up by some land syndicates in and about Brisbane, and very likely about Cleveland, for the purpose of enhancing the value of that particular land, quite irrespective of the wants of other parts of the colony, and quite regardless whether the line was going to do anything more than enhance the value of their property.

Question put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 26.

Messrs. Griffith, Rutledge, Miles, Dickson, Sheridan, Dutton, Brookes, Smyth, Isambert, Jordan, Amear, Kellett, White, Buckland, Foxton, Kates, Salkeld, Stevens, Beattie, Foote, Macdonald-Paterson, Grimes, T. Campbell, Macfarlane, Bailey, and Horwitz.

NOES, 12.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Archer, Norton, Chubb, Macrossan, Black, Stevenson, Nelson, Jessop, Lalor, Palmer, and Scott.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be granted to Her Majesty, by way of loan, a sum not exceeding £175,000 to provide for the Extension of the Railway to the city and Fortitude Valley.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said there was £175,000 proposed for a railway, and not one Minister had got a single word to say for it. They wanted to hear something said for it before they passed it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that that was one of the lines which it had fallen to the lot of the present Government to make, to rectify the mistakes made by the previous Government. When the Sandgate line was constructed it ought to have been taken by Fortitude Valley, and not been taken away altogether from the population. The hon. member for Townsville had picked and chosen the route for himself, but it was where nobody lived. The policy of the present Government was to take the railway through the centre of the population. Hon. members knew very well that the present line was very circuitous.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked what was the estimate of the cost of the property that would have to be resumed for the purpose of carrying out the extension to Fortitude Valley?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he could not answer the question. The amount would no doubt be considerable, but he could not give any estimate. He hoped owners would make reasonable claims.

Mr. NORTON asked in what direction it was proposed to take the line? Was it to be the survey that was upon the table, or had the hon. gentleman changed his opinion? It was rather important to know that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the passenger station would be about where the fire brigade station was in the school reserve in Ann street. Then there would be a tunnel somewhere about the Scots' Church. He did not know whether a better site could be found for the station.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the hon. member said he did not know exactly how much the land would cost. Could he give an approximate idea of it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he could only guess it. He presumed it would be between £60,000 and £70,000, perhaps more.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked how the amount of £175,000 was to be divided?

Mr. BEATTIE said he hoped the amount would not be voted against by hon. members; but at the same time he trusted that the whole of that amount would not be required to do justice in giving railway extension to the people of Fortitude Valley. He was satisfied in his own mind that if the railway was carried out according to the plans and specifications, two-thirds of that money would have to be paid for the resumption of land.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: The whole of it?

Mr. BEATTIE said there was a piece of land marked by the Engineer to be resumed for station purposes, in Wickham street, which would cost the country not less than £60,000. An hon. gentleman alongside of him said "Nonsense"; but if that hon. gentleman had a piece of land there he would not take less than £25 or £30 a foot for it, and he (Mr. Beattie) knew that the proprietors of land there would make that claim upon the Government. The hon. gentleman knew nothing about it. If he would only look at the plan he would see that the portion of land to be resumed for a station was tinted, from Brunswick street to Constance street, and he would allow him (Mr. Beattie) to know a little more about that locality than the hon. gentleman, who was only a newchum there. He, as the member for Fortitude Valley, protested against any wasteful expenditure upon that line, because he believed that if it were carried out as proposed by the Engineer it would be a wasteful expenditure. The people of the Valley could be greatly benefited by the expenditure of one-tenth of the amount down on the estimate. They could have the convenience of railway extension and a station on the edge of the municipality, and could also have an extension of that line to deep water at Bulimba for one-tenth of that sum. He should be very glad to take the responsibility himself of constructing a railway from the connection with the Sandgate Railway to the back portion of the frontages at Bulimba, for at least one-tenth of that amount. He had not gone into the cost of the extension of the Southern and Western line

to Ann street; but the cost of that would have to come out of the £175,000. If his counsels would have any weight with the Minister for Works, and he believed they would have, no more money would be spent in the carrying out of railway accommodation for the people of Fortitude Valley, than was necessary to make it a line that would be advantageous to them, and, especially, the mercantile community in that locality. He did not want to repeat what he said last night.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Hon. members did not understand you.

Mr. BEATTIE said the passenger station would be to the west of Ann street, alongside the fire brigade station, and then the line would run through a tunnel under the Scots' Church, Wharf street; and would come out at Boundary street. From there it dropped into the centre of the section of land between Wickham street and Leichhardt street, a little to the westward of the sewer. It then ran across Warner street, Gotha street, Gibbs street, Brunswick street, and Alice street, and stopped in Constance street, where there was a station tinted pink in the plan, from Brunswick street to Constance street. It then took a sudden curve to the westward, and went past Bridge street, and joined the Sandgate Railway inside the Acclimatisation Grounds. It joined the Sandgate Railway with two curves, one towards Sandgate and another towards Brisbane. The alternative plan he suggested to the Minister for Works was, that after leaving those two curves, one for the downward trains to Sandgate, and the other for the upward trains to Brisbane, he should take the railway to the school reserve. The distance from the fence at Gregory terrace to the school reserve was 17 chains, and the distance to Wickham street was 24 chains, so that by the construction of two-thirds of a mile, and a station at the school reserve, they could give Fortitude Valley the same advantages without the resumption of one foot of land that were proposed to be given by the present loan. He would run the line from there across the Breakfast Creek road and Wickham street, taking it down Victoria street towards the deep water at Bulimba, and they would not require to resume any land in that street. He had no hesitation in saying that if the line were carried in that way it would be to the advantage of the mercantile community and the people generally, and that the line could be constructed for one-tenth the amount set down on the Loan Estimates. He did not intend to say anything more on the question. He believed the Ministry saw the necessity of providing the people of Fortitude Valley with railway accommodation, and that in deciding on the route, they had acted on professional information supplied by the Government engineer. He presumed the Minister had now instructed him to ascertain whether he could not find some alternative course for the line. As he (Mr. Beattie) had said the previous evening, the whole of the land from Boundary street to Constance street was occupied by small tradesmen who had built their little houses on the two sections between Wickham and Leichhardt streets, and if a strip of land two chains wide were resumed for the railway in those two sections it would destroy the whole of their property. But that was not all. Taking the railway along there would not result in any advantage to the residents on the western side of Fortitude Valley. Nor would people living on the eastern side be benefited. He had no personal interest in the matter. All he wanted was railway communication for the people of Fortitude Valley and the mercantile community, who both demanded it. But when he saw a work contemplated, the expense of which was in his

opinion excessive, and he saw the same object could be obtained more cheaply, he thought it was his duty to bring the matter before the Committee. That was the only reason he had for speaking in the manner he had done in reference to that particular vote. He believed that the Government intended to do justice to the constituency and that they would not spend money they thought was unnecessary; but he believed he could show them by personal observation and inspection of the locality that it would be an advantage to the country to spend a lesser sum on a railway for the people of Fortitude Valley. At the same time he hoped hon. members would not do anything that would hamper the Government.

