

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 1885

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.*Wednesday, 23 September, 1885.*

Message from the Governor.—Question.—Cook Election.
 —Formal Motion.—Elections Bill—third reading.—
 Question without Notice.—Victoria Bridge Closure
 Bill—second reading.—Supply.—Adjournment.

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

MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a
 message from His Excellency the Governor,
 intimating that the Royal assent had been given
 to the Public Charitable Institutions Manage-
 ment Bill.

QUESTION.

Mr. HAMILTON asked the Minister for
 Works—

1. How many survey parties are engaged in making a
 permanent survey of the Cairns and Herberton line?

2. How long have these parties, respectively, been so
 engaged?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W.
 Miles) replied—

I shall be in a position to answer the hon. member's
 question next Tuesday, as by that day I expect to have
 an answer by wire from the Chief Engineer of Railways
 for the Northern Division.

COOK ELECTION.

The SPEAKER said: I have to inform the
 House that, pursuant to resolution passed by
 the House on the 4th of August last, I issued
 my writ for the election of a member to serve in
 the place of Thomas Campbell, Esquire, for the
 electoral district of Cook, and that the return
 to such writ has this day been received by me
 under the provisions of the Telegraphic Messages
 Act, with a certificate of the election of Charles
 Lumley Hill, Esquire, as a member for the said
 district.

FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to :—

By Mr. KATES (for Mr. Midgley)—

That Mr. William Kellett be discharged from attend-
 ing the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the
 petition of Samuel Hodgson with reference to the
 alleged wrongful seizure of the vessel "Forest King,"
 and that Mr. Ferguson be appointed a member of such
 committee.

ELECTIONS BILL—THIRD READING.

On the motion of the PREMIER (Hon.
 S. W. Griffith) this Bill was read a third time,
 passed, and ordered to be forwarded to the
 Legislative Council, by message in the usual
 form.

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

Mr. NORTON asked the Premier whether he
 could give the House any information as to when
 the papers in connection with the case of Redmond
versus Cockburn would be laid on the table of
 the House?

The PREMIER: I cannot give the hon.
 gentleman any information on the subject. I
 think there must be some mistake, as I am under
 the impression that the papers have been laid on
 the table.

Mr. NORTON: No; I do not think so.

VICTORIA BRIDGE CLOSURE BILL— SECOND READING.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—This Bill, which provides for the permanent closure of the Victoria Bridge, raises a short and very simple question. The history of the bridge is shortly recited in the preamble. The Brisbane Bridge Act was passed in 1861, and that statute provided that the council of the municipality of Brisbane should be authorised to erect a bridge of not less than thirty feet in width across the River Brisbane, at such place above the Queen's Wharf as the Governor and Executive Council should approve; and there is a proviso in the 1st section of the Act which says that—

“Before any such bridge shall be commenced to be built a plan and specification thereof shall be laid before and approved of by the Governor and the Executive Council, and provided also that no bridge erected by the said municipal council shall be so constructed as to obstruct the navigation of the River Brisbane by any sea-going vessels.”

As most of us are aware the municipal council proceeded with the erection of the bridge, but owing to the financial difficulties of 1866 were compelled to stop. A very great amount of extra expense was incurred in consequence of their having to make a swing in the bridge so that it might be opened to allow vessels to pass through. I believe, though I was not in the House at the time, that the real reason why that proviso was inserted was that sea-going vessels might be allowed to go up as far as Ipswich. A few ships had gone up there; and there was an idea that Ipswich might become a large port for sea-going vessels. I suppose that idea has come to an end now that we have railway communication with Ipswich. Then the difficulties in which the municipal council were involved having become so great in consequence of the cost of this bridge, Parliament passed an Act in 1877, vesting the bridge in Her Majesty. In 1878 the Local Government Act was passed, which authorised the Government to place any bridge of that kind under the control of the municipal council, and ultimately the Governor in Council placed the bridge again under the control of the municipal council. The Supreme Court have held that, being charged with the management of the bridge, they are bound to open it at proper times and under proper circumstances, and that they are liable to damages at the hands of anyone who has been aggrieved or has suffered loss through their not opening it. Under these circumstances the question has arisen—What is to be done? Now, when that bridge was erected South Brisbane was a very much less important place than it is now, and the traffic across the bridge was not very great; but since then South Brisbane has become a very large and populous suburb—I should think the population is nearer 20,000 than 15,000—and it is daily increasing. The amount of business carried on there is very large indeed, and anyone who has lived in Brisbane, even for a very short time, must know the immense and continuous traffic over the bridge. I suppose omnibuses pass over it at the rate of one a minute, and there is a continuous stream of all sorts of traffic—heavy goods and passengers—and in a very short time a tramway will be laid down. Now, sir, to open that bridge continuously through the day would certainly cause enormous inconvenience to a very large proportion of the population of the metropolis. Moreover, not only is there this continuous traffic, but the bridge is the means of conveying gas and water. Of course there is no physical impossibility in opening the bridge, any more than there would be in taking it down—it could be done; the question is whether it is expedient that it should be done. There are two conflicting highways—the

water highway of the river, and the road highway of the bridge; they cannot both be used at once, and the question is, which of them is to give way? At the time the Brisbane Bridge Act was passed, in 1861, there was a law in force in this colony which empowered the Government to erect bridges across navigable streams, and provided expressly that no one should have any claim for damages in consequence of its being done. That is the 30th section of an Act commonly called the Roads Act of 1833—4 Will. IV., No. 11—

“Whenever it shall appear expedient to the Government of the said colony to erect any bridge over or across any river or water, or arm or branch of the sea, either navigable or not, it shall not be lawful for any person or persons to sustain or to commence any suit or any proceedings at law grounded upon any damages, loss, or expenses occasioned or alleged to be occasioned by reason of the erection of any such bridge as aforesaid.”

That was the law in this colony up to the time of the passing of the Public Works Land Resumption Act of 1878, which made a new provision for procuring land for the construction of roads, and by it the Roads Act was repealed. So that but for the proviso in the 1st section of the Act no compensation could be claimed. It was the law of this colony that bridges might be erected over navigable waters without giving rise to any claim for compensation, and a very sound principle too. There are certainly no vested rights which can arise in a colony like this sufficient to justify the obstruction of a public highway in such an important position as the Victoria Bridge occupies. The only objection, I presume, which can be made to the closing of the bridge is on the ground of vested interests, and I assert that there are no vested interests deserving of any consideration whatever. There is no doubt that the value of property on the South Brisbane side has been enormously increased by the facilities for communication, and would be correspondingly diminished by the obstruction of that communication. It might be that a very few persons on one side of the river or the other would get a little more money for their water frontages if they could get sea-going vessels alongside; but they form a very small number, and they share in the increased value given to property by uninterrupted means of communication. I maintain that they are entitled to no serious consideration at all, and the only matter we ought to consider is the public convenience. It has been suggested that though the bridge could not be opened during the daytime it might during the night. Suppose that were so. In the first place, it would interrupt all the means of communication for water and gas, as well as all the traffic that has to take place at night. For instance, driving cattle into town, which I believe is a very important and serious matter, can only be done during the night, and during certain hours of the night. It would never do to drive wild cattle through the streets in the daytime. Again, the proposal to open the bridge during the night is not practicable, for this reason: The opening of the bridge is narrow, and it is not safe to go through except near the top of high water and against the tide. Now, you cannot always arrange for the top of the tide to arrive in the middle of the night, nor can you arrange for the tide to be running in the direction opposite to that in which the ship wants to go at any time during the night; so that that scheme is not feasible. Again, suppose an accident were to occur, as is quite likely, through a ship striking the bridge, or anything else happening to make it impossible to close the bridge for two or three days, the inconvenience and loss which would arise would be a great

deal more than the loss to all the riparian landlords put together. Considering what the law was for so long, persons on the bank of the river have no claim to any particular consideration. I never heard of anyone on the north side wanting compensation for injury to their property on the banks of the river; the only persons who can have, so far as I know, even an ostensible claim, are persons on the other side. As to navigating further up, we have the railway bridge at Oxley, which I suppose no one thinks of having pulled down; so that the only people who could set up their claim for a moment as against the general body of the people are the few who occupy property between the bridge at Brisbane and the bridge at Oxley. We should not be justified in allowing the bridge to be opened and one of the principal highways to be obstructed for their convenience. The Government therefore felt bound to deal with the matter. It was a matter dealing with a public highway of the colony, which could not be dealt with in a private Bill, and the Government felt it their duty to take charge of it; and the conclusion they have come to is that the bridge should be kept shut. That will do no harm to anyone, and it will be an immense convenience to a very great number. Another suggestion made is that there is more wharfage wanted, but I am sure there is enough wharfage below the bridge to accommodate all the shipping that is likely to come up here for many years to come. So far from its being desirable to extend the wharfage above the Brisbane bridge, I am quite certain that we shall have before long more bridges than one between the north and the south side. I wonder what would be said in England if it were proposed to make an opening through London Bridge? That is certainly farther down the river comparatively than the Brisbane bridge, and there is an immense amount of navigation carried on above it; but the vessels are adapted for it. There is no difficulty about that. The question is, whether, to allow of vessels with tall masts going through now and again at rare intervals, the whole population of the metropolis and people passing through the metropolis should be put to the inconvenience caused by the opening of the bridge whenever an individual comes forward and wants to take a vessel through? I think not. The Bill is prepared very simply. It provides that the clause in the Brisbane Bridge Act which says that a bridge shall not obstruct the navigation of the river shall be repealed, and that it shall be lawful for Her Majesty or the municipal council to keep the bridge permanently closed; also that the Bill shall come into operation from the day it was introduced into the House—the 20th of August.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I think anyone on reading the preamble of this Bill will see what a very limited view of the question has been taken by the Government. After reciting the effects of the clauses, so far as legislation on the subject has been concerned, it winds up with the remark:—

“Its usefulness as a main public highway of the colony would be greatly diminished if the traffic across it should be interrupted by opening it to allow of the passage of sea-going vessels.”

I say that a Government which is capable of putting a clause of this sort into the preamble of a Bill, designed for the purpose of stopping the traffic on one of the greatest highways of the colony, has failed to grasp the question altogether. It is the Government who are trying to stop traffic on a highway. It is a different question altogether from merely stopping the traffic between the city and its suburbs. There is a meanness about the Bill that I did not expect to come from a lawyer. Certain parties, whether they have rights or not, above the bridge, consider that

they have rights, and consider they have a right to have access by water above the bridge for sea-going vessels. They appealed to the courts of law, who were the only interpreters of their Acts, and the judgment of the court was that they had such rights. But what is the action taken by the Government? They immediately bring in a Bill declaring legal what has hitherto been illegal according to the decision of the courts of law, and actually making the illegality retrospective, because by clause 3 the individuals who sued the corporation can be made to pay the whole cost of a lawsuit that is over.

THE PREMIER: It is not retrospective to that extent.

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I thought it was retrospective, and, in order to supplement my judgment, I have asked other lawyers not interested in the matter, and they assured me that clause 3 was not retrospective. But I will try and take a wider view of the case altogether than was taken by the Premier; but first let me draw the attention of the House to the very different line of argument which that hon. gentleman uses now, from what he has persistently used in this House. Hon. gentlemen will probably remember very well, when we passed the Tramways and Railways Bill of 1880, that the hon. gentleman in his antagonism to that Bill almost went to the length of obstruction upon this ground: that we were interfering with the rights of private property in actually providing against fanciful claims being raised by the owners of such property against the Government. We knew that we were actually bringing in a Bill that provided against what was a great evil before—the way in which the Government were forced to disgorge money to hungry applicants on account of alleged harm done to property. We tried so far as possible to restrict that; but the hon. gentleman could then see nothing but the rights of private property. But when it comes to a question in which he is counsel for the plaintiff he can see only one view of it, and that is that there is really no right of private property at all, and, if there is, that there ought not to be. The hon. gentleman is wrong altogether in saying that the idea of sea-going vessels going to Ipswich has long come to an end. Those who have come to that conclusion probably live below the bridge—they certainly do not live above it; and what is more, no man who has considered the possibilities of the coal trade in the West Moreton district can possibly have come to the conclusion that the idea of sea-going vessels going to Ipswich has been for one moment abandoned. That it has been abandoned I deny. I remember well, when the railway bridge was being constructed over the river at Oxley, although the law had passed and nothing could interfere with it, I was interviewed, as Minister for Works, by a number of landed proprietors above the bridge, all of whom claimed to have had their rights interfered with by the passing of the specifications which authorised the Government to make the bridge. They never lost sight of their claims to have sea-going vessels pass above the bridge. Why should the idea be abandoned? There is a city of more than 500,000 inhabitants—Liverpool—and about 33 miles off there is another city with 500,000 inhabitants; and the question of creating water carriage between the two is a great problem. Yet here, in the infancy of the colony, with probabilities of wonderful advancement staring us in the face, we are asked to sacrifice for the purpose of a little convenience between a city and its suburbs, one of the grandest prospects the colony ever had. The hon. gentleman says that since the Act was passed making it compulsory

on the builders of a bridge to provide means for sea-going vessels to pass through it, the circumstances of the colony have very much changed. I quite agree with him; but the hon. gentleman sees these circumstances in quite a different light from what I do, as I think the reasons why the bridge should not be closed have immensely increased since the Bridge Act was passed. He can only see in the changed circumstances of the colony that South Brisbane has grown a big suburb, and that constant communication with it is indispensable. No doubt that is so. But I say that the enormous coal traffic that is growing up in West Moreton demands that water carriage shall be provided. Look how the trade has increased! The Ipswich coal produce for 1880 was 53,000 tons; in 1881 it was 66,000 tons; in 1882, 74,000 tons; in 1883, 104,000 tons; and in 1884, 122,000 tons. That is evidence of a constantly increasing traffic; and is the railway able to accommodate that traffic?

The PREMIER: Of course it is.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: The hon. gentleman says of course it is! Surely he does not contemplate that this traffic is to be confined even to the rate of traffic at which it has been progressing. Even at that rate of progress we have not reached the time yet when one wagon-load of coals can be put on board one of the British-India vessels from the land, except in bags. That is the position at the present time. The railway will never provide for the carriage of coals in order to compete economically with other seaports in Australia. So far from being content with the railway we must contemplate a traffic in coals beyond the power of any railway to supply. We must contemplate a traffic that will certainly be far beyond the power of South Brisbane to supply. We can see at the same time that the railway affords an expensive means, and not a very profitable means, whereas we have a river here right through the centre of the coal district; and we are actually going to block the traffic that will allow sea-going vessels to go almost to the pit's mouth. The hon. gentleman says that no damage worthy of consideration can be done to anyone above the bridge. If hon. members will just consider the influence that has been brought to bear to get the Government to introduce this Bill, they will see very clearly what the motive has been. The great influence brought to bear on the Government has been that of the property owners below the bridge, and they brought their influence to bear because they know that the effect of limiting the amount of accommodation for sea-going vessels will be to increase its value. If the opening of the bridge allows sea-going vessels to pass up the river there will be more accommodation for them, and its value will thereby be decreased. That is the reason why so much influence has been brought to bear on the Government to pass this Bill through the House.

The PREMIER: I am not aware of any such influence having been brought to bear on the Government.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I am aware of the influence that has been brought to bear upon myself, and it was always brought with the assurance that they had been to the Premier and the Colonial Treasurer before. I know very well who have been agitating in order to get this Bill passed.