The PREMIER said he was sure the hon. member's constituents would not be much obliged to him for asking the Committee not to allow the vote to pass for a railway through Fortitude Valley. The hon. member suggested that the line should be taken through the Valley to Bulimba Reach. What use would that be to residents in the Valley as a passenger line? If that scheme were adopted the railway would describe three parts of a circle before it got to the town station. That was not the plan the Government proposed. The scheme they proposed was twofold: first to bring the main passenger station of the Southern and Western line to the place where it ought to have been always, and where it certainly would be some day—that was in the middle of the city. In Sydney they had been talking about bringing the line into the city for the last twenty years, and at last they were going to do it, and at twenty times the price it would have cost at first. Then the Government also proposed to extend the line through the city to the Valley where the Sandgate line ought to have gone. That line was intended for large suburban passenger traffic, but it was no convenience to people who did not live near the railway station. As a matter of fact, he could go to Sandgate by road as quickly as by rail, and so could many other people. It ought not to be more than half-an-hour's journey from Brisbane to Sandgate. If a line was built for the conveyance of passengers it ought to be so arranged as to get as much passenger traffic as possible. Those were some of the reasons why the station should be in the place decided upon by the Government. He believed a longer tunnel than was proposed would be an advantage. The hon. gentleman objected to the quantity of land to be resumed. Well, what was it? The total length of land to be resumed from the mouth of the tunnel, if made for the longer distance, to Government land was about twenty chains, or about four acres. He (the Premier) did not know what was the value of land down there, but he did not think the small quantity required for the line would cost such an enormous sum. Of course no railway could be extended into the city without destroying somebody's property, but that line would be run in such a way as only to take away a portion of the backyards of those properties where the land would have to be resumed. The line was to be run the whole way in a deep cutting for various reasons which need not be explained then, but which would be explained when the plans came on for consideration. It was, as he said, proposed to run the line in a deep cutting which would follow the dividing fence between the allotments so that the railway would not interfere with anybody. What concerned the Committee now, however, was not the precise route to be adopted, but whether it was expedient to extend the line into the city, and, if so, whether it was also desirable to extend it to Fortitude Valley. If it was desirable to extend it into the city only, then the item should be reduced; but if it was considered expedient to extend it further,

then the amount set down on the Estimates was not excessive, and he believed it would be amply sufficient for the line, the station, and the land to be resumed.

Mr. NORTON said he must say there was a great deal of common sense in what had fallen from the hon. member for Fortitude Valley. He (Mr. Norton) did not know what was the feeling on that side of the Committee, but for his own part he did not object to expend a sum of money on a line to Fortitude Valley. He, however, thought they ought to consider whether it was expedient to adopt the scheme proposed by the Government. He would point out that the extension was only two miles, and that on that short line it was proposed to expend £175,000, and probably it would cost even more than that. When the Premier spoke just now he appeared to forget what was said by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley as to the line competing with the tramway to be constructed. The tramway was to run out almost to the same place; and it was certain that if that did not serve the people there, they would not be served by the railway. But the route proposed by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley would serve a number of people who would not otherwise be served.

The PREMIER: It would be no use to anybody.

Mr. NORTON: If it would be no use to anybody, he did not think the railway would be any use to anybody. He looked upon tramways as a great convenience. In Sydney most people preferred them to the railway; and he himself always preferred to ride in them. The Minister for Works on the previous night had said that it was not intended to build lines to compete with one another; but the present proposal would be one line competing with another—the railway would compete with the tramway; and if the object was to get all the traffic possible, it would not be got if the line competed with the tramway. It had been pointed out by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley that there was a good deal of excavation going on at the Roma-street station, which was to be extended considerably. A large sum of money was therefore wanted for that. But surely it was not necessary to have two central stations; if they were going to have a fine passenger station at the Normal School, what was the use of extending the Roma-street station? He did not object to a line being constructed to Fortitude Valley; but he did object to such an enormous expenditure for a line two miles long, when he believed the people would be equally well served without it.

Mr. BEATTIE said the Premier had asked what was the use of the station he (Mr. Beattie) had suggested. Well, he would tell him. The distance between the proposed station on that plan and the station he suggested was seven chains; but the latter did not touch any private property—only Government property. The Premier asked who would use the line that he (Mr. Beattie) suggested. Well, he did not think many people would use the railway now proposed, when they could step into a tramcar. The hon. gentleman said there were alternative plans proposed. The distance from the northern end of the station in Ann street to the northern end of the station in Constance street was 72½ chains, and the Premier said that only 20 chains of land would have to be resumed outside the tunnel; the tunnel therefore would be 52½ chains long, and would be a very expensive work. He did not wish to see the Loan Estimates interfered with, believing that the Ministry would judiciously

expend what money was required; but he was positive that if the plan he had suggested had been submitted to them by the Engineer they would have seen its feasibility at once, and would see that it gave the people the same accommodation. The people who went into town would not use the railway when they had the tramway in Wickham street. The Premier had asked why they should simply take into consideration the desirability of going to Bulimba. He (Mr. Beattie) did not do so. He took into consideration the desirability of having a passenger station for the benefit of the people of Fortitude Valley, who wanted to use the Sandgate and the S. and W. line. The people would have the accommodation and the Government would be placed in a position to construct an inexpensive line to Bulimba Reach for the benefit of the mercantile community. A great deal of money was being spent about Brisbane for wharfage purposes, and he thought it was very necessary; but he also thought it was the duty of the Government to make provision for the class of ships that were coming now. If those ships were larger than the present ones—that was, 400 feet—then they would find a difficulty in getting round Humbug Reach and Kangaroo Point. He had consulted with many masters, and they had told him that they would be glad if there was a public wharf somewhere about Bulimba Reach, so as to prevent them having to come round Humbug Reach and Kangaroo Point. He looked upon that as a natural dock. The whole of the land, he believed, from Newstead up to New Farm had been alienated for wharfage purposes. Even some Northern merchants had bought 450 feet river frontage in that locality. He thought it was the duty of the Government to look forward to what was one of the most rising suburbs in the city. If the scheme he suggested was carried out, all the advantages desired would accrue to the people of the locality.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that, if it was considered necessary to make a railway into Fortitude Valley, the proposed line was about the best that could be constructed. It was not a new proposal at all; it had been considered for years. The same line, with the exception of the station, was submitted to the late Government; but it was considered at that time that it would be far too expensive to construct, and also to maintain. It was simply a matter of whether the line should be taken into the Valley or not. The Premier thought it should. There was a difference on the question in the late Parliament. He recollected that the Engineer-in-Chief was summoned to give evidence, and he was submitted to a severe cross-examination by the hon. gentleman, who, however, elicited nothing in favour of his own ideas. Both the Premier and the Minister for Works had stated that they were simply rectifying the errors of the late Government. If they were doing that, they were rectifying the errors of the Chief Engineer, whose opinions the Premier could not shake in his examination. It was simply a matter of opinion, and if there was no necessity at that time for making a line into the Valley there was still less necessity now, since the Government had given permission for a tramway company to be established. That tramway would run right through the heart of Brisbane and the Valley, and it would be an easy matter to bring the whole of the Valley into direct communication with the railway by extending the tramway to the station in Roma street. The construction of a railway to the river at Bulimba was another matter entirely. The proposed line would be extremely costly to maintain, and would do a vast deal of injury to the small holders of property along its line of route in the Valley. It

would never be made for the amount asked for; the value of the land to be resumed would swallow the entire sum.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Is it intended to make the station near the Normal Schools the terminal station for the passenger traffic on the Southern and Western Railway?

The PREMIER: Yes.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: And to retain the present station as a goods station solely?

The PREMIER: As a goods station principally. It was a recognised necessity in all large cities to have the terminal passenger station in the centre of population.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he considered the proposal an extravagant piece of folly. They were asked to vote £175,000 on a mile and a-half of railway for the supposed convenience of the inhabitants of Brisbane, when it would be no convenience whatever, because the tramways would do all the work which the Premier considered the railway would get. With regard to great cities making their terminal stations as near the centre of population as possible—the hon. member seemed to consider it a great inconvenience to the people of Brisbane that they should have to travel as far as Roma street when they wanted to go to Toowoomba; but in what part of London could one live—unless in a very disagreeable part—where he could go to any part of England without having to travel ten times the distance before reaching the central station? In order to lessen the distance to Roma street by eighteen chains they were asked to incur an expenditure of £175,000 to bring the terminal station that distance further into the town. As a suburban line it would be positively useless, because people would not travel by it; suburban trains would not run upon it. The whole line would be taken up with the main line traffic from Toowoomba and elsewhere. In his opinion the land to be resumed would cost the whole of the vote; and what did they get after all? They got a terminal station eighteen chains further into the city, and a suburban line that would not carry any suburban traffic. He believed in the project of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley; and no doubt some day a line would be carried down the river on both sides; but the present was not an effort in that direction, or if it was it was a most expensive one. If the same amount was expended, as suggested by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, by going down to the Bulimba Reach and round the corner, they would get to valuable wharfage property that would bring traffic on the line. The proposed line was not giving any increased facilities for the export and import trade of the city. It simply was a suburban line which would not take suburban traffic; and it gave another terminal station for Brisbane, which was not wanted.

Mr. T. CAMPBELL said the Minister for Works had acted very unfairly in giving £175,000 for that small and miserable line, whereas he had only given £150,000 for the extension of one of the most important lines in the colony—that from Cooktown to Maytown and beyond. He should like the Minister for Works to explain his reasons for the great difference which those two items showed.

Mr. NORTON said the proposal was a sort of extravagance that even the Minister for Works should blush at. It seemed an enormous sum to expend for a very small advantage, especially at a time when other parts of the country, which really required it very much more, were crying out for an expenditure of that kind. He hoped the Government would have the good sense to

admit that the line was needless, or at least that they would carry it out at a much smaller cost, and spend the rest of the money in some place where it was more urgently wanted.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he must point out that the passenger station, as it was now, required a large expenditure for additional accommodation. It would not be wise to spend a large sum of money on the present terminus, and by-and-by to shift it to a more central position. He was satisfied that if the vote was not carried, in five years' time four or five times the amount of money would have to be spent. The people were bound to have a station in a more central place, and he believed the present was the best time to carry out the work. In reference to what fell from the hon. member for Cook (Mr. Campbell) about the Cooktown Railway, he would say that there was a considerable balance to the credit of that line, and he fancied ample provision was made for it to be carried on very nearly to Maytown.

Mr. NORTON asked if the hon. gentleman could give any idea of the cost of the new central station?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It will not be very costly.

Mr. NORTON: The building and site.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said some land would have to be reserved for the line, but the proposed station would be on Government land on the school reserve. It would simply be a passenger station; and, as he said before, unless carried out now it would cost a considerable sum in the future. The present station was not large enough for the traffic.

Mr. NORTON said he would ask the Minister why £50,000 was put down for additions to the central station for new offices for engineers, etc.—was the money to be spent on the present station as well as on the new station? What would the cost of the buildings for the new station be; because, if they were not going to spend money on the terminal station, what was the use of all the excavations which had been going on for so many months past? Surely all the labour and money expended upon that work was not going to be thrown away! He knew engineers did extraordinary things at times. For instance, they built a cottage not two years ago for additional accommodation, and now it was being pulled down and being cleared away again, because the engineers had not the foresight to know what they really wanted. With reference to what the Minister for Works had said about the new central station costing in a few years five times the amount now proposed, he would point out that according to the Minister himself the land belonged to the Government. But if any land had to be reclaimed it might just as well be done at once, and make provision for the future. It was absurd to say that the station would cost five times as much in a few years.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he had made several brave attempts to get the ear of the Committee, and had succeeded at last. He had gone through the Estimates very carefully, and did not see the slightest indication of any intention to provide railway communication with the wharves on the north side, in connection with the city proper. There seemed to be every facility provided for railway communication on the south side, and there was a scheme rising into prominence and taking shape with regard to the opening up of new wharfage at Bulimba, but there seemed to be an entire overlooking of the interests of the north side,

That was a great defect, because, whatever might be the rights and interests of South Brisbane, they were not justified in ignoring the north side of the river. He would rather see part of the money voted to make railway communication with the North Brisbane wharves instead of the money being used for the extension of the railway into the city. He would ask the Minister for Works if the Government had any intention in regard to that matter?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was very hard to please all people. They had been told over and over again that they were running into useless extravagance, and the hon. member for Fassifern now wanted them to spend more money. He would remind the hon. member that "Rome was not built in a day," and it was very possible that at some future time accommodation would be provided for the North Brisbane wharves, and he hoped for the Bulimba wharves as well.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would like to say a word about the central station. It seemed to him that the Government could scarcely have selected a worse place for a central station. The site was not very central, and just look at the hill upon which the buildings would be situated! It would be a very stiff climb for any man going up to the station, and a very stiff pull for any cabman.

The PREMIER: No.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member probably did not know the place.

The PREMIER: I thought the same as the hon. member until I went to see the place and examine it carefully.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had had the pleasure of issuing orders to fill up the hollow in the reserve for the purpose of making the tramway to Petrie's Bight; so he must be given credit for knowing something about the site. As to the cottage referred to by the hon. member for Port Curtis, he had had that cottage put up, and he actually asked the Engineer to select a site such as would not be required in the alterations that were about to be made in the terminal station. He said he would, and the site had now been actually excavated, and the cottage thrown down. That was a sample of their Engineer's work.

The PREMIER said he was under the same impression as the hon. member for Townsville as to the inaccessibility of the site when he first heard of it; but he had walked over the locality the other day with his hon. colleague the Minister for Works, and he found that the approach would be no steeper than the present approach from Roma street to the station. He was very much surprised at it, because at first he absolutely condemned the site as quite out of the question.

Mr. ARCHER said he was quite satisfied the hon. member was mistaken. The road to the proposed station was certainly steeper than from Roma street up to the present station.

The PREMIER: I thought so too till I went to see.

Mr. ARCHER said he had walked up Adelaide street a good many times.

The PREMIER: That is very steep.

Mr. ARCHER said he was certain it was a good deal higher. Let the Premier take the levels.

The PREMIER said they had the levels with them and could see with their own eyes. Creek street was very steep, and so was Albert street; but between them there was a depression of
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several feet. He forgot what the inclination was from the level of the road to where the station would be.

Mr. BEATTIE: One in sixteen.

The PREMIER said he did not think it was so steep as that.

Question put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 25.

Messrs. Rutledge, Miles, Griffith, Dickson, Dutton, Sheridan, Aland, Isambert, Foxton, Jordan, Smyth, J. Campbell, White, Kellett, Buckland, Kates, Grimes, Beattie, Annear, Macdonald-Paterson, T. Campbell, Macfarlane, Salkeld, Bailey, and Horwitz.