The PREMIER: The only people who came to me were the corporation.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: That, I think, disposes of the question whether, by closing the bridge, damage will be done to the land above it. Just consider for a moment the value of that land. Almost the whole of it, right down

to Brisbane, is coal land; and the value of that land, if arrangements can be made along the river banks by which coal can be put almost direct from the pit on board sea-going vessels, will be immense, not only to the proprietors themselves but to the colony. The converse of that is equally true, that to close the river above the bridge to sea-going vessels will be a great loss to the proprietors and to the colony generally. The hon. member asked what would be said in England if it was proposed to make a road through London Bridge for sea-going vessels. London Bridge is certainly an obstruction to the navigation of the Thames by sea-going vessels; but the hon. gentleman forgets that it is a matter of constant regret at home that the rivers of England were blocked long before people knew what traffic was. When London Bridge was originally built it was not an obstruction to sea-going vessels, because the sea-going vessels that came there could pass through the arches of the bridge by simply taking down their masts. But it was never argued that a bridge of that height was an impediment to the navigation of the River Thames; and, besides, vested interests have become so great now that it would be perfectly impossible for them to retrace their steps in that direction. The hon. gentleman also says that it will be quite impracticable to use this road through the Brisbane bridge, on account of its position. But he must not forget that the law is at the present time that the owners of that bridge are bound to find a road for sea-going vessels to pass through it. That is the law of the land, and if the accommodation at present supplied is not sufficient, then the law forces them to provide better. Because a certain wrong has been done up to the present time the Premier is certainly not entitled to say that we cannot possibly find a remedy for it. A remedy can be found for it in course of law; but we are trying, by legislation after the fact, to block the just rights of the public. The hon. member says that an Act passed in 1833—before Queensland was a colony—which is the law in England, and which was in force here until some few years ago, gave a right to the Government at any time to make a bridge over a river, stopping the highway, without compensation. I think that may be laid aside altogether, because, as the hon. member has himself often said, the law of the land is properly got from the judges of the land. What the judge said in this particular case I will read to the House. I do so in order to show the weakness of what the hon. member urged about the Act of 1833 giving the Government the power to obstruct the highway on a river without compensation to owners. What is the actual law of the land is shown by the recent decision given in the Supreme Court.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman misunderstands me. I said that but for the proviso in the first Brisbane Bridge Act that would have been the law.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Then I do not know why the matter was brought forward at all. At all events, I will read the decision of the judge, to show the position in which the question stands now. After stating that there was no doubt as to the ownership of the bridge lying in the hands of the municipality, the decision continues as follows:—

"The sole question for decision on these demurrers then is, whether it is the duty of the defendants to remove this obstruction. The Brisbane River is a navigable tidal river far above the site of the bridge, and as such is undoubtedly in the nature of highway, and would be well described as a 'common highway' (Com. Dig. 'Chinain'—[A Highway]). Up to 1881, when the first Bridge Act was passed, there was passage for the Queen and her subjects in this river highway—

Com. Dig.—and that right could not be taken away or obstructed by the Crown or anyone else, except by Act of Parliament. When the local Legislature passed the Bridge Act of 1861, authorising the municipal council of Brisbane to erect a bridge across the river which must necessarily obstruct the navigation to some extent it was expressly provided by section 1 that 'No bridge erected by the council shall be so constructed as to obstruct the navigation of the River Brisbane by any sea-going vessels.' This means that the upper course of the river so far as it is navigable shall be accessible by some means to sea-going vessels, the bridge notwithstanding. There is nothing in any subsequent statute authorising an abridgment or obstruction of that right of highway as modified and protected by the Act of 1861. The bridge passed, by other Acts—the Bridge Acts and Local Government Act—from the municipal council to the Crown, and again from the Crown to the council, and before it was at last vested in the council it had become a fixed instead of a swing bridge, without any legal authority for such change. The defendants contend that inasmuch as they received the bridge from the Crown in that condition by no act of their own, but under the compulsory powers of the Local Government Act of 1873, they are only bound to keep it in the same condition as it came to their charge. If the alteration of structure upon which the defendants rely for their exoneration was made whilst the bridge was under the control of the Crown, then the obstruction so created was 'in direct opposition to that duty which the law casts on the Crown of reforming and punishing all nuisances which obstruct the navigation of public rivers,' a duty which was indeed only affirmed, not created, by the Great Charter. (Williams v. Wilcox and another, S. Ad. and E., 314.) We think, therefore, that whoever is charged with the maintenance of the bridge must keep it, in accordance with the mandate of the statute, free from obstructing the river highway for sea-going vessels, and cannot find shelter under the illegal act of predecessors in duty. The right of highway across the river by means of the bridge can only be enjoyed subject to the pre-existing paramount right of highway by means of the river itself. (Williams v. Wilcox and another.) The defendants are charged by law with the care of the bridge, and upon them has devolved the duty of keeping the navigation free through to the structure for sea-going vessels. It follows that they must open the swing bridge. There must, therefore, be judgment against them on these demurrers. Judgment for the plaintiffs, with costs."

It is quite plainly stated there that the first duty of the Government is to preserve the interests of the subjects, and give a free highway along the Brisbane River. That is infringed by building a bridge through which there is no opening, and I contend that we are now being asked to perpetuate the injustice done by practice by making the closure of the bridge legal, and thus keeping back those injured in their interests from getting compensation for the wrong that has been done them. We have had a sample of legislation of that kind in the House lately. We have had Dr. Hobbs before us this year, as we have had for a great many years—since I have been a member of the House; and his claim for compensation has been put forward lucidly by the Premier himself—that in that case a public Act of the Legislature authorised certain works to be constructed without providing that those who suffered by them should get compensation. Yet that which was so declaimed against by the Premier repeatedly in advocating Dr. Hobbs's claim was the very thing he here proposes to do. It is not for us to say dogmatically that there is no man injured by the closure of that bridge. I say that common sense at once tells us that a great many people are injured by it; but even if there were none, why should we not put in a clause by which all rights should be preserved? We cannot, in common justice, do less than that. I will quote a few words said by the Premier himself on this case of Dr. Hobbs. When advocating Dr. Hobbs's claim he said:—

"The correct principle to go upon was that, when the rights of a private individual were interfered with for the public advantage, compensation should be given to the individual."

That is the principle laid down by the Premier himself. Then again he says:—

"*Prima facie*, men who do injury ought to pay compensation, and the rule of legislation in British communities had always been never to allow any one man to injure another without making compensation."

That is very clear upon the point of compensation; and the Government cannot escape it by saying dogmatically that nobody is injured. We know that there are persons injured, and as the hon. gentleman himself pointed out, when the Railways and Tramways Bill was passing through this House, that if a man was injured to the extent of a farthing the right to be compensated for that farthing should be preserved for him; so I say that right ought to be preserved here. These remarks go, of course, towards an amendment in the Bill, but I go, as hon. members will see, a great deal further than that. The hon. gentleman can see nothing but the immense highway in the bridge over the river; I see an immense highway in the river underneath the bridge, far beyond the highway across the river. I do not think the two should be weighed in the balance at all. Whatever we do we ought to prevent ourselves from legislating so that that bridge should be closed, and prevent the upper part of the river from being adapted to sea-going vessels. That is a right we ought to preserve for the reasons I have given. We have a wonderful prospective trade in coal, which can never be provided for by railways, as we can see at the present time; and the only way in which we can get coals so as to compete with New South Wales is by allowing sea-going vessels to go up the river. Taking that view of it we should undoubtedly do what we possibly can to preserve what I call the highway. But let us look at it again from another point of view, which I believe we are not obliged to take, but as the hon. member took it I do not care about following him. He says, "Look at the immense rupture of trade that will occur by allowing the bridge to be opened at certain times." I myself do not see it. I do not see why the trade could not be conducted as well, even if it were ten times as great, by bridges that opened. I have seen them in various parts of Europe, and I do not despair of seeing the bridge here opened, and it will be a great convenience to the colony. The hon. member refers to the fact that other bridges will be built across the river. Of course there will be other bridges built across the river, but will there be a bridge built below the Victoria Bridge that will not afford means for sea-going vessels to pass? I guarantee that such a bridge will never be built. All the bridges that will be built below the Victoria Bridge will have to be so built as to allow sea-going vessels to pass, and we should make the one we are now legislating upon in such a way that it can be opened to permit of sea-going vessels passing, or, in other words, to provide that the law shall remain as it is at the present time. Even if that involved the erection of another bridge, a great deal of accommodation would be provided for the traffic if there were another bridge built so as to open for the passage of sea-going vessels, say, near Alice street or some other convenient place, and then when the opening of one of the bridges was being used the other could be made available for the traffic. We are asked to shirk a question now which we cannot shirk afterwards—that is, the opening of all the bridges across the Brisbane River. The question is, whether for the consideration of owners of private property below the bridge we shall sacrifice the rights of those who are above it; and above all, whether we shall nip in the bud one of the best trades that Queensland promises to have, just for the sake of enhancing the value of the

wharfage properties below the bridge? That is the only thing to be obtained by closing the bridge; and should we decide upon closing the bridge we shall enhance the value of wharfage properties below it, but it will be done to the detriment of the colony, to the sure detriment of a great and promising trade, and to the extinction of rights that actually exist and which cannot possibly in justice be ignored.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member has drawn a very glowing picture of the probable expansion of our coal trade—a picture in the realisation of which I quite agree with him. I think the coal trade will extend to the dimensions described by the hon. member; but, from his remarks, anyone who is a stranger to the locality would imagine that a sea-going vessel had only to pass Victoria Bridge to get at once into the coal district, and that all the coal was to be found on the river banks above the Victoria Bridge. We all know that there is no coal whatever between the Victoria Bridge and the Oxley Bridge, and we are aware that that part of the country, which forms an entirely agricultural district, is the real obstruction to the passage of the principal part of the Brisbane River by vessels going in for the coal trade; and therefore the hon. gentleman's contention narrowed itself down to this: What is the practical inconvenience that will be sustained by having the navigation of the river maintained in its present condition up to the Oxley railway bridge? I could not gather from the hon. gentleman's speech that he advocates the railway bridge at Oxley being reconstructed, with the view of an opening being made in it so as to admit of sea-going vessels going to the upper parts of the Brisbane River.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: Yes, I do; whenever the traffic demands it.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The hon. gentleman did not mention that, and I did not gather from his remarks that he went to that extent. However, that is not the question before us. At present we know, looking at practical facts, that the swing of the Victoria Bridge has been closed for years. During the past five years it has only been opened once, and that was for the purpose of letting a Government vessel—a powder magazine—through. For some years before that it had not been opened for any such purpose. It has been opened at intervals of three and five years respectively, in order to repair the bridge and to see that the swing was in operation. Therefore, I contend that, in reality, there has been and will be no practical hardship endured by anyone if the Bill pass. For all practical purposes the bridge has been closed for years, and although some people may take advantage of the introduction of the Bill to try and show that they will be injured by the bridge being closed, on the other hand we must consider the large increase in value which these properties on both sides of the river, and both above and below the bridge, have derived from its construction. I am sure that that increase in value far more than compensates for any deprivation of wharfage purposes which may be desired above the bridge to enable a few vessels to load with coal. One would infer from the hon. gentleman's remarks that the whole of the Ipswich coal-mines were on the banks of the river, but a large extent of the coal country now being worked, and a very large area yet to be opened up, is far away from navigation, and the produce from those places will undoubtedly find its way down by railway carriage to the wharves at South Brisbane. I believe that those wharves will be the chief means of shipping coal from this port. In fact, I very

much question whether, even if the swing were kept open, the masters of any of our larger vessels would willingly incur the risks of going through the bridge. I am convinced that they would much prefer being shifted to the coal wharves at South Brisbane, where they would have no risk of accident whatever, to running the risk of passing through the comparatively narrow swing, which is not at all adapted for navigation by anything like the large ocean-going ships now coming here.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: What is the remedy for that?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The remedy for that is for them to load below the bridge. It is not necessary for me to refer to the question of the depth of water in the upper part of the river, or as to how far ocean-going vessels could proceed up it. That I am not prepared to go into, as I have no data upon it; but at the same time it is an objection that ought not to be overlooked. However, I am fully convinced of this: that by removing from the corporation the disabilities and penalties they at present lie under in connection with the opening of the bridge we are inflicting injury upon none of the land-owners who have river frontages; and as to the great benefits that will accrue to trade—the coal trade in particular—by keeping the bridge open for sea-going vessels, it is a very pleasant picture to draw; but it is one that is, I think, entirely devoid of reality. I believe that a great coal trade will grow up, and that that trade will be brought down to the natural outlet below the bridge; and that can be done by increasing our railway appliances in the future. I do not consider it necessary to make any further remarks on the subject. As I have already stated, the bridge has been virtually closed during the past five years, and there has been no outcry by the maritime portion of the community that they have suffered any inconvenience or loss of profit by being prevented from sending ships up the Brisbane River.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: What do you call an outcry?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I mean that there has been no burning question raised.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: What does McBride *versus* the Corporation mean?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I do not consider that by any means substantiates the position of a general demand by the maritime or mercantile community. I do not accept Mr. McBride as the representative of the mercantile community of Brisbane. We know very well that that case was got up entirely for the purpose of testing the position of the corporation, and with the view, doubtless, of showing that Mr. McBride was personally aggrieved. But it by no means represents the general feeling on either side of the river, because it is generally conceded that great benefits will be derived from the closing of the bridge. In fact, it is looked upon as a foregone conclusion. Every business man regards the bridge as having been virtually closed from the foundation. We know that it would not have been built if the concession of a swing had not been granted; but I remember well that even at the time it was granted it was looked upon that the swing was a mere concession to sentimental feeling—that the construction of the bridge was the main thing to provide for—and that the swing itself would never be used to any extent. Experience has proved that to be correct. The hon. the leader of the Opposition of course felt bound to oppose the motion; but I believe that he recognises as

well as anyone in this House the advantages to the community that will arise from the bridge being closed as early as possible.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. the Colonial Treasurer in his closing remarks said that of course the leader of the Opposition felt bound to oppose the Bill; that is, that whether he believes in it or not he is bound to oppose it. I think that, sir, is a very lame conclusion to arrive at, and a very lame argument in support of the Bill. I take a very broad view of the question. I am inclined to look at the question in a broader light than even the hon. gentleman who leads the Opposition. I look upon Ipswich—when I say “Ipswich” I mean the Moreton district also—not only as a great producing district, but as one that will become a great manufacturing district. I have not the slightest doubt that the time will come in Queensland, as well as it has come elsewhere, when we shall have to go into manufacturing very largely, and I do not know of any place in Queensland more suited or more likely to be the centre round which manufactories will be established than Ipswich itself. Therefore I look upon the closing of this bridge as being the means of closing, or partially closing, the avenue to this great manufacturing prosperity which we are looking forward to, as well as the coal trade, which the hon. the leader of the Opposition has referred to. He has shown by the paper from which he quoted that the coal trade has more than doubled within four years; and I consider that had the appliances for the exportation of coal been equal to the production the increase would have been a great deal more than was mentioned by the hon. gentleman. We all know that there has been an outcry by the coal-owners on account of the insufficiency of accommodation for shipping coal at South Brisbane. And it will always be so. Let anyone examine the place and see whether it can be made into a place from which hundreds of thousands of tons of coal can be shipped yearly as at Newcastle. The thing is utterly absurd, because the site is too cramped for anything of the sort. And if we continue the railway twelve or fourteen miles to the mouth of the river the cost of carriage will cripple the trade, so as to make it beyond the power of coal-owners to compete with Newcastle. Even at present it is difficult for them to compete with Newcastle; and every impediment put in their way—every farthing added to the cost of putting the coal on board ship—renders it more difficult for them to compete with New South Wales. The hon. gentleman's argument was founded chiefly on the fact that there is no coal between the Oxley bridge and the Brisbane bridge, and also that there has been no outcry from the maritime portion of the community. But it is not the maritime portion of the community whose rights we are advocating at all; it is the rights of the district of West Moreton and of the whole colony. The maritime portion of the community do not care what wharf they get their goods from; they have no desire to go above the bridge as long as they can get their goods below, unless they have to pay more below; but if they have to pay higher prices in consequence of not being able to get them above the bridge they will cry out. The hon. gentleman also said that the bridge has practically been closed for five years, and that Mr. McBride, who sued the corporation, is not looked upon by him as in any way representing any general demand for the opening of the bridge. All I can say is that I am very sorry to hear him say so. I think that one reason why there has been no outcry is because there was no other man of public spirit

like Mr. McBride to contest the matter with the corporation—to compel them to open the bridge; and I think Mr. McBride deserves credit, whatever his motive was, for contesting in the public interest for what is of great public value. As to the fact of the Oxley bridge being an impediment, that is an impediment which can be removed by the Government any day; and I will tell the hon. gentleman how it can be done. We should do one of two things if the necessity should arise—and I hope it will arise some day, in the interests of West Moreton—we should either make a swing sufficiently large to allow vessels to go through, or raise the bridge to a higher level so that vessels can go underneath. The leader of the Government asked what would be the answer to a demand for opening London Bridge, and that question has been already answered by the leader of the Opposition; but I will tell him what has been done in a place of much less importance than London. We know that the different towns of Europe, in spite of the railway communication which exists there—and especially in England—are demanding communication with the sea, if possible, because they find that even with all the railways they cannot supply the means of communication at the rate at which competition demands it should be supplied. Paris is ninety miles from the sea, but is situated on a river at whose mouth there is a large and important seaport; yet a project has been on foot for years to make a seaport, by putting the Seine into such a condition by dredging and other operations as to enable ships to come up to Paris instead of staying at Havre. The same thing is being done at Manchester, and the distance between Manchester and the sea is not more than one-third the distance between Paris and the sea. The people of Manchester find it a terrible inconvenience, owing to the close competition in business, to be situated as they are; and they find it difficult to compete with the rest of the world in the production of cotton yarns and calico—more especially with Glasgow, which has direct communication with the sea. The ship canal mentioned by the leader of the Opposition is a project that has been on foot for several years, and the cost has been variously estimated at from £7,000,000 to £10,000,000; but the people of Manchester are willing to undertake so costly a work, in order that they may have direct communication by water with the sea instead of getting their goods from Liverpool as they do now; and thus avoid the extra cost of carriage over thirty-three or thirty-four miles of railway. The cotton trade alone expects to gain half-a-million a year through the making of that canal. Now, I will tell the hon. gentleman what was done in England only two years ago. When a railway was projected from Hull to Lincoln, across the Humber, the people of Leeds, who have no communication with the sea—unless it is by a river not navigable to that town—protested successfully, through their representatives in committee of the House of Commons, against the building of that railway, because it would have crossed the Humber and prospectively have prevented them from having water communication with the sea. That was only two years ago. And during the present session two Bills have been brought before Parliament to put towns into better communication with the sea than they are at present, by the improvement of the rivers Dee and Don. The Tay, Tees, Clyde, and many other rivers are being improved for the same purpose; but here the Government are going in a direction opposite to the spirit of progress in every other part of the civilised world. And what is the reason? Simply because of some slight