NOES, 13.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Archer, Macrossan, Nelson, Norton, Chubb, Ferguson, Palmer, Lalor, Jessop, Scott, Black, and Stevenson.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The COLONIAL TREASURER, in moving that £120,000 be granted, by way of loan, for completing the South Brisbane Branch, the extension of the Railway Wharves, and the extension of the South Brisbane Branch, said that the original estimated cost of the South Brisbane Branch was £59,000. £89,000 had been actually expended, including £10,000 for the resumption of land, the alteration of grades, and other additional work not included in the Engineer's estimate. The amount previously voted was £44,000, leaving £45,000 to make up the amount to be expended. Of course, that included permanent-way material, which was not included in the Engineer's estimate. The Government had decided to extend the wharf by an additional 700 feet, the Engineer's estimate for which was £25,000, and for the extension in South Brisbane £50,000, making in all £120,000.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked if the estimate of £50,000 for the extension was the Engineer's estimate, and if it included the cost of land to be purchased? And was the estimate of £25,000 for Railway Wharves the estimate of the Engineer-in-Chief of Railways or the Engineer-in-Chief of Harbours?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that the estimate of £50,000 for extension covered £20,000 as cost of land. The estimate for the wharves had been obtained from the Engineer of Harbours and Rivers, who had prepared the plans for the present wharves.

Mr. NORTON asked what was the width of the wharf extension?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: 700 feet in length, and he thought 60 feet in breadth.

Mr. NORTON asked if the point had been fixed where the extension was to stop?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: To the end of the bridge.

Mr. NORTON asked if he was to understand that the line went all the way up to the end of the bridge through private property?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was proposed to cross Stanley street and go up the back of the buildings, thus passing through as little valuable land as possible.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked if the hon. gentleman meant that Stanley street would be between the proposed extension and the river. If so, what was the object of the extension?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the object was to serve the passenger traffic.

Mr. NORTON said he did not know what the passenger traffic was likely to be, but one night he had come down that way and there was only one passenger. He had been told by one of the officials that that was about the usual number of

passengers. The passenger traffic would no doubt be increased by the new lines, but the present station accommodation was sufficient for any increase for four or five years to come. If the object was to give more station accommodation it was not necessary, and if the object was to bring two or three passengers down to the end of the bridge the cost was too great.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that the South Brisbane Valley Branch would be completed in a few months, and that would bring more passengers, and then they expected a large increase of passenger traffic from the Cleveland Branch.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had no objection to the extension, but when they were extending the line up to near the end of the bridge he thought it should be kept to the wharves. According to the hon. gentleman, however, they were taking the line away from the wharves. They would not be able to serve a single ship unless they crossed Stanley street again.

Mr. NORTON said the tramway company were going to construct a tramway up Stanley street, and twenty times the number of passengers, even after the new line was opened, could come up to the bridge tramway from the present station which was quite large enough. He thought the line was to come along the river side, but now it was to come behind Stanley street, which would be spoiled or greatly injured by it.

Mr. JORDAN said the proposed extension, he believed, starting from the Dry Dock, would pass under Stanley street, and then along between Stanley street and Grey street at the back of the houses to a point in line with the bridge which would bring the station into the centre of that part of the city, and would be a great accommodation to the large passenger traffic which might be expected from the coast line from the Tweed River, and the new Southport and Beenleigh lines to South Brisbane. The present terminus was at a most inconvenient place. It was very well for the coal traffic, for which that branch of the Southern and Western line had been made. A very large coal trade was being developed, and the proposed extension of the wharves was necessary to accommodate it. It would be most inconvenient; in fact, there was not room enough for a passenger station there; whereas by going under Stanley street, and about sixty chains towards Melbourne street, there would be a most convenient centre for persons travelling to the southern parts of the colony.

Mr. NORTON asked if the hon. member for South Brisbane could give them any idea of the number of passengers he expected to arrive? He did not think the Premier's grumbling would do much good; he might as well be civil; he had been grumbling and growling for the last ten minutes.

The PREMIER: I have never been treated in this way before.

Mr. NORTON said that when the hon. member was in Opposition he used to keep the Government waiting for a long time.

The PREMIER: I never condescended to this sort of thing.

Mr. NORTON said he remembered seeing him and his friend, the hon. Mr. Garrick, keeping the Attorney-General for hours asking him questions about things that they knew better than he did himself. It was because they knew more that they kept him. They had had no information from the Minister for Works, and therefore he would ask the hon. member for South Brisbane, knowing that the passenger train was so small,

and that there were no large centres of population there, what passenger traffic were they likely to have?

Mr. JORDAN said he might give a slight idea possibly. There was considerable settlement in the Logan district, which was one of the oldest and most successful agricultural settlements in the colony. There was also considerable farming population upon the Upper Logan, which would be increased when the extension was made to Beaudesert, about fifty miles—that was a part of the Government scheme. Then there was the Tweed River which would provide a great deal of passenger traffic. It was very difficult to get out of the Tweed River, because the navigation there was exceedingly dangerous. There was a large amount of settlement there, and the line from the Tweed to Brisbane would be one of the most successful in the whole colony. It would attract produce and passengers even from the Clarence and Richmond Rivers, which were not very far distant from the Tweed. Some years ago he learned that the maize produced on the Clarence River was equal to the whole of that produced in the remaining parts of New South Wales. He should not have believed that had he not heard it on the very best authority. There was no line which would pay better; it would take in Southport and Beenleigh and other thickly settled districts of the Upper Logan. It would also take in Cleveland, and before long they might expect a large passenger traffic on the lines. The hon. member for Port Curtis said he had counted one or two passengers the other day on the South Brisbane line. It reminded him of what he heard when he was in England some twenty years ago, that when the Southern and Western line was opened from Ipswich to Toowoomba the first passengers were the guard and a kangaroo. There were not many persons who travelled upon the South Brisbane line, partly because there was no convenience for them. It was simply a line for bringing down coal. When they got a station in a suitable centre in South Brisbane, and completed those lines, some of which were passed already, they would have passenger traffic from the southern part of the colony.

Mr. ALAND said the hon. member for South Brisbane was certainly not correct in his facts. He remembered all that the hon. gentleman had referred to. The Government had agreed some years ago to run Sunday trains between Ipswich and Grandchester, and the only passengers by the first train were the guard and a kangaroo which he had with him. He supposed that the colony was more pious then than now.

Mr. GRIMES said, in reference to the two passengers who came down by the half-past 6 train to the South Brisbane Junction, he might give this information to the Committee. Other trains during the day brought in through passengers from Toowoomba; but the train in question was forty minutes later than the through train from Toowoomba and further westward, and those passengers who lived two or three miles along that line preferred to come in to the Brisbane station and go back by omnibus, so that they would be at their homes sooner than by waiting for the half-past 6 train.

Mr. NORTON: There is also a train at about half-past 9 o'clock.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £168,000 be granted out of Loan to complete the Beenleigh branch, and to make the line from Beenleigh to Southport and the border.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER, in moving that £70,000 be provided to defray the construction of the Upper Logan Branch to Beaudesert, said that the line was twenty miles in length, and the approximate estimate was £3,500 per mile.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : What route is it to take?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the line would branch off at Logan Village. The survey was made long ago.