inconvenience to the public travelling between North Brisbane and South Brisbane. That is the only reason that can be given; and I say the Government that cannot find means to carry on a traffic like that between North and South Brisbane without keeping the bridge closed is not worthy of its name. There are dozens of men in Brisbane who could carry on communication between North and South Brisbane without stopping the prospect of vessels going up the river. If we cannot look forward to the time when the large ships spoken of by the Colonial Treasurer can go up the river—I suppose he meant the British-India Company's vessels—a thing which is not unlikely, seeing what has been done in other rivers in other parts of the world—if we cannot look forward to that time, when vessels drawing 24 to 30 feet of water will be able to come up the river, why not provide for vessels of from 15 to 18 feet? If we cannot provide for vessels of the larger class, why not get the next class? It is not the largest class of vessels that carry the largest quantity of coal from Newcastle, but vessels of from 600 tons to 1,000 tons, and they could go up the river, and to within a mile or two of the pit's mouth, where they could ship coal at 2s. 6d. or 3s. 6d. a ton less. That would be putting the people into a fair way of being able to compete with Newcastle. No compensation put into this Bill to recomp the owners of land on the banks of the river will, in my idea, compensate for the closing of the bridge. I do not care what clause is put in by way of compensation, it will not compensate the colony; it will not compensate the people of West Moreton, whose prospects of a large manufacturing industry, as well as of a coal-producing industry, are the brightest of those existing in any part of Queensland I know of at the present time. Even if we put in a clause giving the fullest compensation that can possibly be given to persons having a right to the river being open to free navigation, it will be a blow to the rest of the colony simply for the benefit of those persons. I hope the Government, more especially the Premier—who knows much better—in fact, any member of this House ought to know better—will not attempt to close the greatest and the best and the easiest public highway that exists in the country between Brisbane and Ipswich. It costs nothing to keep in repair; and once put into proper order for the accommodation of shipping, will never require anything further. It will not be like the lower part of the river, which requires continual dredging, because the higher part will always clear itself. It is not like a railway either, because a railway always requires to be kept in order. We shall never be able to carry by the South Brisbane Railway the amount of coal which the prospects of West Moreton have in view so as to compete with Newcastle successfully. That I am fully convinced of. The best chance of competition that there is, is by having the river open, and by having it put in such a state by dredging or otherwise as will allow ships of 500 or 1,000 tons to come up as far as the coalfields. I will oppose the second reading of this Bill, and I will also oppose it in committee.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: I am very pleased to see that Ipswich is again coming to the front. We have always said that it was the first town in the colony, and that was the reason why the swing in the bridge was constructed; but we had no idea that Ipswich was likely to so soon become the capital. We have always known that there was a wealth lying in the bowels of the earth that is far before all the goldfields of the colony, and that is the reason why we have been agitating for such a long time for railway communication with the sea. Hon. members will remember that one of the arguments used by the Ipswich members in favour
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of railway communication was, that by continually shifting the coals from the pit-head to the trucks, then from the trucks to the water, and then from the water to the ships, it became deteriorated very much, and consequently railway communication from the pit-head to the sea was an absolute necessity. That being so, I think that Ipswich and those above the bridge have been pretty well compensated by the railway; and so far as I am concerned—although I know that some of my colleagues disagree with me—yet I look upon railway communication as a compensation for the loss of the means of carriage by water. Besides, I think it is far better to take coals to the sea-going vessels than to take the sea-going vessels to the coals. The majority of sea-going vessels are not able to come up the river past the bridge, and it would take thousands—I may say millions—of money to improve the river so as to allow sea-going vessels to come up. And if they did come up the river, what then? Many of the coalfields above Oxley bridge are away on towards the west and not near the river at all. They are miles and miles away, and it would be far easier for them to have communication with the main line of railway than to have communication with the riverside. The owners would have to make communication from the pits to the riverside, and then we should have vessels coming up and taking a few hundred tons from one wharf and a few hundred from another, and so on. But when once we have a double line of railway and a few branch lines we shall then have communication with the sea, and ample means of conveying the coal to the seaside. Of course, arguments of a different kind are brought to bear to show that the opening up of the river will be valuable; but I cannot see any force in them myself. The hon. member for Townsville has evidently never been in Glasgow; because he referred to the improvement of the Clyde, and said we now propose to do the exact opposite. But we are doing the same as they did in Glasgow, because in that case the only improvements that were made in the river were made in that portion of it below the Brooinielaw bridge, and the only vessels that came through the lower bridge were steamers that had to lower their funnels to get through. No sea-going vessels came through the bridge, and, as I say, all the improvements on the Clyde have been made below the bridge. In the case of the Brisbane River, we are making the improvements so as to allow sea-going vessels to come up to the bridge, and I do not think we shall be interfering with any vested rights if, while we close the bridge, we at the same time provide additional railway accommodation. That accommodation has been promised, in the shape of a double line from Ipswich. It has been a long time coming, but I think that the whole of the West Moreton district will be put in such a position by the construction of that line that they will be completely compensated for any loss on account of the closing of the bridge. Besides, barges will not be prevented from going up the river as they do at the present time, but sea-going vessels could not, in any case, get up beyond Oxley. The Colonial Treasurer said that when the Bridge Act was passed the insertion of a clause providing for the swing was a concession to the sentimental feelings of a few persons, and I suppose he means it was a concession to the feelings of some members representing the West Moreton district. At that time it was well known that Ipswich would be a large manufacturing town—when we had not then advanced so far in the matter of railway construction, and we did not know how to provide additional modes of carrying produce. I, as an Ipswich representative,

am satisfied that if the Government will give us sufficient railway accommodation we shall be content to allow the bridge to be closed. I know other Ipswich men who take a different view of the matter, but this is my opinion.

Mr. FOOTE: I totally disagree with the hon. gentleman who has preceded me, and I do not endorse any of the views he has set forth. I look upon the permanent closure of the Brisbane Bridge as a piece of petty localism by which a very few parties indeed will be benefited. All those who wish to keep it open have interests above the bridge; and we must come to the question—are not the rights of the persons who live above the bridge equal to the rights of those who live below it? For my part I think they are, and I think it is an act of injustice to the parties who live above the bridge to pass a Bill that will close it and will depreciate in value their property very considerably. I cannot see that a Bill of this sort can be passed without compensating the persons interested, and if they are to be compensated who is to compensate them? Is it to come out of the pocket of the general taxpayer of the country, or from those persons who live below the bridge and will be benefited by its closure? The closing of the structure means this: that every piece of land below the bridge available for wharfage purposes will be sold at high rates for wharves. The time may come by-and-by, after all these frontages have been occupied, when people will have other ideas on this subject, and wish to open the bridge in order to continue the wharfage above it. I think the Legislature which passed the Victoria Bridge Act did a good thing when they inserted a proviso prohibiting the obstruction of the river to sea-going vessels. It cannot be gainsaid that the river is the highway of the colony, and I think we ought to consider the remarks of the leader of the Opposition, who made out a very good case in favour of his view of this question, and answered the arguments advanced by the Premier in introducing the Bill completely. The hon. member for Townsville also was very conclusive in his contention, and showed most effectively that there are rights—rights of individuals, and rights of places—which ought not to be overruled even by an Act of Parliament. It has been tried to be shown that the railway will more than compensate for the loss of the river highway. That I deny, sir; it will not compensate for that loss in any respect. It is well known that nowhere—in no colony, in no country of the world—can a railway carry goods at the same rates as they can be conveyed by water carriage. For instance, it is well known that since the Government ran the steamers off the river people in Ipswich have been compelled to employ the railway, but those parties who were in power at the time well remember that so long as we could employ the steamers we kept them going, because it was a source of very much greater convenience to us to be able to ship our stuff and send it down direct to vessels going north, and receive the goods brought to us in a similar manner. But the Government went into competition and ran the steamers off; consequently we were compelled to resort to the railway for the carriage of our goods. It is within the knowledge of some gentlemen—it is within your knowledge, sir—that sea-going steamers have gone as far as Ipswich. If I remember rightly, the "Platypus" went to Ipswich some fifteen or twenty years ago; and when we remember that not one sixpence has been spent on the river above the bridge in the history of man—

Mr. BEATTIE: Two flats were dredged.

Mr. FOOTE: The hon. member for Fortitude Valley reminds me that there was a little dredging done in Fortitude Valley—I mean that there

has been a great deal of dredging done there at one time and another, of a peculiar sort. I do not refer to river, but to other sorts of dredging. But at Cockatoo Island, on the Brisbane, a place which used to silt up, something was done in the way of dredging about twenty years ago. Since then, however, nothing has been done. In consequence of the steamers being run off by the Government, and in consequence of nothing having been done to the river, we have not been able to use the river lately as we might. But I am prepared to say that if my proposal to take the duty off wheat had been adopted there would have been schooners coming to Ipswich from the southern colonies with grain; and no doubt other kinds of traffic would also have sprung up. The railway cannot possibly take the whole of the coal traffic. It does not do so now, and the facilities have been found to be greater, and the cost of transport cheaper, by water than by rail. That may not be so in all instances, but in most cases the facilities for loading punts on the river are better than those for loading trucks on the railway. It is preferable to put the coal into punts which come down alongside vessels in Brisbane to sending it by rail. I know two parties who send most of their coals by water—one loading them on the Bremer and the other at Goodna. I think Mr. Gulland scarcely ever sends a truck of coal to the South Brisbane wharf, but he loads it on punts above Goodna. We are not to take the trade as it stands now, but to look at what it is likely to be twenty years hence. What was it twenty years ago? It mattered little then whether the bridge was opened or not. But look how the trade has increased during the last fifteen or even ten years—or more recently still, within the last five years—and what may be expected of it within the next ten or twenty years? I think the House ought to pause twice before they attempt to close the thoroughfare, the highway afforded by the magnificent River Brisbane. Reference has been made to the River Clyde, but from all the information I have been able to get about that river it is a mere ditch converted into a river by sheer work—at any rate, a very great part of it—and it is not to be compared in any respect with the River Brisbane. What will be the population along this river during the next century? That is a question which ought to be taken into consideration in dealing with this Bill. I maintain that those who live above the bridge have a just claim to have their rights respected quite as much as those who live below the bridge. It has been contended that, supposing this Bill does not pass, and the Act which is now in force still remains, sea-going vessels cannot get past the railway bridge at Indooroopilly. Well, even if that was the case, it would be adding something like seventeen miles river communication to that which already exists. Then, if the traffic increased in such a way that it became necessary to open the Oxley Bridge, the necessary alterations in that structure could be made when the time came. Again, some hon. members have spoken of the obstruction to traffic by the opening of this bridge. There would be some temporary obstruction to traffic, possibly, but no more than is common in other large cities. Take, for instance, the drawbridge at Pyrmont, in Sydney, a much larger structure than the Victoria Bridge, and one over which there is a great deal of traffic. I do not mean to say that that bridge is such a handsome structure as the one referred to in this Bill, or that it cost anything like the amount of money that this one cost, but I do say that there is a great deal of traffic over it; and yet that bridge is opened. I saw it opened the last time I was in Sydney, and certainly the amount of traffic above that bridge necessitates that it

should be so constructed that it may be opened. Reference has been made to the gas and water pipes that are carried across the bridge; but surely it is not absolutely necessary that the people on the other side should get their gas and water from this side; and if it is, they could have them taken across at some other point. They have had the facilities for a long time without any cost, and it is time that in the general interest they should remove their pipes. The matter is within very small compass; it is one of local interest, but I think that what has already been urged may still be urged in this case. For instance, every bridge henceforth made between the present bridge and the mouth of the Brisbane must of necessity be open for sea-going vessels. The highway is an excellent one, and there are very great prospects of a river trade springing up. There are works being projected now that will in a few months of themselves cause a great amount of traffic, and in many other places works will spring up; so that it is impossible to say what the trade on the river will be in the course of a few more years. I think myself that it is far better that ships should come as near as possible to the pit's mouth for coal than that the coal should be carried to the ships by railway. Of course, we cannot expect the very largest vessels to go up; but ships of about 1,000 tons are the class we require. I shall oppose the second reading of the Bill, and in committee I shall do all I can to block it.

Mr. CHUBB said: Mr. Speaker,—I agree entirely with the speech of the last hon. member who spoke, except where he said that this was a local matter. I maintain that it is by no means a local matter; it is a national matter. The Brisbane River does not belong to Brisbane or Ipswich; it belongs to the entire colony; and although I live below the bridge, and what little interests I have are below the bridge, I look upon the question as a broad one. Have we the right in a colony only twenty-five years old—in its infancy—to close a highway such as the Brisbane River? I maintain we have not. No one who was here twenty-five years ago would have been considered sane if he had predicted that Brisbane would be as large now as it is, and who can tell how large it will be in another twenty-five or fifty years? or even Ipswich? I maintain that we have no right to close any highway or waterway that may in future years be of advantage to the colony. I do not care whether it is a question of convenience or inconvenience between North and South Brisbane, or a question of depreciation of property; the question goes beyond that—we have no right to close a main thoroughfare such as the Brisbane River. To come to a similar matter: The Government are at present calling for tenders for the erection of a swing-bridge over Ross Creek at Townsville; and at some future time when Ross Island has become an important place, the inhabitants there may petition to have that bridge closed. The Government have there recognised the necessity of keeping the waterway open. We have nothing whatever to do with what was the intention of members of the House at the time the Act passed; what we have to consider are the interests of the colony, present and future; and I say the future of this colony demands that this bridge should not be closed. I do not mean to discuss the question of how it affects Brisbane; I look at it as an inhabitant of Queensland; and I maintain that neither the Brisbane River nor any other highway should be closed in that way. I shall oppose the Bill here as well as in committee.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I shall support the second reading of this Bill, and

my hon. friend, the leader of the Opposition, knows that that is the opinion I expressed to him more than six weeks ago on the subject. I shall support it because I believe no injustice will be done by keeping this bridge closed. As for the remarks of the hon. member for Bundamba, he must surely remember the great fight that took place within the walls of this Chamber with regard to the communication with Ipswich, whether it should be by railway or river. I remember I maintained there should be no railway; I did not vote on the matter, because I was not in the House when the division took place; but I maintained that the communication with Ipswich should remain as it was. Those views I now bitterly regret, because I believe more benefit has accrued to Ipswich and the surrounding districts from railway communication than they would have derived from water communication. The hon. member for Townsville said it would be possible to take vessels of from 600 to 1,000 tons up to Ipswich. It would be possible, but so would it be possible to make that canal the hon. member has dilated upon, which up to the present time has not met with the success its promoters thought it would achieve. To come to the question more particularly before us: When that Oxley bridge was made hon. members knew as much as they do now. They knew of the existence of the coal fields, and they knew perfectly well that the erection of that bridge completely barred the progress of any sea-going vessel beyond that point. Why did they not then protest against the improper closure of the river? I should like to hear from any hon. member opposed to this bridge what benefit would be derived from opening that stretch of river which would be opened if the present Act remained in force, and the corporation were compelled to throw open the swing. I would like to know what benefit could be derived by the coal producers that cannot be obtained under the existing railway system. Hon. members of this House must know as well as I do that the coal in Newcastle is trucked from the pit's mouth and put on board ships by shoots or stages, or by the bodies being taken off the trucks and lowered into the vessel's hold. The hon. member for Bundamba said that Mr. Gulland preferred putting his coal into punts and bringing them down the river, and then putting the coal into baskets and lowering them into the ship's hold. I can hardly believe that the hon. gentleman knows much about coal, and especially such tender coal as the bulk of the Ipswich coal is. The less that coal is handled the better. To put it into punts and then into baskets, and then drop it into the ship's hold, must very much damage it, so far as its bulk is concerned, and that is a matter of very great importance, as the hon. gentleman knows. It appears to me that Ipswich is insatiable, it wants everything. As was pointed out by the hon. member, Mr. Macfarlane, the people of that town have adequate means of bringing their coal in a marketable condition at a very low rate, and I think it is asking a great deal too much when they ask this House to close one of the great highways, not only between North and South Brisbane, but also between Brisbane and a large portion of the southern part of the colony. To say that it is only a small temporary convenience to shut the bridge permanently, is to very much under-estimate the trouble that will ensue. In past years that bridge has been looked upon as a highway; and if it had not been for what I consider the inflated value put upon properties in and about Brisbane we should have had no talk at all about opening the swing-bridge. I certainly think that a gross injustice will be done to the corporation, who, I think, should receive some consideration at the hands of the House;

and who bought the bridge, and a very expensive purchase it has been. Navigation is stopped a very few miles above the Victoria Bridge by the Oxley railway bridge, which was almost unanimously passed by this House; and I think a very gross wrong will be done if the second reading of the Bill be not carried. Individually, it does not concern me one iota; but I think it will cause a very great loss to accrue to a very large number of people—a very much larger number than can possibly benefit by the retention of the law as it will stand if this Bill does not pass.