Mr. NORTON : Does it go up the Albert River?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : No.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman did not seem to know where it was going. They would let it slide.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that the sum of £44,000 be granted, by way of loan, to complete the Sandgate Branch, to construct the extension and the double line to the Junction, and said the total amount expended on the Sandgate line had been £85,956, or in round numbers £86,000, which was the amount previously voted. The sum now asked for was to provide for the purchase of land, which had cost about £11,000; for rolling-stock and extra works, such as platforms, sidings, telegraph lines, etc., not included in the original estimate, which it was expected would amount to £11,449; and also for permanent-way material. Those items would account for the £25,000 set down for the completion of the Sandgate Branch. The item of £4,000 was for the extension of the Sandgate line further into the town of Sandgate, near to Shorncliffe. The double line to the Junction, which was estimated to cost £15,000, was much required in order to work the line properly, especially on holidays when there was very heavy traffic upon it.

Mr. NORTON : This £25,000 has already been spent, I think?

The COLONIAL TREASURER : Yes, it has been spent.

Mr. NORTON : The £4,000 is for the extension?

The COLONIAL TREASURER : For the extension.

Mr. NORTON said he would like to know from the Minister for Works or the Colonial Treasurer, he did not care which, what direction the extension was to take. Was it to go along the flat at the back of the town, or was it to go through the hill by a tunnel, or was it to branch off from the main line before the latter reached Sandgate?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : I presume it will have to go through the hill by a tunnel.

Mr. NORTON : Do you know where the tunnel goes?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : The extension from the station will necessitate tunnelling.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH : Is the extension to the jetty?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : The extension is from the railway station to the jetty, and the ridge will have to be tunnelled.

Mr. NORTON said there were several routes surveyed—one branching off from the main line before it reached Sandgate, another from the terminus of the present line along the flat to Shorncliffe, and a third from the station going off to the left and then pretty direct to the jetty.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : The line will have to go to Shorncliffe by a tunnel. It is not yet decided which way the extension will go.

Mr. NORTON : Why did you not tell us that at first?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : It will be taken the most convenient course.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN : What about the Breakfast Creek Bridge? Can the hon. gentleman tell us why traffic was stopped there for a few days?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the construction of the Breakfast Creek Bridge was faulty, and it had been found necessary to build a new one. It was not actually unsafe, but it required very careful watching. The hon. member knew well the cause of putting up a retaining wall behind the piles and why the piles had slipped.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he knew nothing at all about the matter beyond what he had heard outside; because whatever damage was done or had been discovered, was discovered during the hon. gentleman's term of office. He (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) had heard that the bridge was faulty in construction, that the screw piles were not put far enough into the rock. It was a very difficult matter to screw piles into hard rock. He was told that in that case the piles were simply resting on a steep bank of rock and had slipped. He did not know anything more about them, and what he had heard was told him by one of the engineers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the information he had received was that the bank had slipped and shifted the piles out of their places. There was no doubt that the piles had not been put in deep enough.

Mr. MIDGLEY said he would like to know whether it was intended to duplicate the line from the Brisbane terminus to the Junction. It would also interest the people of Sandgate to have some sort of idea where the extension was to be. He was not an authority on the subject, but he thought that £4,000 for a tunnel meant that it did not take the direction mentioned. Certainly on the plans it was indicated quite differently. The map showed that the line went at the back of Swan's; and the mayor of Sandgate was going to give the land.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that from the Brisbane station to the Junction the line would be a double line.

Mr. NORTON said he did not see the use of a double line there. There were not a great number of trains. They had managed for many years with a single line to Ipswich, and he thought they might manage well enough on the Sandgate line too.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. member had overlooked the fact that there was a large traffic on the Racecourse line, and there would be the additional trains on the Gympie line. The duplication of the line would be very much required, and should, indeed, extend to the Gympie junction.

Mr. NORTON said it might be required in a few years, but it certainly was not now.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked whether any defects had been discovered in the Cabbage-tree Creek Bridge?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : I have not heard of any.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he heartily agreed with what had fallen from the hon. member for Port Curtis. If the Minister for Works would put himself in communication with the Traffic Manager, and ask him to explain the scheme he had for working the Racecourse Branch before he went away, it might probably

prevent the duplication of the line. He (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) thought that branch could be worked well and the Racecourse thoroughly well served, unless on holidays—and the Sandgate people also well served—by the Traffic Manager's scheme.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he would see about it.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £45,000 be granted, by way of loan, for the extension of the Brisbane Valley Branch to Mount Esk. The amount of the previous vote for that line was £105,000, of which £59,000 had been expended, leaving a balance available of £46,000. Provision was now asked for £45,000, so that the available vote would then be £91,000. That was for the construction of about twenty-two additional miles, and to provide for the transfer of the permanent-way material.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN asked whether the hon. gentleman could give them any idea of how the money had been expended?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the distance from the present terminus to Mount Esk was 18½ miles.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that was not what he asked. They had been told that £59,000 had been expended. Surely it could not all have been spent on the first section?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he supposed it had all been spent on the first section.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: No, it has not. Have the rails been paid for out of it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not aware of it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he had stated that the present provision was to cover the transfer of permanent-way material on the section of the line already constructed.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that showed that the £59,000 had been used for the line; and he would like to know how it had been expended. That was a piece of information the Committee ought have after what had been said about the line. Perhaps, the Minister for Works could say what the amount of the contract for the first section was?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. gentleman ought to know, considering that he let the contract.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did know, but he wanted to ascertain whether the hon. gentleman also knew. The amount of the contract was £42,000, and he wanted to know how the £59,000 had been expended, when the contract was not yet finished?

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: And none of it expended in rails.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he did not carry all the figures in his head. What was the use of the hon. gentleman asking him when he knew all about it himself? How was it possible for him (the Minister for Works) to carry in his head the whole of the figures about the amount of contracts and the sums paid on them? Did the hon. member want to know what had become of the balance?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he thought the hon. gentleman could not answer the question. Had he taken the advice of the hon. member for Stanley, given some hours earlier, and had his subordinates in the gallery, he would have been able to answer every question put to him. In passing an amount of money like that they were entitled to all the information they could get on the subject.

Mr. JORDAN said it was unfortunate that those officials were not present, as if they had been hon. gentlemen on the other side would not have asked those questions. They simply asked questions knowing that the Minister for Works was not in a position to answer them and in order to turn the laugh upon him.

Mr. NORTON said he was surprised to hear the hon. member make such a statement. The information he had asked for was information which the Committee ought to have, and if the Chief Engineer had been present he should have asked for it all the same. If the supporters of the Government were satisfied to pass the vote without question, it was their business as an Opposition to see that all possible information was elicited.

Mr. JORDAN said he was not alluding to the hon. member for Port Curtis, but to the hon. member for Townsville, who told them he had asked a question which he knew the Minister for Works could not answer.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member for South Brisbane was labouring under a strange delusion. The Colonial Treasurer made a statement to the effect that £59,000 had been already expended on the line. He (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) knew that the contract was for £42,000, and that the whole of it had not been paid for, and he was justified, therefore, in asking what had become of the balance. He could assure the hon. member that, so far from asking fewer questions, if the hon. gentleman's subordinates had been present he would have asked a great many more; but out of deference to the Minister for Works, who did not know so much as he ought, he refrained from asking them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he believed the information the hon. member wanted had reference to some matters mentioned by him a few nights ago. He gathered on that occasion that the hon. member accused the Chief Engineer of taking the railway out of the contractors' hands and altering the curves at their cost. He begged to assure the hon. member that the Chief Engineer had done nothing of the sort. The alteration in the curves of the line had not been charged to the contractors. He would promise to supply the hon. member with all the information he wanted to-morrow.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would be satisfied to get the information to-morrow or any other time; but it was not for himself personally, but for the Committee. With respect to the other matter, the Chief Engineer did take the line out of the hands of the contractor, and did alter the curves, though whether at their cost or not he could not say. As a rule, when an engineer took the maintenance and construction of a line out of the hands of the contractors, the work was done at the cost of the contractors, and what he had said was only a fair inference to draw.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £34,000 be granted by way of loan for the Fassifern Branch, extension to Coochin. The amount previously voted was £75,000, of which £39,000 had been expended.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: When are we going to adjourn?

The PREMIER: When we get some more business done.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said he asked how long it was intended to go on, and he objected to be answered in that uncivil tone.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman was about the last person in the House to talk about an uncivil tone, as there was no one so habitually

uncivil as the hon. gentleman himself. Some days ago he announced that it would be absolutely necessary to sit later. Many hon. members desired to leave town on Saturday, and if the business was conducted at an ordinary rate of speed there would be ample time to dispose of it. But the Government had fair cause of complaint that the business had not been conducted at the ordinary rate of speed, dozens of speeches having been made about nothing in particular. Hon. members were of course entitled to ask as many questions as they liked, but when an unusually long time was occupied in doing so, the only way to make up for it was for hon. members to sit later. It would be very inconvenient to many hon. members if they did not dispose of the Loan Estimates by Friday evening. He believed that was the idea of many hon. members. There was an item on the Estimates which they knew would take a considerable discussion—the line from Ipswich to Warwick—but they did not propose to go on with that, although they should have disposed of it that night. They would dispose of all the other items up to that one.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said if the hon. gentleman had kept his temper and been civil, he would not have made any objection to sitting later. He was willing to sit there until two o'clock if necessary; but all that he asked on behalf of hon. members on his own side was that they should know how far the Government proposed to go. As to causing delay, he had never seen a time when so much money was pushed through in so short a time, and he had never seen such a display of ignorance on the part of Ministers, including the Premier himself.

Mr. NORTON said the Premier was out of the Chamber during the last half-hour, but if he had been present, he would not have wondered that there was delay. The simplest question had not been answered. It would facilitate business if they adjourned now, and waited until to-morrow when the Ministers had someone in the gallery who could give information. The Minister for Works could not hear the questions asked, which had to be repeated by another Minister to him, and then he could give no answer. That evening they had voted one and three-quarter millions of money, and the Premier wanted to hurry on, and said that the business was being delayed. Good heavens! did they not spend nights in discussing little paltry sums when the Estimates-in-Chief were going through!

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: No man did more of that sort of thing than himself.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. member must admit that in voting such a large sum of money they had done a fair share of business.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that the sum of £30,000 be granted for the Laidley Branch.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Have you nothing to say about that line?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he did not want to take up the time of the Committee. He had referred very fully to all the items before, and he had only to say that it had been represented that the line would be a benefit to agricultural settlement in the Laidley district.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the time was not far distant when the colony would stare at the facility with which they passed votes of money without the slightest reason being given by Ministers why they should be spent. Here was a line, of which the only thing that could be said was that it went up Laidley Creek, and would benefit farmers.

It could go up any creek in the colony, and benefit farmers. He had presented a petition from certain influential residents of the district, because the members of the district refused to do so, against the construction of the line. That petition stated facts which contained a great amount of common sense. It said, and he heard afterwards that it was the truth, that three-fourths of the people of the Laidley district would be glad to take one-quarter of the money proposed to be spent on the line, and provide water for the different parts of the district. The line would, no doubt, benefit a few farmers and men who were pretty well off already as far as carriage was concerned, but the great bulk of the people would not benefit by it. He would like to know the opinion of the member for Stanley, Mr. Kellett, upon the matter. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) remembered him assuring hon. members that he was a plain "honest John," and that he never asked for anything for himself; but he (Sir T. McIlwraith) fancied that that line did not go far from the homestead of the hon. member. They had not had any reason assigned for the construction of the line, and it would be well to have the opinion of the members for Stanley.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it would be in the recollection of hon. members that the leader of the Opposition presented a petition against the construction of the line.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I have said so. The hon. member is dull of hearing.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member had presented a petition—

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I tell you I have said so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said, then the hon. gentleman objected to the line, did he! Well, he was not at all surprised that he did. The hon. gentleman objected to everything proposed from the Government side of the House. He (the Minister for Works) could assure hon. gentlemen that the land was about the finest for agricultural purposes in the colony, but the farmers had to take their goods over the Little Liverpool Range in order to get them to the railway, and the construction of the line would be a very considerable benefit to those who resided in the locality. The land was the usual black soil of the Downs, and in wet weather it was very difficult to get the produce to market. He did not know of more difficult country to get over than the blacksoil tracks. It took the farmers two days to bring in their produce at the present time, and he was satisfied that the line was one that was badly required.

Mr. WHITE said that the allusion he made in a late speech to the fact that his opponents considered him too honest for a member of Parliament was meant for a reflection on the late Government. They had demoralised their supporters to such an extent that they did not believe an honest Government could exist. That was why he made the reflection, and he supposed some of them took the hint; but they required pretty plain speaking to convince them of facts. The farmers on Laidley Creek, who were beyond twelve or fourteen miles from the railway, had to camp all night with their load of produce when they were taking it to the railway, and the branch line was meant to enable them to deliver their produce in one day. If a farming population could not deliver their produce in one day they would not go in for farming to any great extent, but would cultivate only a small piece, and depend upon their cattle and their few breeding horses. Hon. members who would study the interests of Queensland would

see the urgent necessity for having every acre of that Laidley Creek land brought under cultivation. The colony was subject to frequent dry seasons, when nearly all the agricultural population of the southern part of the colony were unable to gain any crops, and they had to send away to Sydney and New Zealand for produce. At Laidley Creek they were up in the stirrups when a dry season came, because they always got a good price for their produce, and they got abundance of produce in the worst season they ever had. They might have a patch of an early crop that was not good, but they always got one splendid crop every year. There was a saw-mill up there, and they had to send the timber down to the railway station by bullock teams. In prospect of the railway, several selectors had rushed up to the top of Mount Mistake and taken up selections, and the probability was that the whole of that back country would become settled in consequence of the railway. Then there was a coal-seam a mile and a-half from the creek, which could be worked with little expense, as no haulage power would be required, because there was an incline up to the seam and the full waggons could run up the empty waggons. There was fully three feet of splendid coal without a band in it, and it would burn like a candle. That was to the day, and it would probably be much better some distance below the earth. At the present time the seam was covered with debris, but when he found it it was exposed to the day, and some fragments that he took home in his pocket burned like a candle. That seam of coal would probably be of considerable benefit to the railway, as it would save taking coal over the Little Liverpool Range for the western part of the line.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: You will get it from the Ipswich people if they know that.

MR. WHITE: There was also stone there, and he believed a splendid quarry would be opened several miles from Laidley. Another thing in favour of the line was that it could be worked so cheaply. There was an engine kept now at the Little Liverpool to pull up the trains; and, of course, that was half idle and could do the other little work without any further expense. The railway would be a benefit to Queensland as well as to the farmers of Laidley Creek.