Mr. KELLETT said: Mr. Speaker,—I shall oppose the second reading of this Bill. I think that a great injury will be done to a great number of people if the bridge is permanently closed. In a few years it will be found that it will be a great detriment to the city of Brisbane itself. I am not thinking now about Ipswich, as I think it will not be so detrimental to Ipswich as has been maintained by some hon. members. The injury will be done to Brisbane. We know that wharfage accommodation is very nearly all taken up about Brisbane, unless we go down some distance; there is none near the centre of commerce. The water frontages are all taken up, and there is not enough to accommodate the coasting trade. I am certain that in a very short time there will be a large number of wharves above the bridge utilised for traffic, and I am sure it will be a great loss to persons who have river frontages up there if they are debarred from utilising them; whereas if the bridge is opened it will make very little inconvenience to the people of South Brisbane, as has been mentioned, because it can be opened at only fixed periods. Arrangements can be made at night for vessels going through, and one or two hours in the morning and evening would be quite enough. No great inconvenience can accrue if the bridge is kept closed all the day, and opened during the night when there is no traffic. Of course proper notice will have to be given by shipowners as to when the bridge is required to be opened. In a few years most of the members who are now voting for the closure of the bridge will be very glad if it is not carried, because I am satisfied that it will be a great detriment to this city. I expect in ten years Brisbane will be a very large city if we continue to go ahead anything like we have done for the last five or six years. I do not think that having the bridge open will be such a great advantage to the coal trade, because there is another bridge at Oxley, and there are no coal-pits between there and Brisbane. I happen to own some coal-pits myself, but I am not speaking in their interest. I think the wharfage accommodation from that bridge down will be very valuable and necessary, and members should pause before they allow the Victoria Bridge to be finally closed. The swing has not been used much certainly, but I have not the slightest doubt that it will be used in the future, and before very long. It can be put in such a state that it can be opened and shut easily, and regulations can be made for opening it at hours when it will not inconvenience traffic. For these reasons I shall oppose the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. ARCHER said: Mr. Speaker,—I think from the way in which the Premier spoke on this motion that he knew he had rather a bad case in hand. He mentioned several matters in his speech which were altogether too paltry to be taken into consideration in a matter of this kind. For example, he told us that if the river could be used above the bridge it would be by very small vessels only, and they could only go through the bridge when the

tide was flowing, and urged some other little objections of that kind—paltry matters which could be easily overcome, especially when they were taken into consideration as against the enormous advantage the opening of the bridge will be. This river is one of the most navigable in Australia. The Fitzroy is longer, but it is far more difficult to navigate; yet here we are deliberately asked to close one of the best means of water carriage in the colony, while we are always complaining of water carriage being the great want of Australia. The thing is a perfect absurdity, and I have not the slightest doubt that it is done, completely forgetting what may be the future of Ipswich as a great manufacturing town. Manufacturing centres can only spring up where there is an unlimited local supply of coal; and the case will undoubtedly be the same with Ipswich as it has been with similarly situated towns at home. From its position, Ipswich must become a large, perhaps the largest manufacturing district in the colony; but if this Bill is passed we shall have, in the course of a few years, a dozen closed bridges blocking the water highway between the two towns. As to vessels being dependent on tides for going through the bridge, that may be the case with a small swing, but the bridge itself has only a limited duration of life; and when it is rebuilt it will be just as easy to put in a swing double the present size to meet the demands of trade. Ship-owners would be then prepared to take their vessels through at any state of the tide, and whether it was with them or against them. Nobody would take a sailing ship up the river without a tug. In speaking of sea-going vessels, some hon. members seemed to have a mistaken notion, for no one would ever suppose that, even if the bridge was open, they would all go as far as Ipswich. Large sea-going steamers, such as those of the British-India Company, would load at Brisbane, on account of the shortness of their stay, and would submit to the extra price incurred in taking in their supply of coal for the homeward journey here. But we must look forward to the time when Ipswich will be the Newcastle of Queensland; and when vessels going to China or America will load with coal from Ipswich instead of leaving Brisbane in ballast and going south for it. For that trade vast wharfage accommodation is absolutely necessary, and it should extend as near as possible to the pit's mouth. Of course the railway bridge at Oxley will be to a certain extent an obstruction, but it will no doubt in time be removed. I am not saying that that bridge will be removed for many years to come, not until the trade becomes of such magnitude as to compensate for the expense and trouble of shifting it. That, however, is a question of the future; what is clear at present is, that there is not room below the bridge to provide for the inevitable expansion of the coal trade. As the hon. member for Townsville has pointed out, anyone looking at the accommodation at present provided for vessels loading coal will see that not more than two vessels at a time can lie there. But there is an enormous extent of room above the bridge, and one of the most magnificent waterways that any river in any of the colonies can show, and a very short branch from the main line would save a vast amount of carriage. Probably the very finest reach or series of reaches in the river is to be found between the two bridges, containing many miles of wharfage accommodation and with deep water all the way, at a very little cost for dredging. The question resolves itself into this: How can we keep up communication with South Brisbane—which is by no means a simple question to be pooh-poohed, as if not of much consequence—and at the same time, not to block the grand highway alone the river? With an open river, ten times more

coal would be carried on it than would be carried by railway; it can be carried so much more cheaply and conveniently. This great waterway must be preserved for the vast trade which will ultimately ensue. It may not come about in my time, but I am certain there are men sitting here now who will see that river covered with shipping. The simplest way of solving the question of communication with South Brisbane seems to me to erect a second bridge over the river, also with a swing; and then there would always be one means of communication open. That would cost a little money, but it would be very small in comparison with the benefits which would accrue from it, especially in the way of keeping the river open for sea-going vessels. Some hon. members have made statements during the debate which are, to say the least, peculiar. The hon. member for Ipswich made a wonderful statement about the Clyde. Probably that hon. member knows the Clyde well; but I also, having lived some time in Glasgow, know a little about it. He says that they have built a bridge over the Clyde, some miles from Glasgow, and that vessels can get as far as that bridge and no further. But the river is impracticable above the bridge. Had they the magnificent reaches of water there that we have here above our bridge, they would have taken precious good care that it should not be closed by any bridge that ever was built. But they have only a ditch above the bridge—a little bit of a river which could by no possible means be made navigable for sea-going vessels, and consequently they have deepened the channel to the bridge and no further. There is no doubt the Brisbane, above the bridge, is a splendid river, and by a very little expenditure for dredging would afford ample accommodation for large sea-going steamers. I would like to inform the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Macfarlane, that they are so anxious to conserve water communication and the rights of navigation in the old country now that they are actually conserving the rights of navigation in the small river at his native place.

Mr. MACFARLANE: That is below the bridge, the same as here.

Mr. ARCHER: Yes; but we have got a river here. They had to make a river there. They built their bridges there where there was no water, and then made a river up to them. There was no navigation about the place where those bridges were made, and no possibility of navigation. The hon. member for Ipswich, who is willing to forego the enormous advantages of water communication, must be entirely ignorant of the amount of work the railway can do. I can foresee the time myself when our railways will be enlarged—when we shall probably have a wider gauge and heavier trucks—but, even then, the carrying of coal down to the wharves here will lead to enormous additional expense, as the hon. member for Townsville has said. If we take sea-going vessels as far as we can up the river towards the Oxley bridge, a very small extension will enable us to supply the present demand, and then by cutting through the other bridge we shall be able to take vessels, not only ten or twelve miles up the river, but as near as possible to the pit's mouth. The difference in the cost of bringing the coal down, even in barges and on the railway, more than compensates for the extra handling and putting the coal on board vessels from the barges. Even supposing the coal is brought by the railway to the wharf at which the vessel loads, I am not sure that there will not be just as much handling then. We are placing great difficulties in the way of those who are to come after us in the removal of obstacles we shall have made for them. That this river

will become a great highway of commerce there can be no doubt, but if we take steps now to make obstacles of this kind they will have to be removed in the future. Is it not better to begin to remove them immediately? Let us meet the smallest difficulty now, and make up our minds that provision will have to be made for vessels going through the bridges as well as for people going across them from one side to the other. Let us take the best means provided for meeting the difficulty, and at all events not meet it by putting up obstacles that will be only difficulties to be struck out of the way by those who come after us.

Mr. BEATTIE said: Mr. Speaker,—The remarks of the hon. gentleman who has last spoken upon this question have all been directed to the coal trade, and the desirability of giving facilities to sea-going vessels to load coal, and to the increased traffic that might take place above the Victoria Bridge. I was rather pleased at that; in this way, because I think his argument was a wrong one. He said if it were possible to construct wharves between the Victoria Bridge and the Oxley bridge the coal proprietors would be enabled to have a short line from the main line to the wharves there. That, of course, would be expensive, but it is in contemplation by the Government to double the Ipswich line? Is there no other part of the river fit for wharfage accommodation except both sides of it from the Victoria Bridge to the Oxley bridge? All the remarks made by the hon. member were in support of the contention that there was no place along the Brisbane River fit for wharfage except from Kangaroo Point to Oxley bridge. If the hon. member will turn his attention in another direction from Kangaroo Point, and go down to the Bulimba Reach, he will find plenty of room to do all the business necessary. To talk about taking vessels up the river to the Oxley bridge is absurd. Surely hon. members who spoke like that can know nothing about the river or about the amount of money it would require to make it possible to take anything in the shape of a sea-going vessel of over sixty or seventy tons past the Seventeen-mile Rocks, or over Cockatoo Flats. They could not have the slightest idea of the amount of money it would cost. The hon. member for Bundamba, I believe, knows all the vessels that have gone to Ipswich, and amongst others he mentioned the Platypus. That was a vessel that went to Ipswich and carried railway iron, but it only drew six or seven feet when loaded, and hon. members know very well that on the Cockatoo Flats there is not more than three feet six inches at low water. Vessels cannot go up the river except at high water; in the olden times when steamers were going regularly up the river to Ipswich they had to leave at different times to get across those obstructions. Another argument used was that the vessels could be brought to the pit's mouth. The fact of the matter is that there are only two coal-mines on the Brisbane River that would be at all affected by vessels going up there, unless branch lines were constructed from the pit's mouth to the edge of the river. Mr. Gulland has been spoken of as an authority, and as one who sends down a large quantity of coal. I know he does, and that he has done so for many years; but who does he supply? Does he supply any coal for export? He simply supplies the Australasian Steam Navigation Company with coal for their local trade, and consequently the whole of his coal comes down the river in barges. That is because it is the most convenient plan for him. The whole of the Waterstown coal also comes down in barges; and I may mention that there is a very large

trade opening up in these districts connected with the coal-mines, as there is an immense quantity of bricks and tiles being made there. Is that bringing trade to the railway? No; it is done by the very punts that bring the coal down, because it is the cheapest way to fetch it down from the coal-pits that are contiguous to the river. As far as keeping the Victoria Bridge open is concerned, there is no doubt that it would be a convenience if we were confined, as they were in Glasgow, to the portion of the river that had to be followed up to its source—if we had no other wharfage property to fall back upon to accommodate the mercantile community. But I have no hesitation in saying that between Breakfast Creek and Humbug Reach we have two or three reaches as well adapted for shipping purposes as any in the whole of the Brisbane River. There is nothing approaching them above the Victoria Bridge except perhaps the Toowong Reach, which is a very fine one, I must acknowledge. Now, sir, is the closing of the bridge going to interfere with the trade or prosperity of Ipswich, which I hope to see become a very large place? For myself, if it were possible to make the arrangement, I must acknowledge that I would sooner see the bridge kept open than closed; but under present circumstances, and seeing the obstruction that exists six or eight miles further up, at the Oxley bridge, I think very little benefit would be derived from it so far as shipping is concerned. There is no doubt that the people of South Brisbane have received very great advantages by the construction of the bridge; and, as one hon. member—I think the hon. member for Balonne—remarked, this question has arisen in consequence of the enormous prices water frontages have brought below the bridge. People who have water frontages above the bridge think they will be seriously injured by the closing of the bridge; and I say that if they can give satisfactory proof that in order to carry out a great public convenience they have suffered injury, they should, as I have always maintained in such cases, receive compensation for the loss they have suffered by any act on the part of the Government or the Legislature. I do not think that the closing of the bridge will increase the cost of carrying coal; at any rate, the increase would be very little, because there is another place besides South Brisbane which has been pointed out as being admirably suited for the purpose of shipping coal. Of course, there is no use “crying over spilt milk,” but the hon. member for Townsville will remember that I told him on several occasions that one of the greatest mistakes he ever made was fixing upon Woollongabba as a place for shipping coal, because he had not room enough for the purpose. If he had only taken “the bull by the horns” at that time, we should now have a place where there is plenty of room, and which would simply have required the extension of the railway a mile and a-half from the Brisbane station, and have saved a large amount of money to the country. I hope hon. members, in discussing this matter, will see the great inconvenience it will be to the general public if the corporation are compelled to open this bridge. I shall support the second reading of the Bill, believing as I do that there are plenty of places convenient for carrying on the mercantile business of this—as we hope to see it—great city, in other localities besides the Brisbane River above the bridge.

Mr. SALKELD said: Mr. Speaker,—I object to this Bill, but upon different grounds to those advanced by many hon. members who have spoken. My principal objection is that serious injury will be inflicted upon owners of property along the river between Brisbane and Indooroopilly if the bridge is closed. Anybody who

knows the locality will admit that there are very fine reaches of the river between those two places, and I am given to understand that there is plenty of deep water along North Quay. I believe that one effect of closing this swing-bridge by Act of Parliament will be to retard the progress of the locality situated between those two bridges, and especially of South Brisbane. I believe that in ten years' time the inhabitants of South Brisbane—or, at any rate, those who live in the main part of it—will be very sorry indeed if the bridge is closed. They will then have seen that it was a great mistake to close it. As we all know, Brisbane has progressed at a very rapid rate during the last twenty years, and very likely during the next twenty years its progress will be accelerated to a greater extent. At the present time river frontages from Brisbane towards the Bay are bringing very high prices, and these prices will certainly increase—very likely double in value during the next ten years. One idea that I have with regard to the frontages above Victoria Bridge is that shipbuilding will yet become an industry in Brisbane, and that manufactories of various kinds will be established along the river banks; but if the bridge is closed, sailing vessels especially, and steamers, will not be able to pass under it so as to go up to the various wharves in connection with those manufactories. The chief effect of closing the bridge will be to depreciate property situated between it and the Indooroopilly bridge. Of course it will greatly increase the value of frontages down the river; and I do not think that Parliament should legislate so as to depreciate the property of a large class of people above the river and to benefit property owners who live down the river. I am quite sure that the coal industry will attain tremendous dimensions in this part of Queensland. At the present time there are very poor facilities for loading coal, and very few people seem to understand what accommodation is really required for our large export coal trade, which is increasing every year. I remember the time when we were told that the produce of the Ipswich coalfields would not be more than sufficient to supply the A.S.N. Company's steamers, but we have seen it grow to its present dimensions, and we are quite sure that it will continue to grow. If it goes on increasing in the next ten years at the same rate that it has during the past ten years it will be a very large trade indeed. I believe that, if the bridge were left open, places for shipping coal would be erected below the Indooroopilly bridge. The railway line could run in there right-away; there would be no river carriage necessary to the ships, and no trouble and bungling of having to wait for berths at the wharf, by which vessels are often delayed. Of course, delay in connection with the loading of vessels means expense. I believe a large quantity of coal would be shipped along there; but if the bridge is closed all those facilities will be lost. If there was no swing in the Victoria Bridge at the present time and it was proposed to put one in by passing an Act for that purpose, a good deal might be said against it—against the expense of it; but the swing is there, and persons who have invested in property above the bridge will have just cause of complaint if the swing is closed after having been made. I believe the principal object in bringing forward this measure is to protect the municipal council of Brisbane against actions for damages for not opening the Brisbane bridge, because the decision of the Supreme Court in the case tried there was that the bridge should be opened. If the provision for the bridge being opened, instead of being repealed, were suspended for three, four, or five years, I should have nothing to say

against that, because I do not think that during the next few years any great public necessity will exist for the bridge being opened. It is only in regard to the future that I think it would be wise to have the provision suspended instead of repealed. If in the future it is found that public requirements are so large that the bridge ought to be opened, a Bill could be brought in to reopen it, but when once it is closed it will be a very difficult matter to get it reopened again. I shall certainly vote against the second reading of the Bill, not because it is practicable to take sea-going vessels to Ipswich, but because if we close the bridge we shall be closing a waterway, and a very important one, which will be a very serious injury to a large number of persons and a district.

Mr. FRASER said: Mr. Speaker,—There is no doubt this question may be regarded as an important public question, and as a representative of a locality that is likely to be immediately affected by the decision either one way or the other, I do not feel inclined to give a silent vote. No doubt it may be urged that it is a very objectionable matter to interfere with or interrupt in any way whatever such an important public highway as the Brisbane River; but it is to a certain extent interfered with already, and I think that when we come to talk about the highway and the traffic we are bound to take into consideration the relative importance of the traffic across the river and the traffic along the river. Well, sir, I think it is a very practical comment upon the importance attempted to be given to the waterway above the bridge that for the last four or five years the swing has been practically closed. Another thing—and it is worthy of note—there has been little or no shipping traffic upon the river between Brisbane and Ipswich for the last few years. The railway has been found not only equal to all requirements up to the present time, but it has also had the effect of keeping the steamers off the river, showing clearly that twenty-five miles of railway carriage can be accomplished more cheaply and more speedily than fifty miles by the river. It has been attempted to be shown that the traffic across the Brisbane bridge is a mere local traffic—that the bridge is simply a connecting link between North and South Brisbane, and I am rather amused at the insinuation, rather than the assertion, that South Brisbane is a mere suburb. I consider it to be part and parcel of the city of Brisbane, and it is promising—I do not say rivalry with the north side, but I believe the south side will ultimately carry the palm. I do think it would be extremely unfair to allow this matter to hang over the corporation of Brisbane, seeing that the bridge was forced upon them—that they were in reality compelled to take it against their will. In order to enable hon. members to form an idea of the importance of keeping this bridge closed, at the present time at any rate, I will just give them a few facts. Hon. members in this House, I am quite sure, will remember that it is but as yesterday when the whole of the traffic between the north and south side of the river was accommodated by something like three punts and a few boats; and what I am going to submit to the House will show the enormous strides that the trade between the two sides of the river has assumed within the last few years. I hold in my hand a return of the traffic taken by the corporation of Brisbane for the week ended Saturday, 27th June, 1885, and this return is taken between the hours of 6 a.m. and 7 p.m., or a little more than 12 hours. This is the result: Horses, 31,554; vehicles, 24,243; sheep, 1,600; bicycles, 152; and a few other minor matters. This does not take into account the passenger traffic, and I can speak from my own observation

and experience that the pedestrian traffic has increased so rapidly that at certain times of the day it is almost positively dangerous to drive or walk across the bridge. I think it is time—and I say this by the way—that those in authority should take some stringent measures to regulate the traffic across the bridge. Well, since that return was made another has been taken, as late as July. This return extends over two days, the 2nd and 3rd of July, and was taken from 6 a.m. till 12 p.m. In this case horses and vehicles for the two days amounted to 13,200; vehicles only, 9,940, and other traffic in proportion. Well, I say, Mr. Speaker, that a great deal of this traffic is not local traffic; it is heavy traffic between the railway station on the north side and the wharves on the south side of the river. This traffic is effecting what we all desire to see largely increased—the shipping trade of the port. One or two more wharves are now in course of construction, the corporation wharf is rapidly hastening to completion, and another is about to be commenced; so that I would point out to hon. members that to open the swing of the Victoria Bridge at any hour of the day or night is a matter that is perfectly impracticable without stopping or hindering the traffic to a very serious extent indeed. We have been told that it is very desirable to take sea-going vessels to the pit's mouth, but I would like to know where the coal-pits are to which sea-going vessels can be taken. Then again, what is meant by a sea-going vessel? According to our idea of sea-going vessels in the present day, there are great numbers that could not pass through the swing at all—in fact, I am told that even the Government steamer “Lucinda” could not pass through the swing; so that to carry out this contention to a logical conclusion and make room for all sea-going vessels that wished to pass through the bridge, we should require to have a much larger swing than we have at the present time. As to the statement that the objection to opening the swing arises from the property-owners and wharf-owners below the bridge fearing that it might affect the value of their properties, I do not think that is entitled to any attention. At all events, I do not attach the slightest importance to it. That property-owners above the bridge may suffer somewhat I am prepared to admit, and I think they ought to be compensated to the extent they may suffer. It has been admitted that the coal trade within the last year or two has very considerably increased; and it is a very singular thing that that increase should take place in conjunction with the opening of the South Brisbane line and the wharfage accommodation afforded at South Brisbane. Notwithstanding the increase that has taken place I am not aware that the coal traffic on the river has increased to any material extent. I know very well that Mr. Gulland brings all his coal down by the river, and that for a very good reason. One of his coal-pits is near the river, and he had a steamer and all necessary appliances in full operation before the South Brisbane Railway was opened; and, as it has already been pointed out, he mainly supplies the Australasian Steam Navigation Company with coal. So that it suited his purpose to bring his coal down the river if there was no other consideration. I think it will be admitted that perhaps the port of Liverpool exports a larger quantity of coal than any other port of Great Britain, and all that is brought by water to that port goes by the Wigan and Bridgewater Canal. All the rest—or, at any rate, four-fifths of it—is brought into Liverpool by rail from the Lancashire districts, and from Wales to Birkenhead; and yet, as I have said, there is more coal shipped from Liverpool than from any other port in Great Britain. Stress has been laid, too, upon an attempt

made by Manchester people to construct a ship canal from the Mersey to Manchester. Well, that attempt has been and is still being made, but it is too well known what is behind the scenes in that matter. The proposal is not prompted solely for the purpose of securing cheaper conveyance for their goods; it arises from a jealousy which has existed between the people of Liverpool and the people of Manchester, extending over forty or fifty years. Under present circumstances I am inclined to think that it would be a mistake to prevent the swing in the Victoria Bridge being closed. But there is one thing that the corporation or the Government must certainly look in the face, and that is that the traffic across the bridge is increasing so fast as to force upon their attention the necessity of constructing a second bridge either in that locality or over some other part of the river convenient to the city. As has been pointed out by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, we shall not for a long time yet be compelled to go above the bridge for wharfage accommodation. We have the whole Garden frontage not touched yet, and that will afford a large extent of wharfage accommodation.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. FRASER: Hon. members make a mistake; I have not the slightest wish or intention that the Government Gardens or the Government Reserve should be at all interfered with, but hon. members can see that we could have a line of wharves circling the whole without infringing in the slightest degree upon the rights and privileges of visitors to the Gardens and Government Reserve. I feel bound in the interests of the great body of my constituents to support the second reading of the Bill; and while supporting it in their interest, I believe I am also supporting it in the interest of the public at large.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—One of arguments used by the last speaker, the hon. member for South Brisbane, was in reference to the amount of traffic that crosses the Victoria Bridge daily. His figures are rather astonishing to me, although I knew that that traffic was very great—in fact, so much so that I believe any interruption to it would amount to almost a revolution. And when the wharves now being erected on the river frontages facing Stanley street are completed, I think the amount of traffic there will be along that street will increase in a year or two almost beyond belief. The very argument that the hon. gentleman has urged against the opening of the bridge, I certainly think, applies the other way—is equally strong against the closing of the swing. The present traffic is more than the bridge can carry, and it is almost unsafe to cross the bridge at some times of the day on account of this heavy traffic. This shows that there must of necessity be another bridge, if not more; and I would ask, if another bridge were erected, say at Alice street, whether the hon. gentleman would consent to closing that bridge in the way it is now proposed to close the Victoria Bridge? It stands to reason that as the traffic now is more than the bridge can bear, and it will be considerably greater—perhaps ten times greater—when the new wharves are built, new bridges will have to be erected. Will they be closed bridges? I have been convinced in a great measure by the arguments used by those who have pleaded against the closing of this bridge, that the proposed Bill is a mistake. In fact some of the arguments seem to me to be beyond contradiction. The question is not so much what the traffic is now. It has always been a drawback that, when laying out towns in these colonies,

the future of the towns has not been taken into consideration; and we have only to look at Brisbane or Sydney, or any of the older towns of the colonies, for an illustration of the fact that the people who laid them out had no idea what the future of these towns was going to be. The same fault is noticeable in the laying out of Brisbane as in that of Sydney. And in closing one of the main roadways between the north and south sides of the river people have no idea what the traffic will become in our own day—within the next ten or fifteen years. We have not sufficiently looked forward to the requirements of days to come. When I came into the House this evening I was very much inclined to think that the closure of the bridge was almost a necessity, seeing the amount of traffic over it; but when I know that the simple engineering difficulty of keeping the swing open can be easily overcome, and that we must have more bridges in a few years, it strikes me as a very reasonable thing to keep the bridge open still. I do not suppose the hon. member for South Brisbane would accept the idea that the other bridges we must build are to be closed, and why should the present bridge be closed? It does not matter whether anyone is likely to demand that it should be opened this year or next year; the time will come when the demand will be made, perhaps beyond what we have any idea of at the present time. The arguments this evening have been more for the railway traffic than for the traffic between North and South Brisbane. I sympathised with the hon. member for South Brisbane on having his district called a suburb; and I agree with him that it is almost the largest part of Brisbane, and soon will become the largest part. There is every indication that the city will spread in that direction instead of the other side, where the hilly country would prevent it. That is one reason why there must necessarily be more bridges erected, and if a swing is opened in each bridge that crosses the river the traffic would not be suspended in the least. I suppose some signal would be given—a flag or something of that kind—to show that a swing was open; and the traffic would turn round and go to another bridge. It has been argued that George street might be extended and a bridge built to the cliffs on the other side, which sea-going vessels could pass under; but I think there are no cliffs on the other side high enough for that; so we get back to the necessity of having openings in all the bridges across the river. Although the Oxley bridge may be said to be a closed bridge, there is no great engineering difficulty necessary to open a swing there, and I suppose it could be done without any interference with the railway traffic. There is nothing that engineering skill will not accomplish, provided there is a necessity for carrying it out. I am quite convinced that in giving my vote against this Bill I shall be acting in the interests of the colony at large, and of what the city of Brisbane will become in the near future.

Mr. DONALDSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I regret exceedingly that I was not here in the early part of the evening. I should like to have heard the arguments of the hon. the Premier in introducing the Bill, and also those of the leader of the Opposition in reply, as I daresay I should have gained a great deal of information from them. However, I have listened attentively to the speeches which have since been delivered, and although I had made up my mind how I would record my vote, yet the speech just delivered by the hon. member for South Brisbane (Mr. Fraser) has thoroughly convinced me that I was right in the way I intended to give it—that is, against the second reading of the Bill. He made reference to the fact that only a few years ago three punts and a

few boats were able to take all the traffic from one side to the other; and he gave a return of the number of vehicles, horses, and bicycles—he said nothing about foot traffic—that crossed that bridge daily. That shows an enormous increase indeed, but I think, on the other hand, he might have made some statement as to the increase in the amount of shipping coming up the river during the last few years. Some ten or fifteen years ago I believe the A.S.N. Company had a monopoly, and very few other vessels came up. What do we see now? Not only do various colonial companies trade here, but we have ships coming from other parts of the world; and I believe in a few years the improvements made in the river will be sufficient to allow the largest ocean-going steamers afloat to come up here. I hope to see the day very shortly when we shall be able to get the shipping from all parts of the world at the wharves here. If we take the past as our guide for the future we shall see that the amount of accommodation at the wharves is very limited indeed, unless we drive it down to Lytton. Is that desirable? I believe that above this bridge there is a splendid reach of water that with a very slight outlay might be made available for wharfage as good as any below the bridge. I do not think it is quite fair to persons who have purchased property on the upper side of the bridge to be debarred from the privilege of erecting wharves and enabling shipping to come alongside. If this is done I believe it will give an immense monopoly to holders of frontages down the river and enhance the value of their property very much, to the detriment of those above the bridge, who have as just a claim for consideration. Personally I have not the slightest feeling in this matter. I have tried to look at it from a fair standpoint and I wish to see justice done to all parties. I must confess there has not been the outcry made against the proposed closing of the bridge which I at one time anticipated—not as many petitions sent to the House, nor as many public meetings held round the town protesting against it, as I expected. I certainly think that if we were to close the bridge we should be not only limiting our wharfage accommodation, but doing a great injustice to persons who have bought land along the river which they expected to increase in value for wharfage purposes. Let us take one of the other colonies. I remember the time when the River Yarra in Melbourne would not allow very small vessels to pass up to Melbourne, and now, notwithstanding the large accommodation at Sandridge and Williamstown, the Harbour Trust are spending enormous sums of money in dredging, deepening, and widening the river for the purpose of bringing shipping close up to the town. If they had a river like we have here, I feel confident that no Government or party in the country would be allowed to put a bridge across it so as to stop the traffic. I believe if we take Victoria as our guide we have every reason to believe that in twenty or thirty years Brisbane will be as large as Sydney or Melbourne is now, and we shall have as much shipping as they. We have not a bay outside as they have, for the accommodation of shipping. That is one of the reasons that I have for not wishing to see the bridge permanently closed. I do not think there is sufficient traffic to make it necessary to open the bridge at present, as sufficient wharfage accommodation can be obtained further down the river, at the wharves already erected and those now under construction. If the traffic has increased to such an extent as was stated by the hon. member for South Brisbane, during late years, surely the shipping has kept pace with it, and if there is a prospect of the traffic increasing it would be unjust on our part to limit its

accommodation. I do not think it will be necessary to keep the whole waterway open as far as the coal-mines at Ipswich, although possibly in the distant future all the coal will be shipped from that place. No doubt there will have to be a large expenditure of public money to put the river in a fit condition. That is a matter upon which I am not competent to give an opinion, but from the arguments I have heard a large outlay will be necessary. I do not think we should place any restrictions in the way of that part of the river being developed in future, if necessary. There was one remark made by the hon. member for South Brisbane that I cannot agree with; that was that it may become necessary to take the Garden frontage for wharfage purposes. I think, Mr. Speaker, that that would be a gross act of vandalism, because we have a very limited number of reserves in Brisbane as it is, and the Gardens, as they are, are not adequate. It was no doubt a great mistake in the past not to have a greater number of reserves. We should be doing a grave injustice to the people of Brisbane if we consented to the Gardens being spoiled by allowing shipping to load alongside of them. It may be contended that the frontage might be used in such a way, by the erection of a retaining wall, that the Gardens would not be interfered with, but I contend that if traffic were taken through the Gardens it would do away with them as they are at the present time. The people of Brisbane would not be acting truly to themselves in allowing such a thing to be done. If the question ever comes up, and I am a member of the House, I shall always vote against it. I believe, as I have already said, that the time has not yet arrived for opening the bridge, as the traffic is not sufficient to warrant it being done. I would willingly support any proposition for closing the bridge for a specified term only, so that in future, if it became necessary to construct wharves above it, it could be done. If we permanently close it we shall be putting an unfair restriction on the extending of wharfage accommodation. I have every reason to believe that in the next fifteen years Brisbane will be one of the largest seaports in Australia.

Mr. ISAMBERT said: Mr. Speaker,—In connection with the Bill under discussion I do not think that the advantage derived from opening the bridge for the sake of the river traffic will compensate for the injury done to the permanent traffic over it. I believe, therefore, that at the present time, and until considerable alteration in the river traffic has taken place, it would be unwise to open the bridge. The balance of advantage would be in favour of the closure of the bridge for the present. We must not lose sight of the fact that we should not arrogate to ourselves power to make laws which cannot be altered in future. If the hint of the hon. member for Warrego were taken advantage of, and the Government should accept an amendment to the effect that the bridge should only be temporarily closed for a definite period—say five or ten years—after which it could be left to the future necessities of the port—it would save the Government from any liabilities for compensation, because, people knowing that the bridge can be opened, no vested interests would be imperilled. The Government would act wisely, and meet the wishes of the majority of the House, by accepting an amendment in the direction of a temporary closure only.

Mr. McMASTER said: Mr. Speaker,—I have listened very attentively to the arguments for and against the closing of this bridge, but I must say that the argument for keeping it open

is not a new one—it is the same that was used years ago. Some twenty years ago I read the same arguments that have been brought forward to-day about sea-going vessels going to the head of navigation. As a matter of fact, I am not aware of any sea-going vessel having gone up the river to Ipswich during that period of twenty years. A great deal has been said about the magnificent reach above the bridge, and how necessary it is that the swing of the bridge should be opened to allow vessels to make use of it. Some hon. members must have lost sight of the fact that one side at least of that reach cannot be utilised for wharfage accommodation. From the Victoria Bridge to Toowong, the river bank is part and parcel of the road, and could not be used for the purpose of shipping coal. A decision has already been given, preventing any buildings from being erected along the Toowong road. Mr. Finney had a case tried in the Supreme Court, and the shire council of Toowong were compelled to remove their office from the river frontage. I am sure that the people of Toowong and along that side of the river would certainly protest against coal-shoots being erected there. As a matter of fact, I do not see how sea-going vessels can be taken above the bridge without destroying that structure altogether. It is a known fact that there is only eight feet of water under the swing at high tide, and no sea-going vessel of the size that come up here now—over 1,000 tons—draws as little as eight feet of water. With regard to the argument that the river could be deepened by dredging, in that case the structure would be destroyed by undermining the cylinders. The river cannot possibly be deepened without a very large outlay in dredging and removing some of the cylinders and widening the bridge. The traffic across the bridge has become so great that the municipal council have seriously considered the advisability of applying to the Government to widen it. I do not think it is so necessary to erect another bridge at a lower part of the river as it is to widen the present bridge. The corporation has enough land on both sides, and if the bridge is made double its present width it will be large enough for the traffic for a very long period. I do not think it at all likely that any sea-going vessels will go up the river to load coals when they can get them brought down by railway and can ship them so easily as we see now at Woollongabba. I have been informed that one coal proprietor erected a coal-shoot at the Oxley bridge, and had loaded some coal there, but he found that it was much cheaper and better, and that there was less waste, to send his coal to port by railway. I am satisfied in my own mind that there is no necessity for going above the bridge and running the risk of having the swing kept open while we have so much river frontage available for wharf accommodation lower down the river. I certainly do not agree with the hon. member for South Brisbane as to interfering with Government Gardens. There is no necessity for it. There is ample room for the Government to extend their present coal wharves round Kangaroo Point. And when they no longer have sufficient room there, there is splendid wharf accommodation on the south side from Norman Creek right along the Bulimba Reach, and on the north side as far as the Hamilton Reach. Therefore I fail to see the necessity of compelling this swing to be kept open to enable sea-going vessels to go up the river. We had the same arguments twenty years ago, about sea-going vessels going to the head of navigation, that we have heard to-night; but when they get there there is not room to turn, and they would have to be taken back stern foremost. I never knew how the old "Settler" managed when she was engaged in that trade,

but I suppose she had to come backwards for a portion of the way. Would any man in charge of a sea-going vessel be foolish enough to risk his vessel going up to the head of navigation for coal, when it could be brought down to South Brisbane by rail very much cheaper and at no risk to his vessel? The hon. member for Bundamba spoke about the river traffic from the head of navigation, and about the Ipswich people continuing to patronise the river as long as they could—that is, until the railway came into competition with it; then they had to give it up. No doubt, the hon. member will remember that the cost of carriage of produce by water was 6s. 6d. a ton, whereas the cost by rail was only 2s. 6d.