MR. PALMER said that notwithstanding the able advocacy of the hon. gentleman who had just sat down, a great many objections could be taken to that very small branch line for the simple reason that it was hemmed in between the Little Liverpool and the Main Range, so that it could not be extended any further. It would be within the recollection of hon. members that the hon. member for Townsville, when he was Minister for Works, said the railways should be the main roads of the colony. The divisional boards had to keep the main roads in order, and it was a question for consideration whether those small branch railways should not be built by the divisional boards. They would give a certain amount of interest which was not derived from roads, and they were more within the province of the divisional boards than of the country. None of the branch lines ever paid the smallest fraction of a percentage on their cost. The shortness of that line was against it. If branch lines were to be of any use they must have room to extend, and it was impossible for that line to extend beyond the mountain locked valley it ran in.

MR. KELLETT said he should not like the vote to pass without saying a few words, though his colleague had explained very ably the advisability of the railway. He was satisfied

that anybody who knew the locality would find that that line was as well justified as any on the Estimates. He was confident that it would pay very good interest on the amount expended, and that was the principal thing they had to look out for. Some hon. members might not know that that small place called Laidley supplied more agricultural produce than Toowoomba, supposed to be the garden of the colony; or than Warwick, supposed to be the other garden; or than Rosewood, the great agricultural district below the Range. Laidley supplied more agricultural produce than any one of those places he had named, and that was a justification of the expectation that the line would pay. In regard to the petition against the line presented by the leader of the Opposition, he had been asked to present it, but he refused to do so, considering the residents of Laidley district up to the present time had been anxious to have the line, and had by their able advocacy to a previous Minister of Works so satisfied him that it was a line which ought to be made, that he promised them a survey.

MR. NORTON: Who was that?

MR. KELLETT said the hon. member for Port Curtis was the Minister for Works who had promised the survey, and he supposed the late hour of the night had made him forget. He was assured that the hon. member would not have agreed to the survey unless he had been satisfied that that was the course he ought to take. A large and influential meeting of the inhabitants of the district of Laidley had been held on the previous evening protesting against the previous petition presented by the leader of the Opposition, and stating that that petition had only been signed by a few Germans, who were afraid that the people up the creek would be put in as good a position as themselves if the railway were made. They sent a petition in favour of the line which he had presented that afternoon but which was informal—a petition signed by men whom he knew, and who lived in the district. He was satisfied from statistics that the township of Laidley supplied more agricultural produce to the colony than any other—bar Ipswich; and the reason why Ipswich supplied more was that other lines came into it. The land about Laidley was capable of producing any crop, as hon. members could see if they would only go there, and the district was well entitled to the railway.

MR. STEVENSON said that the further they went into the Estimates, and the more they heard of those lines, the more convinced was he that the colony was being committed to a scandalous and disgraceful waste of money. They had been told that this line was as much justified as any line in the Estimates. If that was the case, God help the taxpayers of the colony. The hon. member, Mr. White, had used an argument against the line when he said that there was an engine up at the Little Liverpool which was half idle and could do the whole of the work of the Laidley line without an additional engine. The hon. member had also said that the farmers were twelve or fourteen miles from the main line, and that if they got that railway it would save them camping out a night in bringing their produce to market. That was a splendid argument for getting a railway! He dared say a good many members would be satisfied if they had a railway so near as to save them camping out more than twenty, aye thirty nights. But if a man had fresh horses he could come and go twelve or fourteen miles in one day, and experience had shown that where farmers were within a reasonable distance of a main line and had to load up their teams they would not

send their produce by a branch line. From all he had heard of that line he was satisfied they were committing the colony to the expenditure of money not necessary or justified by anything they had heard.

Mr. NORTON said he thought his hon. friend the member for Normanby was wrong when he argued that none of the people along the line would make use of it. Their produce was not to stop at Laidley, and they would make use of it. The hon. members for the district had made out as good a case for the line as could be made, and Mr. White deserved a great deal of credit for the way he had advocated it that night. He (Mr. Norton) knew that the land was good and produced splendid crops, but the line could not pay more than working expenses. He believed also there was no possibility of carrying the line much more than the ten miles. It had been said that he had promised a survey. Perhaps the hon. gentleman was quite right, and if the information they had got that night was good and reliable as to the value of the country to be served by the railway, he assumed that the promise was made, and that the survey was carried out. But it did not follow that the Ministry should be prepared to recommend that a line should be constructed without any more being known about it. The line could not be extended, and he could not see how it could possibly pay. If there was a very extensive coal field there, possibly it might be worth while for the Government to go on with it; but there was nothing but farming produce, which was carried at very low rates, and there would be a very limited passenger traffic. The Minister for Works knew very well that that line would never pay. Almost all the produce that would be brought by that line would have been brought by the main line, and the only effect of making that branch line would be that the farmers would cultivate more land than they would have cultivated otherwise. But there were other places which were in exactly the same position. If the argument applied in one case it would apply in another. There had been no greater reason shown why that one line should be made than any other line, and he trusted that the hon. member would not suppose that when a promise of a survey was made it necessarily followed that the line should be constructed. For his part he considered it desirable to get as many surveys as could be carried out in order that the land might be reserved; so that if there happened to be any justification for constructing the line the Government would not have to resume the land afterwards.

Mr. KELLETT said he might just remark that the hon. gentleman was so impressed with the representations made to him by the deputation, that he not only promised the survey, but he promised to visit the place. That latter promise he did not carry out, or they should have had the railway by now.

Mr. NORTON said the mere fact of his promising to visit the place was sufficient to show that he was not satisfied with the representations made by the deputation. So far as not having gone to see it was concerned, he should certainly have done so had he had an opportunity.

Mr. GROOM said the hon. member for Stanley, Mr. Kellett, was slightly wrong in his figures. He said there was more produce from the Laidley station than from the Toowoomba station. The land in the Toowoomba district was known to have been more largely settled upon than the Laidley district—in fact it was occupied before Laidley was thought of as an agricultural settlement. The Commissioner for

Railways, in his report for 1883, stated that the value of the produce from the Laidley station amounted to £2,612, while the value of the produce from the Toowoomba station for the same year, 1883, was £7,809.

Mr. KELLETT: The hon. gentleman is misrepresenting what I said. I said agricultural produce.

Mr. GROOM: This is agricultural produce.

Mr. KELLETT said the last statistics showed that Laidley was higher than either Toowoomba or Warwick.

Mr. GROOM: This is simply agricultural produce—maize, hay, potatoes, and other produce.

Mr. KELLETT said that if the hon. gentleman went back for two or three years he would find that that amount for Laidley was exceeded in every case.

Mr. BLACK said he would like to ask the Premier whether he would consent to adjourn after that vote? There was not very much more to be said, and he thought it was rather too late to begin a fresh vote. Still, if it were decided to go on, he could find a great deal more to say.

Mr. ANNEAR said the Government had announced last week that they were going to sit later. He had done no talking that night, he was there to work. The Loan Estimates had been in the hands of hon. members for some time now, and there was not much talk required. They were well understood, and the proper way if there was any objection was to take a vote.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: We have not been to any caucus.