Mr. FOOTE: They got it cheaper by water than by rail.

Mr. McMASTER: I know the Brisbane people paid the full amount of 6s. 6d. or 6s., so the profit must have been made at the other end. Certainly the Brisbane tradesmen had to pay the full price, by water, of 6s.; then when the railway came into competition with it the price was reduced to 5s., and now, I believe, the railway has run the trade off the river altogether. Produce is brought to Brisbane now for 2s. 6d. a ton, and the river traffic has in consequence ceased. I fail to see why this swing-bridge should be kept open for the purpose of accommodating such men as the gentleman who tried the case in the Supreme Court. Mr. McBride is well known as a citizen, but not as a man connected in any way with shipping. It was simply a "try on" to see what he could get from the corporation of Brisbane. That is well known, and I have no doubt a number of such men might be found amongst the citizens of Brisbane who would try it on if they thought there was a likelihood of getting a handsome sum from the corporation by way of compensation. But Mr. McBride has failed.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: He has got a judgment.

Mr. McMASTER: He has certainly failed, so far as getting any compensation from the municipality is concerned, nor do I think he is likely to get any. Compensation, I think, is out of the question, Mr. Speaker. I am afraid there is an impression on the minds of some hon. members that this is a mere corporation question. As a matter of fact the corporation, as a body, do not care whether they have to open the bridge or not. The question is solely one of convenience to the public. The traffic across the bridge is now so enormous, that if it was stopped for even one hour the effect would be such that the citizens would rise up in arms and demand its closure permanently. Cattle are only allowed to cross the bridge between 11 o'clock at night and 5 in the morning, and according to the hon. member for Stanley, that was the period which would be most convenient to open the swing to allow the passage of vessels up or down the river. By the way, I fail to see how the hon. member is going to get high water at the bridge at the same hour every night of the year, in the event of Mr. McBride wishing to have a vessel taken through every night. Let us suppose that the swing is opened at any time between 12 and 4, and that the vessel gets blocked or that something goes wrong with the swing, and while cattle are waiting to come across the bridge. The swing might remain open for three or four hours, or possibly for a whole day, and the cattle would be wandering about South Brisbane, and no one can tell what damage they might do. It is a very serious matter, in the interests of the general public, to run the risk of having that swing-bridge opened. It is not for the

convenience of the citizens of Brisbane alone, but for the convenience of all the outlying districts towards the Logan and Ipswich, that the swing should be closed. It would affect all the districts on the southern side if the swing was opened and a blockage happened to take place. Therefore I consider the Government is only acting wisely in asking for power to close the bridge permanently. I would remind the hon. member for Rosewood that there is no need to insert the word "temporarily," for I am not aware that any Act of Parliament has been passed in any part of the world that could not be repealed. If the necessity arises in the future that both the Oxley bridge and the Victoria Bridge should be opened, it will only require the Government of the day, or some private member, to bring in a Bill to effect that object. I do not see that any person above the bridge will suffer any hardship if the bridge is closed permanently, as there is ample room down the river for wharfage accommodation for very many years to come. Reference was made by some hon. members to Glasgow. It is a long time, I admit, since I left Glasgow, but at that time there was no shipping of any consequence above the bridge; and I do not think from what I have heard and read that any improvements whatever have been executed above the bridge so as to enable sea-going vessels to get there. I am quite well aware that small steamers ply up and down the Clyde, but they are enabled to go under the bridge by lowering their funnels. If some of the vessels the hon. member for Bundamba spoke of were to go up we should have to widen the river as well as to deepen it, because otherwise they could not turn. I shall certainly give my support to the Bill before the House. The corporation, I think, do not care very much which way it goes, because they believe—and I think rightly, knowing the bridge belongs to the Government—that any expense that may be incurred will fall upon the Government. The citizens of Brisbane have already paid, and paid handsomely, for that bridge. Some hon. members appear to be under the impression that the citizens of Brisbane have paid nothing for the bridge, and that the Government of the colony in taking it over paid the debt on it, but they got the bridge lands for it. But that is not the case, because, over and above what the Government have paid, the citizens of Brisbane have paid over £20,000 in cash for it, for which they got nothing from the Government. I shall certainly give my support to this Bill for permanently closing the bridge.

Mr. FOXTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I think every member of the House must have been glad to hear the voice of the junior member for Fortitude Valley for the first time. Following him, I do not think I shall be acting out of the usual course in complimenting him upon the clear and lucid way in which he put his views before the House. But, Mr. Speaker, they are corporation views, and the hon. member's speech was an aldermanic speech from beginning to end. I may say at once I am opposed to the closing of this bridge, not because it will affect Ipswich in any way, because I believe, with some other hon. members who have spoken, that the closing of the bridge will not affect Ipswich at all; those immediately above the bridge will be much more concerned. The hon. member who last spoke mentioned, as one great reason why the bridge should be closed, that the land above the bridge—from the bridge to Toowong—was unalienated. I think that is a strong reason for opening it.

Mr. McMASTER: I said because it is a road.

Mr. FOXTON: It would be very easy to turn the road into wharves. I think the bank of the

river, from the bridge to Toowong, affords a splendid opportunity for providing very good wharfage accommodation indeed.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH: The Thames Embankment, for instance?

Mr. FOXTON: Another argument the hon. member used was that there was only eight feet of water under the swing at high water. The hon. member ought to know all about it because he is an alderman and ex-mayor; but I have always been under the impression that there was eight feet of water under the swing at low water.

Mr. McMASTER: No.

Mr. FOXTON: I give way to the hon. gentleman, but I have always been under that impression. The reason is that the river there has silted up, and the hon. member says that if we dredge away the silt we shall dredge away the bridge; but in my opinion the bridge is built on a more stable foundation than silt. I look upon that as an aldermanic argument. Some hon. member mentioned the fact that the "Lucinda" could not go through the bridge. I am not at all surprised at that, but as I have been on board the "Lucinda," and I am not prepared to say she is a sea-going vessel, that argument, in my opinion, does not hold good. The gentleman who brought out the "Lucinda," Captain Hudson, stated as a fact that she was the widest vessel that had ever gone through the Suez Canal, and therefore I do not wonder that she would not be able to go through the swing of the bridge; but if any vessel approaching her width could go through, it must be clear to every one that sea-going vessels would not be prevented from going through the swing merely on account of the narrowness of the opening. I am not going through all the arguments used, but I will deal with one or two matters which have occurred to me while hon. members have been speaking. Towards the close of the debate a suggestion was thrown out—I think, by the hon. member for Warrego—that a temporary closure only should take place. I protest against that, for this reason: that once the bridge is closed the very greatest difficulty will be experienced by those who may wish to obtain the opening of it in the future, because it will then be said, as we say now, that there are vested interests concerned. Surely hon. members who argue so strenuously against the opening of the swing of the bridge are furnishing the strongest argument why a temporary closure at all events should not be decided upon. The inconvenience that would ensue from occasionally opening the bridge has, I think, been greatly exaggerated. I am not an engineer, and am therefore not prepared to give an authoritative opinion, but looking at the matter from a common-sense point of view, I believe the swing might be opened occasionally during the night for some years to come. A vessel would not require to go up every day, or perhaps every week, and, if I remember rightly, it was stated by the judges in their judgment on the recent case—or, at all events, during the arguments—that the right to use any highway, whether to go across or along it, must be exercised reasonably. It seems to me that a reasonable exercise of the right to go up that river would be that a man must accommodate himself to the requirements of the public in seeking to have the swing of the bridge opened. I do not see why by-laws could not be passed, or why a Bill might not be passed to enable the corporation to make by-laws providing that at some time during the night, say from 6 o'clock in the evening till 6 o'clock in the morning, the bridge should be opened in the event of anyone requiring to take a vessel through. We must have a high

tide under the bridge every night between those hours, and a notice might be put up, say every other day, stating when the tide would be favourable for the passage of a vessel through the swing. The argument that the pipes could not be taken across the bottom of the river, and that if they could not be taken across the bridge they could not be taken across at all, is absurd. Pipes have been taken across Sydney harbour, and if that can be done—and it has been done—there can be no difficulty in dealing with that phase of the question here.

Mr. CHUBB : How about the Gas Company ?

Mr. FOXTON : As to that, it is quite possible that the South Brisbane Gas Company may want to come over to North Brisbane to compete with the other. It appears to me, taking it all round, that the arguments are entirely in favour of maintaining the *status quo*; that is to say, at all events, of not interfering with the present state of affairs, but to allow the public, or shipowners, to go up the river when they require to do so, and to exercise that right reasonably. With reference to the proposal for a temporary closure on the ground that the swing is not necessary to be used now, I would point out that if it is unnecessary then the less inconvenience there will be to the public at the present time. The public will not be interfered with until pressure comes for more wharfage, and then, of course, the interests of those above the bridge will be paramount to those who want to cross it. I shall certainly vote against the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. JORDAN said : Mr. Speaker,—I feel some reluctance in rising to speak on this question, and I shall not say more than a few words, because I consider the matter has been thoroughly debated. As one of the representatives of South Brisbane I feel bound to say something, but I do so with diffidence because I am interested in some property above the bridge—wharfage—which is very valuable. I promised my constituents, sir, that I should vote for the Bill, but the arguments I have heard to-night have disposed me to think that the bridge ought not to be closed, in the interests of the colony at large. I was disposed to think that this was a purely local matter, but I have altered my opinion whilst I have listened to the debate. I must not forget, moreover, that a number of my constituents live above the bridge—that they have vested interests in the matter—and I am not quite sure that we may not be doing injustice to persons holding property above the bridge by passing the Bill. The more I have listened to the debate the more I am satisfied that some injustice must necessarily be inflicted upon persons above the bridge if it is closed. An argument was made use of by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, Mr. Beattie, who is in favour of the Bill, that the wharfage accommodation at South Brisbane is very limited, but that there was plenty at Bulimba. But, I ask, how would that suit my constituents in Stanley street?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER : The sawmill ?

Mr. JORDAN : That does not affect me in the slightest. I am going to vote against my own interests—I am going to vote for the Bill, because I promised to do so. But I do think, sir, that my constituents take a very narrow view of the question. I am only sorry that they did not hear the arguments on the other side so ably set forth by the hon. the leader of the Opposition and other hon. members who have spoken against the Bill, before coming to the conclusion that it would suit their interests to close the bridge. I think they have taken rather a mistaken view of the question, and that they do not understand their own

interests. Nevertheless, I have looked at it from this light : about three-fourths of my constituents are in favour of the Bill ; and regarding it as a purely local matter, as I did before I heard the debate, I promised that I would give the Bill my support, and I am going to do so. I only regret that my constituents do not take a broader view of the whole question. I do not attach much importance to the views expressed by the hon. leader of the Opposition in connection with carrying on a coal trade with sea-going vessels, because I do think that that will be rendered unnecessary if the South Brisbane branch of the Southern and Western Railway be made into a double line, which I certainly think the Government should do when they bring in a Bill to close the bridge, thereby preventing the possibility of the coal trade being developed by sea-going vessels going above it. At all events, we have the fact that our coal trade has greatly developed during the last few years, and has become one of the most important industries in the colony ; and if the Government have determined to pass this Bill, I hope they will see their way immediately to double that branch line, because if that is not done we may be quite sure that the coal trade will be greatly limited in its development. We heard a few days ago about a vessel that wanted 1,700 tons of coal being only able to get 600 tons ; and I shall take this opportunity of impressing upon the Government, or suggesting to them, the importance of at once extending the wharfage accommodation at South Brisbane, according to a promise given fifteen months ago. The money was voted for the work last session, and I shall take this opportunity of repeating that my constituents are greatly astonished and disappointed that no means whatever have been taken up to the present time for the extension of that wharf ; and I shall have the pleasure, I hope, of introducing a deputation to the Minister for Works upon that subject in a very few days. I may point out that a few years ago it was not supposed that the coal about Ipswich and West Moreton was so valuable as it has been found to be, and now that has proved to be of very superior quality—I suppose the lower they go down the better the quality becomes—and we can compete, I believe, successfully with Newcastle, the question arises as to the difference between taking in coal by sea-going vessels that go up the river or paying carriage by railway. I am not quite sure, but I am prepared to think that the railway can compete successfully with sea-going vessels, and that if we get that branch line doubled, and the wharfage accommodation extended at both ends—which we can do without any great difficulty—we need not attach much importance to the arguments of the hon. the leader of the Opposition about sea-going vessels. But I must remember this in the interests of my constituents : We have wharfage accommodation above the bridge—all the way up that fine reach ; and if, as the hon. the junior member for Fortitude Valley said, we cannot utilise the northern side because it has been held that we cannot erect buildings there, it is still more important to my constituents that they should be able to utilise the southern side. I cannot help attaching great importance to that ; and I think and hope that after the debate my constituents will arrive at the conclusion that it would have been better for them if the bridge had been left open. At all events, having given the promise I did, I shall vote for the Bill.

Mr. NORTON said : Mr. Speaker,—I am really sorry that the hon. gentleman who has just sat down has made the speech he did. I have great regard for the hon. gentleman, and I do not like to see him acting with such utter

inconsistency as he is doing just now. He told us that he was perfectly convinced that it was an undesirable and improper thing to close the bridge, and yet because he had made a promise to his constituents he is going to vote for the Bill. I only hope that after the speech he made to-night the hon. member will, though he has decided to vote for the second reading if it should get beyond that stage, act in accordance with his own conscience, and vote against the third reading.

Mr. JORDAN : I promised to vote for the Bill.

Mr. NORTON : I can only say it is a most unfortunate thing that an hon. member who has not thoroughly gone into a subject to be discussed by this House should have made a promise as to the action he will take before he has had an opportunity of fairly deciding on the merits of the question. Of course that is a matter for hon. members to judge for themselves; but I say honestly and sincerely that I regret having heard the speech the hon. member made just now. When I first heard of the difficulty with regard to the bridge, I thought it unfortunate that anyone should have the opportunity of challenging the corporation and insisting on the bridge being thrown open. The tendency of the arguments in favour of closing the bridge is to show that the river goes too far into the country; but it has been admitted in all other countries that it is of great advantage for a river to be very long in order to enable trade to be carried by water as far as possible. But the Bill not only proposes to close the bridge, it also takes away existing rights. It admits that the owners of property above the bridge and the traders who would take their vessels there have certain rights; yet it proposes not only to take away those rights, but absolutely to prevent their claiming in a court of law damages for any injuries they may have sustained, or which they may sustain in the future. It is an immoral Bill, because it is founded on a principle which is immoral. A great deal of the argument used in the course of the debate has been in regard to the present state of the traffic across the bridge; but that is likely to lead to a wrong conclusion. When Brisbane was laid out it was never supposed that it would be as large as at present, and it is a matter of general complaint that the streets were made a great deal too narrow. When the town was laid out it was proposed to make the streets a chain and a-half wide, but the then Governor of New South Wales objected to that width; he could not perceive that Brisbane at any time would become anything more than a pottering little place—anything better than a penal settlement; and he insisted on the streets being laid out as they are. That is a strong argument against trusting to the present position of affairs as an indication of the progress which will take place at any future time. Retaining the power to open the bridge whenever necessary does not necessitate any expenditure, but maintains rights which the people on the river now have, the acquisition of which, there is no doubt, necessitated the payment of a higher price for their land than they would have paid under other circumstances. No one who has spoken in favour of closing the bridge, if he had private property to which a right-of-way led which was not used, but which it was proposed to close, would agree to its being closed without compensation. And that is exactly the case of the property owners above the bridge now. If their right-of-way is taken away from them they are entitled to some compensation; yet the Bill provides that it shall be taken away without any compensation whatever. I do not look so much to

the coal traffic alone in connection with this question, for I do not see why other traffic should not spring up. I do not see why factories should not be established along the river banks. It has been argued that the present railway is not sufficient for the coal trade; but it would not be sufficient if the line were doubled. At present the coal traffic is carried on at a loss, and if that traffic necessitates the duplication of the line, I say that duplication will be a loss to the country. I shall now refer to the argument that since the railway between Brisbane and Ipswich has been constructed it has run the traffic off the river. I admit that it has done so, but who has to pay for that traffic being run off? The country is paying. It was not done by fair competition, but by a reduction in the rates of carriage, which gave the people who used the line greater advantages than those who used the river. It was by that means alone that the river traffic was done away with, and at the present time we are not only working in that way by making a greater reduction on some things carried between Brisbane and Ipswich, but arrangements have been made between the Railway Department and gentlemen connected with the shipping trade, by which they are induced to send produce which comes to them—I am speaking of the large merchants in Ipswich—down by the railway rather than start boats to carry it by the river. That was the case a short time ago and I believe it is the case now, and that is a direct loss to the country for which the whole of the taxpayers of the colony are paying. It is undesirable that by an Act of Parliament anything should be done which goes to excuse the continuance of anything which has the effect of imposing an increased tax on the whole of the ratepayers of the colony. I object to the Bill because, though the result may be a present convenience to Brisbane and the suburbs, it will act detrimentally to them and prejudicially to the whole of the people of the colony in the future. It is not necessary for me to say any more; but I do hope that the effect of the discussion will be that the majority will vote against the second reading.