Mr. ANNEAR said he had not been to any caucus. He had known Laidley before there were any railways in the colony. There was a large population there now, and they were all consumers, and the chief revenue of the colony was raised from dutiable goods. There was no comparison between the railway up Laidley Creek and the line to Springsure. A great many people were interested in the line to Springsure, and many other railways which were perfect abortions. Hon. members had made up their minds as regarded the line under consideration and the other railways in large centres of population. While he had a seat in that House there would be no dog-in-the-manger about him. While he was within those four walls he would give his vote either on one side or the other; he would not walk out. He had the courage of his convictions, and those convictions should be recorded by the votes he should give. They were told that the discussion would take place to-morrow night upon the line from Ipswich to Warwick. He did not see why it should be so very long. He had been reading up that day, and was better informed on the subject than he was last night. The distance to be traversed, and the character of the country through which the line would pass, were sufficient to decide him how he should vote. The previous evening he stated that he would support the line from Toowoomba to Drayton, because it would shorten the distance between Toowoomba and Warwick by twelve miles. He still held to that intention. He hoped the Liberals—and there were Liberals, and great Liberals—who always had the true interests of the colony at heart, would on that occasion stick together as they had done before, and show that they were united for the general benefit of the whole colony.

Mr. BLACK said he thought the hon. gentleman had had a pretty long go-in for talking, and on matters irrelevant to the question before

the Committee. The hon. gentleman's definition of a Liberal seemed to be a man who was liberal with other people's money. It was the best definition he (Mr. Black) could find for the Great Liberal Party in connection with those Loan Estimates. The hon. member for Toowoomba had put the matter of the Laidley Creek Railway in a nutshell when he pointed out that the value of the produce from Laidley for one year was the grand sum of £2,612.

Mr. WHITE said he must call the hon. gentleman to order. The hon. member for Toowoomba was in error. He (Mr. White) did not remember what was the amount of produce from Toowoomba last year, but the quantity received at the Laidley station was 6,000 tons. The hon. gentleman was in error.

Mr. ARCHER: What is the point of order?

Mr. BLACK said he would like to know whether he was to be interrupted in that way. In all his experience in that House he had never been interrupted in such an unwarrantable manner as he was just now by the member for Stanley. The figures he (Mr. Black) had quoted were not his figures, but the figures of the hon. member for Toowoomba, and he was quite certain that that hon. gentleman, from his long experience in that House, would be accurate in any quotations he gave the Committee. The amount he gave was not 6,000 tons but £2,612. What did that probably represent in agricultural produce? He assumed that the bulk of the produce was hay, potatoes, and maize, and that the sum he had quoted represented 300 or 400 tons?

Mr. GROOM: More than that. About 3,000 tons of maize.

Mr. WHITE: 6,000 tons.

Mr. BLACK said the member for Stanley would have an opportunity of replying at length if he was so disposed. If £2,612 represented 6,000 tons of produce, the rates must be so very low that he could not imagine how the line could possibly pay the country at all. He did not object to that particular line any more than to some others, but he contended that no sufficient cause had been shown why they should spend £30,000 on ten miles of railway in a district which only yielded £2,612 worth of produce in one whole year. In addition to the traffic which that would create, there might be some up-loading and a small amount of passenger traffic, but the inhabitants could not be very numerous if they could only grow produce to the value of £2,612 in twelve months. There were agricultural districts in the colony which could produce fifty times more than that, and their claims for railways were not recognised in the Loan Estimates. That Laidley Creek line was one of a bunch which hon. members on the other side had made up their minds to pass. Although he was speaking against the line, he knew as certain as he was standing there that it would be passed, and nothing he could say would prevent it being constructed, but he was perfectly justified in expressing his view of the question, which was that the colony could not afford to spend money on such a railway at the present time. The member for Stanley need not be at all alarmed at it not being passed. It would certainly be passed. He (Mr. Black), however, would point out the ridiculous claims on which certain districts down here became entitled to railway consideration. He held in his hand a petition against the construction of that railway. It was a petition from the residents of the Laidley district, and showed—

"That sensible of the advantages of branch railway lines when actually required to open up new country and induce fresh settlement, we view with much doubt and dissatisfaction the £30,000 on the Estimates for the Laidley Creek line."

That was from residents of the Laidley district, and as the inhabitants of the district were not numerous he assumed that the majority were very likely signatories to the petition.

Mr. WHITE: No, no; nothing of the sort.

Mr. BLACK: The petition went on to say—

"Your petitioners humbly beg to lay before your honourable House their strong convictions:—

"1. That the proposed branch line cannot open up any fresh country, or induce any more settlement than there is at the present.

"2. That the area that can be cultivated in the Laidley Valley is so limited that under the most favourable conditions this proposed line could not be worked but at a heavy and continual loss.

"3. That the settlers on Upper Laidley Creek, whom this line will alone benefit, have already a thorough good road to and within a reasonable distance of the railway station.

"4. That the number of settlers on Upper Laidley Creek, in comparison with the number in other parts of the Laidley district, that would reap no benefit by this proposed line are but as 1 to 5; therefore grateful as we are to the Government for recognising our district, we respectfully consider that this large sum of £30,000 would be most injudiciously spent for the sole benefit of a small but powerful minority of Laidley district, whilst other and more populous portions have been languishing for assistance in the shape of wells and dams for the conserving of water and various other matters.

"We trust that your honourable Assembly will give these, our strong convictions, your serious attention, and your petitioners, as in duty bound will ever pray."

That was signed by about 150 persons, and he was informed that they were the most influential inhabitants of the district. If the Minister for Works was anxious for him to read the names he would do so. A number of the signatories were Germans, who he (Mr. Black) had always understood were entitled to every consideration as agriculturists. He still maintained that there was no sufficient cause shown for the expenditure of that money, and he was glad to be able to record his protest against that particular line in addition to other lines that were in that schedule.

Mr. GROOM said he wished to correct a statement he made a few minutes ago. He had understood that the amount he quoted was paid for the produce; but he now found it was the amount paid for freight. The correct figures were these: In 1882 Laidley despatched during the year 2,880 tons, and paid for freight £1,250; in 1883, 6,177 tons, and paid for freight £2,612. In 1882, at Toowoomba, 2,678 tons were despatched, and £2,953 paid for freight; in 1883, 6,803 tons despatched, and £7,809 paid for freight. Of course it would be understood that he was not in any degree opposing the vote. He knew the district and the people very well, and he believed the line would be a very useful one.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that £24,000 be granted by way of loan for the extension of the Highfields Branch to Crow's Nest. The plans had been approved by the House, and that vote was additional to the expenditure that was going on.

Question put and passed.

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

MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER reported that he had received the following message:—

"Legislative Council Chamber.

"Brisbane, 17th December, 1884.

"Mr. SPEAKER,

"The Legislative Council agrees to the free conference, requested by the Legislative Assembly in their message of this day's date, on the subject of the

Council's amendments in the Crown Lands Bill, disagreed to by the Assembly and insisted on by the Council, and appoints that the same be held in No. 1 Committee Room, Legislative Council, at 4.15 p.m. to-morrow, and that the Hon. A. C. Gregory, the Hon. F. H. Hart, the Hon. W. Forrest, the Hon. A. J. Thynne, the Hon. T. L. Murray-Prior, and the Hon. W. F. Lambert, be the managers thereof on their behalf.

"A. H. PALMER,
"President."

The SPEAKER reported that he had received a message from the Legislative Council stating that that House had agreed to the Legislative Assembly's amendment in the Legislative Council's amendment in clause 52 of the Defence Bill.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER, in moving the adjournment, said that for the information of hon. members who were not familiar with the practice on holding a conference between the two Houses, he might mention that at the time appointed the members' names were called over, and they then proceeded to the conference; the House suspending its sitting until their return. He hoped that before that they would be able to dispose of all the items on the Loan Estimates down to the Ipswich and Warwick line.

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