Question put, and the House divided:—

AYES, 18.

Messrs. Griffith, Miles, Rutledge, Dickson, Dutton, Moreton, Fraser, Aland, Jordan, Buckland, McMaster, Wakefield, Mellor, Beattie, Macfarlane Bailey, Annear, and Sheridan.

NOES, 14.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Archer, Norton, Macrossan, Hamilton, Kellett, Lissner, Govett, Ferguson, Foxton, Palmer, Salkeld, Foote, and Chubb.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

SUPPLY.

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

The PREMIER moved that the sum of £2,010 be granted for salaries and contingencies for His Excellency the Governor. There was an increase of £20 in that item to one of the mounted orderlies. The orderlies were police constables detailed for that duty, and if they remained in the Police Force they were entitled for five years' service to an additional £10 a year and promotion to the rank of senior-constable, for which another £10 was granted. The senior orderly was entitled to the increase according to police regulations.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that the sum of £1,039 be granted for the Executive Council. The vote was the same as last year.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that £3,400 be granted for salaries and contingencies, Legislative Council. There was an increase of £40—£25 to the principal messenger and £15 to the assistant. The salaries of the Assembly messengers were increased last year, the salaries previously having been alike. A pledge was given last year that the salaries of the Council messengers would be increased, and in accordance with that pledge the amounts were placed on the Estimates.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that there be granted £3,585 for salaries and contingencies for the Legislative Assembly.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that the sum of £7,000 be voted for the payment of the expenses of members, and said it was explained in the Estimates that those expenses would be payable at certain rates and under certain conditions, which were exactly the same as those contained in the Bill passed by the House at an early period of the session, but which had not been returned to them by the Legislative Council. He thought the Assembly had quite made up their mind to authorise the expenditure of that money, and the course now adopted of putting the amount on the Estimates was not starting a new precedent. It had been the practice in New Zealand to vote the expenses of members in that way for a great number of years; he could not say when it began, but he had traced the practice as far back as 1869. He thought that in every way it was proper and desirable that the money should be placed on the Estimates.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said they heard now for the first time that it was understood at an earlier period of the session that it was the intention of the Government when the Members Expenses Bill was adopted to place the money on the Estimates. He knew that if that were the case it was certainly not from any statement made by hon. gentlemen on the Ministerial benches. Although hon. members tried to force such a promise from the Government Ministers declined to give it. He did not believe that that was a proper or desirable way to carry payment of members. It was perfectly useless to contend that it was payment of the expenses of members; it was payment of members—payment of two guineas a day for each day on which a member gave his attendance in Parliament. That was not payment of expenses, but payment for services rendered. He was not surprised at the hon. gentleman putting the money on the Estimates. He believed at the first that the Premier would very likely adopt that course—although he never led the House to understand that he would—and that he would do it, not because they had a precedent in New Zealand, but because it would satisfy some of his followers inside the House and others outside the House. Now, the proper way to attain an object such as that desired by the Government—namely, payment of members—was by passing a Bill through the House. That was acknowledged by the hon. gentleman as the proper course to adopt, by introducing the Bill which was lost in another place. The Premier had said nothing whatever about the difficulty which that Bill would have got over. Hon. members knew perfectly well that by the Constitution Act no member, except a member of the Government, was allowed to sit in Parliament and receive emoluments from the Crown. That was provided for in the Members Expenses Bill by a clause which virtually repealed the provision in

the Constitution Act. The clause he (Sir T. McIlwraith) referred to in the Members Expenses Bill stated that—

“Nothing in this Act shall be construed to make the office of member of the Legislative Assembly an office of profit, or otherwise to affect the capacity of any member to sit and vote in Parliament.”

The very fact of such a clause being inserted in the Members Expenses Bill showed that the Government considered that the seats of members would be invalidated by the acceptance of that payment, and to prevent that occurring they virtually repealed the clause in the Constitution Act so far as members of that Committee were concerned. Hon. members, he believed, stood in this position: that if they accepted the payment put on the Estimates for their services their seats would become vacant; at all events, if that was not such a payment as was contemplated by the Constitution Act they might drive wholesale through that statute in any other direction, and might accept payment from the Crown in any shape or form. There was another matter to which he would draw attention. It was the first time in his experience—and, he believed, in the experience of any other hon. member of that Committee—that such items as those had appeared in the Estimates with the conditions attached. The Government usually asked for a certain amount of money from the Legislature for carrying on the Government, and stated that baldly; but here they actually had embodied the provisions of a Bill—whole clauses of a Bill—in the column explaining the reason why that amount of money was asked for. That had never been done before. It had sometimes been explained in a foot-note what was the ultimate destination of some sums which could not be explained in the Estimates, but no Government had ever before gone to the length the Government had gone in the case under notice. In fact, it was running out the items in the same way as a grocer or other tradesman might under his bill, and it was a completely new departure and involved an amount of work on the part of the members of the Committee, but which they ought not to have to undertake. The matter plainly stated was this: that the Government had put in the Estimates a Bill rejected by the other Chamber. That was inviting a discussion with that Chamber, which he thought the Government ought not to do.

The PREMIER said the Estimates were recommendations from the Crown for the expenditure of certain money. If the Crown chose to explain how that money was to be expended that might very properly form part of the recommendations, and it was not inconsistent with precedent. The conditions in the present case happened to be more elaborate than in ordinary cases; but they had frequently voted money on the condition that a corresponding amount, or half the amount, was subscribed. In the present case the conditions happened to be a little more elaborate; that was all. As to its not being previously stated that the amount would be placed on the Estimates, it was not distinctly stated by him in the House, because it would have been indecent for him to have done so at the time; but although he did not say it in so many words, anybody who heard him could have no doubt what he meant. The other point made by the hon. member was that the Bill introduced at an earlier period of the session contained a provision that the acceptance of those expenses should not constitute the office of member of the Legislative Assembly an office of profit. He (the Premier) was sorry that clause was introduced into the Bill, and it was quite clear that it was unnecessary. The only part of

their law which could be suggested as having any application to the matter—and it really had none—was the 3rd section of an Act passed last year, called the Officials in Parliament Act, which referred to “any person holding an office or place of profit under the Crown,” not being one of the officers named in the Act. It could not be said that the office of a member of the Legislative Assembly was an office of profit under the Crown any more than the office of the Chairman of Committees or of the Speaker of the House. The Constitution Act only referred to persons who had contracts on account of the Public Service. In other colonies where the salaries of members were annually voted, there was no provision of that kind. He was sorry that such a clause had been inadvertently inserted in the Bill, because it might be used by persons who could not distinguish it as an untenable argument. It was inserted on the last occasion simply for the sake of leaving the Bill in exactly the same form as before. There could be no doubt that such a question would not arise.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the excuse of the clause being inadvertently inserted was a very shallow one, because it was in the Bill on two or three occasions when it was introduced. The hon. member professed that he considered it was an error, but he knew it was nothing of the kind. He was reading the Constitution Act perfectly correctly—that none of them had the right to accept money from the Crown for any work done in their position as legislators or otherwise while they had a seat in the House. He had heard the hon. member arguing that over and over again. As to the officers of the House—the Chairman and the Speaker—they were exceptions which were constantly recognised, and always had been; but the same did not apply to members. If it did, a great many members the hon. member had paid secretly would have been paid openly.

The PREMIER: Name them! Who are they? It would be news to me, and interesting information to members of the Committee and also to the country. I am afraid the hon. member cannot give the names.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Cannot give the names! It would not be of the slightest interest to the Committee.

The PREMIER: It would be of great interest.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: The names!

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: The hon. member would very likely be disappointed. The Minister for Works knew all about it; plenty of men on that side got money they would never have got unless they had been supporting the Government—to put it in the mildest way. To pass to another point, he wished a ruling from the Chairman. Clause 120 of the Standing Orders said that no member should be entitled to vote upon any question in which he had any pecuniary interest, and the vote of any member so interested should be disallowed. Now, the question before them was one in which they all had a pecuniary interest.

The PREMIER: That has been raised every time.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that was no reason why he should not raise it now. A good argument was none the worse for being enforced twice. He himself was directly interested—he acknowledged the fact—in that two guineas a day; and very much interested, because he had been in his place almost every day since the session opened. He would not say how he would vote, because that might influence the Chairman in his judgment; but the clause

said he must not vote on any question in which he had a pecuniary interest; and he asked the Chairman's ruling whether he was to be allowed to vote.

The PREMIER said he would point out for the information of the Chairman that on every, or nearly every, occasion when the question of members' expenses had been before Parliament the same point had been raised, and it had been invariably ruled by the Speaker that the Standing Order did not apply.

Mr. NORTON said that on other occasions the members had not proposed to pay themselves—the payment was not for a Parliament then in session, but for a Parliament at some future time. The proposal now referred to the members of the Committee personally. It applied to them, and no one else, therefore it was utterly impossible to disregard the Standing Order.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that if one single instance could be pointed out where the Chairman's ruling had been asked on that question or where it had been referred to the Speaker, he would not press the matter any further. That question had never been submitted—namely, the voting of money to themselves for the current year.

The PREMIER said he remembered that the question had been brought up before. It was raised when Mr. Walsh was Speaker, in 1874, by Sir Arthur Palmer, on the third reading of the Bill. The Speaker said he would strike out all the votes for the “Ayes,” and a motion that the Speaker's ruling be disagreed to was carried by 24 to 10. He was referring to *Hansard*, vol. xvi., page 246.

Mr. ARCHER: What was the ruling?

The PREMIER said the Speaker ruled that he would strike out all the “Ayes,” so that there would be no votes except the “Noes.”

Mr. ARCHER: Was the question the payment of members?

The PREMIER: Yes. I do not know whether the point was raised afterwards.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: You said it had been raised repeatedly.

The PREMIER: The Speaker was overruled on that occasion, and whether the point was raised in the following year I cannot say. The point was exactly the same as the present. The Standing Order did not apply to the case.

Mr. NORTON said it did apply directly. There was no possible escape from the rule, which applied to every member in the Committee. He would challenge the vote of every hon. gentleman except the Ministers if the question went to a division.

The CHAIRMAN: My ruling has been asked as to whether it is competent for members to vote upon a question, on the ground that they are personally interested. Standing Orders 120 and 121 say:—

“No member shall be entitled to vote upon any question in which he has a direct pecuniary interest, and the vote of any member so interested shall be disallowed.”

“The rule of this House relating to the vote upon any question in this House, of a member having an interest in the matter upon which the vote is given, shall apply likewise to any vote of a member so interested in a committee.”

On consulting “May,” page 385, I find as follows:—

“In the Commons it is a distinct rule that no member who has a direct pecuniary interest in a question shall be allowed to vote upon it; but in order to operate as a disqualification this interest must be immediate and personal, and not merely of a general or remote description.”

"On the 17th July, 1811, the rule was thus explained by Mr. Speaker Abbott:—'This interest must be a direct pecuniary interest, and separately belonging to the persons whose votes were questioned, and not in common with the rest of His Majesty's subjects, or on a matter of State policy.'"

According to "Cushing," page 713:—

"There seems to be very little doubt or difficulty in determining what interest disqualifies a member from voting or would give rise to the disallowing of votes if given. The case of members voting on questions concerning their own pay is an exception from which no principle can properly be derived. It has invariably been decided, of course, that this was not such an interest as would disqualify, either because it was a case of necessity or because all the members were equally concerned in interest."

Putting "Cushing" on one side, and referring to the ruling of Speaker Abbott, it seems that this is a matter of State policy, and my ruling is that it is competent for hon. gentlemen to vote upon it.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said he was sorry to disagree with the Chairman. "May" said that the interest must be immediate and personal. He held that the interest in the present case was immediate and personal. "May" also said the payment must not be common to the whole of Her Majesty's subjects. In the present case it was a direct pecuniary benefit to themselves. Those were the only quotations from "May," with the exception of a general remark that it must not be upon a subject of State policy. But even the Victoria Bridge Bill was acknowledged by all members to be a matter of State policy. He did not think that a member who was directly interested in that bridge would be justified in voting for it. He moved that the Chairman's ruling be referred to the Speaker.

The PREMIER said he might reasonably object to that. The points had been decided in the House by a large majority, and it was so held by all authorities. However, he would raise no objection.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said the matter had never been decided in the present House at all. It was a distinctly peculiar case, and had not been previously before the House. They were asked in the Estimates to vote money to themselves directly, and they knew exactly the amount that was due. He had always taken good care that the Clerk-Assistant put his name down whenever he was present in the Chamber. He knew exactly what his own personal interests in the matter were, and no doubt the Premier did also. In fact, they were going directly to vote money into their own pockets.

The PREMIER said the case of 1874, to which he referred, was identical. It was a question of the direct payment of money to the members of that Parliament. Objection was taken by Mr. Palmer, and the opinion of the Speaker was overruled on a division by 24 to 10. The hon. member for Mulgrave was one of the 24.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said the hon. member did not make a point there. There were greater sinners than he, who had repented. For many years he was one of the strongest supporters of payment of members, but for that he had sat on the stool of repentance too often for the hon. member to make a point against him on that subject. He was astonished and ashamed to see the Premier, after the experience he had had, bringing up his (Sir T. McIlwraith's) old arguments in favour of such a wretched measure as that, to vote money into their own pockets.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the precedent of 1874—

The PREMIER: You are another of the twenty-four.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the precedent of 1874 had nothing whatever to do with the present question. They were asked now to vote money into their own pockets, and immediately they did so, if it was sanctioned in another place, the Treasurer would send them each a cheque for the amount. In 1874 the House was asked to pass a Bill which would give payment of members on some particular date after that. The money was not in question at the time. It was a question of State policy, which the question now before them was certainly not. The Premier had taken it out of that category, and it was now simply a question of paying money into their own pockets.

Question put and passed.

On the House resuming,

Mr. FRASER said: Mr. Speaker,—On the question of the item for the expenses of members coming before the Committee, the question was raised by the hon. member for Mulgrave as to whether it was competent for hon. members to vote on the question seeing that they had a direct pecuniary personal interest in it. On referring to Standing Orders 120 and 121, I find it laid down as follows:—

"120. No member shall be entitled to vote upon any question in which he has a direct pecuniary interest, and the vote of any member so interested shall be disallowed."

"121. The rule of this House relating to the vote, upon any question in the House, of a member having an interest in the matter upon which the vote is given, shall apply likewise to any vote of a member so interested in a committee."

On those Standing Orders, of course, I should have had no difficulty in giving a decision; but on referring to "May," page 385, I find the following:—

"In the Commons, it is a distinct rule that no member who has a direct pecuniary interest in a question shall be allowed to vote upon it; but in order to operate as a disqualification, this interest must be immediate and personal, and not merely of a general or remote description."

"On the 17th July, 1811, the rule was thus explained by Mr. Speaker Abbott: 'This interest must be a direct pecuniary interest, and separately belonging to the persons whose votes were questioned, and not in common with the rest of His Majesty's subjects, or on a matter of State policy.'"

I considered that this was a matter connected with State policy, and I gave a ruling that it was competent for hon. members to vote upon it. To this ruling the hon. member for Mulgrave objected, and moved that I leave the chair and refer my ruling to your decision.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said: Before making up your mind, Mr. Speaker, I will refer briefly to what took place in 1874. In that year, whilst Mr. Macalister was Premier, a Bill was before the House providing for payment of members, such payment to take place from the 1st January of the following year; so that members were possibly paying themselves, but not actually paying themselves. This case, I submit, is quite different. We are not only paying ourselves, but we are paying ourselves from the commencement of the session, a considerable amount having already accrued due to us. No argument, therefore, can be drawn from the arguments used by Mr. Macalister in 1874 in favour of his contention. We had the same old ruling by Mr. Speaker Abbott then that we have had now, and which I have not the slightest doubt you are about to quote again. But I will read an extract or two from the debate that occurred in 1874. Mr. Macalister said:—

"There was this distinction: the pecuniary interest must, according to 'May,' be immediate and personal in order to operate as a disqualification. Now, the

Bill was not intended to come into operation until the 1st January, 1875, and he would like to know what difference there could be between the Bill coming into operation on that date, or on the 1st January, 1876."

Notice the distinction which Mr. Macalister, an acute lawyer, took. Another speaker on that occasion was Mr. John Scott, a great luminary on these questions; I am sorry he is not present here to-night. But there was a higher authority still, who took a part in that debate, who is here. I refer to Mr. Miles, the present Minister for Works, who said that—

"He, like the hon. member for Port Curtis (Sir Arthur Palmer) had always been in favour of payment of members, but he objected to members of the House sitting and voting sums of money to themselves."

The hon. gentleman was a pure patriot in those days. He went on to say:—

"In fact, to provide a remedy for such a proceeding, he himself moved an amendment that the Bill should not take effect until after the next general election, and that it should continue in force for only three years; so that all necessary precautions were taken in the absence of the hon. member for Port Curtis. He found, however, on looking over the division, that only five or six hon. members voted with him, and a large majority were in favour of the Bill as it now stood. But that had not altered his opinion; he still believed it was unconstitutional for members to sit in that House and vote money for themselves—to pass a Bill providing for the payment of the members of the present Parliament."

That was a proposal simply to pay themselves after the 1st January of the following year. The hon. member said:—

"He believed it was absolutely necessary that members should be paid, but he contended that it was unconstitutional for members to vote themselves sums of money."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have only changed places; that is all.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: For your guidance, Mr. Speaker, and in order to refresh your memory upon the point, I will read what the Speaker said at that time:—

"The SPEAKER: Now, I think, is the proper time to give my ruling upon the question put by the hon. member for Springsure, and, in doing so, I shall have to quote again the clause of the Standing Orders referred to by the hon. member. The 287th Standing Order provides:—'In all cases not herein provided for, resort shall be had to the rules, forms, usages, and practice of the Commons House of Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland, which shall be followed so far as the same may be applicable to this Assembly and not inconsistent with the foregoing rules.'

"Now, the 120th Standing Order is clear. It says:—
 "'No member shall be entitled to vote upon any question in which he has a direct pecuniary interest, and the vote of any member so interested shall be disallowed.'

"According to the final clause of the Bill, I am decidedly of opinion that every hon. member voting may have a direct pecuniary interest in it, and I therefore think that the third reading of the Bill cannot be put. I am borne out in my ruling by the recollection I have that in all Bills which have been introduced in other places—in other colonies—for payment of members, it was provided that the payment was not to take place during the current Parliament. I have, therefore, to state, having given my ruling, that the Bill cannot be read a third time; that if it is forced to a division I shall order, unless otherwise controlled, that the votes for the 'Ayes' be struck out from the votes given upon it."

As a matter of fact, he was controlled by a majority of 24 to 10 to accept the votes of the "Ayes," and the third reading of the Bill was put and carried; but the question was decided by the Speaker that it was against the Constitution Act and against the Standing Orders of the House that members should vote upon that question, because it was a question affecting the personal interest of the members. The Speaker in those days was a Speaker whose rulings have obtained some celebrity and a great authority upon many matters, and particularly

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great authority with members on the other side of the House. I believe he is to be our chief commissioner at the next Exhibition at home, and hon. members will do well to recollect that when dealing with the question.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I think it right and proper to add that the ruling the hon. gentleman has quoted was disagreed to by the House by a majority of 24 to 10.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—Before you give your ruling I wish to say a word or two. The Chairman, before he gave his ruling on the 120th and 121st Standing Orders, quoted certain decisions from "May" and certain decisions from "Cushing." I wish to point out in regard to "Cushing" that his decision given in the passage quoted only refers to the estimates of the different States in the United States in which payment of members is the law; therefore it does not apply in this case. There can be no application of "Cushing" whatever in this case. His decision applies to States where payment of members is the law, and in such cases members voting a sum of money on the Estimates for their own use are exonerated, because there it is the law of the land. Here it is not the law of the land, and Cushing's decision can have no application; but what I wish to point out particularly is that I do not think there is any necessity to resort either to "May" or "Cushing," or any other authority, to find out the meaning of our Standing Orders when they are so plain that we can understand them ourselves. The 120th Standing Order distinctly states that no members of the House can vote upon a question in which they are pecuniarily interested.

Mr. ARCHER said: Mr. Speaker,—If there could be any possible doubt that the vote upon this question is one in which we are all interested, it will be admitted—even the Premier will admit, I think—that if we were to die before this money was paid our heirs could claim the money. We are asked to vote for the payment to ourselves of a back sum; and if I were to die that sum would be a part of my estate.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—Before you decide, there is one point which I think has not been made the most of. Our own Standing Orders are perfectly clear upon the point that no member is entitled to vote where he is pecuniarily interested. It is useless, therefore, to refer to what is done in other countries, or in the House of Commons, because the 287th Standing Order distinctly states:—

"In all cases not herein provided for, resort shall be had to the rules, forms, usages, and practice of the Commons House of Parliament of Great Britain and Ireland, which shall be followed so far as the same may be applicable to this Assembly, and not inconsistent with the foregoing rules."

That Standing Order only applies to cases where we have not Standing Orders of our own; but our own Standing Orders upon this point are so distinct that there cannot possibly be any doubt as to what they mean.

The SPEAKER: Anticipating that I might be called upon to give a ruling upon the question that has arisen in committee, I have given the matter my anxious consideration ever since the sum appeared on the Estimates when brought down to this House by message from His Excellency the Governor. And in order to ascertain correctly how the matter stood, apart altogether from the practice of the House of Commons, I have thought it necessary to ascertain the practice of the adjoining colonies where payment of members is in force; because I quite admit that all the cases referred to by the Chairman, and referred to also by other hon. members, not only now but on previous occasions, when the

question has been raised in regard to the pecuniary interest of an hon. member in his vote, have not been on such a question as this. It has been on questions such as—to mention particular cases—the opinion has been given upon the votes of bank directors upon the Gold Coin Bill. In other cases it has arisen where co-partnerships were concerned, and also on Bills affecting societies—such as insurance societies—and other matters not at all applicable to such a question as that now before the House. I first took the colony of New Zealand, and there I found that upon the Estimates every year appears the item “Expenses of members, £16,500.”

Mr. NORTON: What do the Standing Orders say?

The SPEAKER: I am glad the hon. member has mentioned the Standing Orders. The Standing Order we have here—No. 120—is exactly the same as that in force in New Zealand; and the same Standing Order is in force in South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales.

Mr. NORTON: I spoke also of the 287th Standing Order.

The SPEAKER: I am referring now to the 120th Standing Order.

Mr. NORTON: What of the 287th Standing Order?

The SPEAKER: That is the Standing Order referring to the practice in the House of Commons?

Mr. NORTON: Yes.

The SPEAKER: That is the same in all the adjoining colonies. As I said, the sum of £16,500 is on the Estimates in New Zealand for the expenses of members of Parliament, and is voted annually by the House of Representatives. In Victoria, where payment of members also prevails, the sum is placed on the Estimates, and voted annually by the Victorian Parliament.

Mr. NORTON: They have an Act of Parliament.

The SPEAKER: I am quite aware of that. In Canada, where they have payment of members, not only of the Senate, but of the Dominion House of Commons, the sum also appears on the Estimates but under the designation of “Indemnification of members”; so that so far as the principle of payment of members is concerned it would apply to all the colonies which I have now mentioned—namely, that the sum appears on the Estimates-in-Chief brought down annually by message from the Crown, and is voted annually for members. Therefore they also have a direct pecuniary interest each in that vote, supposing the question could be raised in the respective Houses. I have ascertained that the question has not been so raised in any of the other colonies; and no authoritative decision having been given by the Speaker in either of the three colonies I have named, consequently I take it that this is the only Assembly where the question has been put, as it has been from the Committee, and in which the Speaker has been called upon to give an authoritative ruling. I wish hon. members to be acquainted with that. If there was any precedent that I could have ascertained from either of the three colonies I have named, where the Speaker had given a ruling on the question, I should have obtained it, and have been very glad to have submitted it for the information of hon. members. In looking at the question as a whole I have arrived at the opinion that it is a question of State policy and not one affecting the interests of individual members. It is a question which applies to the whole Legislative Assembly,

and not to individual members of it. On that ground—considering that it is a question entirely of State policy which the House may vote or may disallow—I am of opinion that the House has the power, and can vote the sum of money referred to. I may inform hon. members that I have not arrived at this conclusion hastily. I have given the matter very anxious consideration, and I have read over every authority likely to afford any information upon the subject. I have not read “Cushing” at all, because I should hesitate to accept the opinion of an authority where the differences are so wide as they are between this House and the two Houses in America. Their proceedings are so widely divergent from our own that I think it would be very unsafe to refer to “Cushing” to guide our deliberations in this House; and as long as I am in the chair—while I am quite prepared to hold in all possible respect the opinions given by “Cushing” so far as the Legislature of America is concerned—I still think that while we have such an Assembly as the House of Commons—which has been established for centuries past—to guide us in our deliberations, we cannot do better than take that as our guide rather than the more modern institutions of America. As I said before, I have not come to a decision hastily upon this matter, but have given it very considerable thought and deliberation, and I now give it as my opinion that it is a question of State policy upon which the House as a whole can vote.

The Speaker left the chair and the Committee resumed.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. the Speaker had left the chair rather hurriedly after giving his decision. Possibly he thought that some questions might be put to him. He (Hon. Mr. Macrossan) was going to ask him two questions, and he would now put them to the Chairman. The hon. the Speaker had quoted to the House the practice of several colonies—in fact, all the Australian colonies—and of the Parliament of the Dominion of Canada, and had told them that sums of money had been placed on the estimates in those places where payment of members existed under different titles. In Canada the word used was “indemnification”—a very nice expression indeed to soothe the consciences of hon. members. In New Zealand it had a different name, and so it had in Victoria. The question he wanted to ask was this—Was payment of members law by Act of Parliament in each of those colonies? If it was so, the case was entirely different to the one now under discussion. They were now making a law unto themselves without going through the formality of an Act of Parliament. He should like an answer to that question; perhaps the Chairman could answer it?

The CHAIRMAN: No.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: No! Then he was sorry for the hon. gentleman. He (Hon. Mr. Macrossan) could answer it for him.

The PREMIER: So can I.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: It is the law—

The PREMIER: It is not.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: It was the law in Canada, and the hon. gentleman could not say positively whether it was or was not the law in New Zealand, because he could not tell the Committee how the £16,000 first got on the Estimates there. He (the Premier) had told them a few minutes ago that he had traced it back as far as 1869, and could go no further. It used to be called an “honorarium” there—a nice euphonious term—£100 a year to each

member. He was not certain how the money got on the estimates in New Zealand—whether it was by resolution of the House or by Act of Parliament. However, there was no such thing as payment of members in New South Wales, nor, he believed, in South Australia; so that the only places to which the hon. the Speaker's remarks would apply were Victoria, Canada, and New Zealand. He held that it was going quite outside the matter to call it State policy. That was the other question that he was going to ask the Speaker—whether this vote could be considered any more State policy than the resolution arrived at by the House the other evening, granting £1,000 to the widow of the late Justice Pring, could be called State policy? One could no more be called State policy than the other, because to come within that term it must be part of a policy submitted to Parliament, and this had not been submitted to the Parliament of the country. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government knew very well that when the question of payment of members was submitted to the Parliament of the country it was disallowed by the other Chamber, on the principle, he believed, that members should not vote money to themselves. He believed that if the hon. gentleman had introduced a Bill authorising payment to members of future Parliaments it would have become law. The Bill was disallowed in the other Chamber, because the Assembly had gone on the wrong principle of authorising payments to themselves. The hon. gentleman knew very well that the other Chamber could not stultify itself by allowing that measure practically to pass by the amount being tacked on to the Estimates—a place where it should not go. Therefore it could not be a question of State policy in the same sense as that in which the Chairman and the Speaker had ruled. The hon. the Premier was evidently provoking a conflict—knowingly, with his eyes open—with the other Chamber, and in doing so he was not justified in his action, because he knew full well what the result would be. He must know that the whole business of the country would be disarranged, and that the payment of money must cease at the end of the month in which the conflict began. If the question of payment of members had been submitted as a distinct question to the people of the colony and decided upon, the hon. the Premier would not be so much to blame for the course he was now pursuing; but it had never been submitted to the people as a distinct issue. When it was submitted to any constituencies it was mixed up with many other questions that really decided the election. In some constituencies it was never submitted at all to his knowledge—certainly not at the last general election. Therefore he was not justified in taking the course he had taken that night, and the people of the colony would hold him responsible for disarranging the whole system of government, if that conflict should take place. The hon. gentleman also said something about members who would have their seats vacated if they accepted money in the nature of a contract; but it seemed to him that this was a contract which they themselves entered into with themselves to give themselves certain payments upon performing certain conditions. It was purely a contract as much as if they actually signed their names to a bond; and, besides violating the 120th Standing Order, they were also violating the Constitution. He knew the hon. gentleman having a majority at his back could force the question through the Committee, but that would not force it through the other Chamber; and if they were not able to force it through the other Chamber, the consequence would be that the Appropriation Bill would not

pass. There were very few instances in the colonies of an Appropriation Bill being refused. He knew of only one, and the consequence was very serious in that colony, and it would be very serious in Queensland also if such a state of things should occur. If hon. gentlemen were serious on the question, and unselfish in their motives, the better way would be to bring in a Bill—not such as was introduced at the beginning of the session, but a Bill authorising the payment of members of the next Parliament. That would receive very little opposition in that Chamber, and he was strongly inclined to believe—though he had no authority for saying so—that it would also have a good chance of passing through the other Chamber. That was the best thing they could do, unless hon. gentlemen were in such a hurry and under such necessity as to be compelled to attach importance to payment of members during the present Parliament. His objections to the motion were, that in paying themselves they were doing that which they were not authorised to do by the law, or by the voice of the people of the country at the general election.

The PREMIER said the hon. member asked whether in those colonies in which money was voted annually payment of members was authorised by law. Of course it was not. Where money was voted annually it could not be authorised by a permanent Act, and the question answered itself. In New Zealand there was no permanent Act; but the money was voted every year by resolution in Committee of Supply, as would be found by examining the Estimates of that colony. With reference to the rest of the speech of the hon. member, he sincerely trusted that he was speaking on his own authority, and not as the mouthpiece of others. He had never heard such a threat held out before. The hon. gentleman told the Committee that if they, in the exercise of their undoubted rights, thought fit to vote a certain sum of money, no Appropriation Act would be passed, and the whole of the Public Service would be thrown into confusion. He thought a statement of that kind was not calculated to prevent that Committee from exercising its undoubted right to vote any sums of money it thought proper, and he trusted, as he said before, the hon. gentleman was speaking entirely for himself and not as the mouthpiece of anyone else. He did not wish to provoke a quarrel; he went on the principle—

“Beware

Of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in,
Bear it that the opposed may beware of thee.”

They would not lightly enter on a quarrel, and there had been no occasion to quarrel up to the present time, and he trusted that the wisdom and reason of all persons in the community would prevent any such quarrel being entered into.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman had been going a good way to provoke a quarrel, and he had done so with regard to the Local Government Bill, which had ended rather ingloriously for him.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No!

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Did the word “ingloriously” grate harshly on the ears of hon. members opposite? He should not change it. The matter ended ingloriously, in his estimation. The hon. member should have tried to enforce the privileges of the Assembly after going so far; but he was compelled through want of power to throw the Bill aside. As far as State policy was concerned, they had no more right to vote £7,000 for themselves than they had to vote £700,000 for themselves—it was not the amount but the principle. The Committee had just

as much right at the beck of the hon. gentleman to vote £7,000,000 as £7,000, and no more right. They knew of one instance of a Parliament doing a most flagitious act—an act which was paid for, not by thousands or tens of thousands, but by millions; and there was nothing to prevent the hon. gentleman and his majority from doing the same. Nevertheless, a majority would not make a flagitious act a right one; and the gentlemen composing that Parliament had been held in execration ever since. He hoped the hon. gentleman would not provoke a quarrel; but he must say that he was taking the best way of doing so. He might tell the hon. gentleman that he (Hon. Mr. Macrossan) was the mouthpiece of neither man nor party; his opinion was based on his experience in that Chamber, and on his reading previous to obtaining a seat in that Chamber.

Mr. KELLETT said it had been stated by the hon. member for Townsville that the question was not brought before the country at the last general election. All he could say was that nine-tenths of the members on the Government side stated plainly in all their election speeches that it was part of the programme of the Liberal party—that it was a very important part, and a part by which they meant to abide. It had been well known for many years that the Conservative party were against the payment of expenses—that a paltry £100 or £200 was a matter of no consideration to them; and that was why the question was brought forward by the Liberal party, in order that people who had not so much money at their command in banks should not be prevented from sitting in Parliament on account of the expense. The people wanted to put in men with the interest of the country at heart, men who would advocate measures for the benefit of the general population. The other party had always been against that; and it was well known that from their position in Parliament they were benefited in many instances by thousands of pounds. They were in a position to advocate measures for their own interest; they were the lords of the soil for many years; they owned the whole of the territory of Queensland, and they wished to keep it to themselves. But now another party was springing up—the tillers of the soil, the working men of the country, and a valuable yeomanry class; and they had outnumbered those hon. members, who were consequently very sore. They had not the sway they previously had, nor had they the whole of Queensland to themselves as formerly. That was the last little grasp by which they were to retain their influence. The member for Townsville had thrown out a threat—a threat which was thrown out by the leader of the Opposition when the Payment of Members Bill was before the House. That had been done continuously; but it was the first time in which the threat had been maintained. The question was now whether the Upper Chamber was to rule the country? That was what it had come to. The member for Townsville went further, and said that if a certain Bill was brought in he would guarantee it would get a certain amount of support. Well, that was the most impudent statement he had ever heard. The smaller the opposite party got in numbers the greater was their impudence. He did not know whether members opposite were losing their heads because they had lost their tail, but he gave them credit for a little common sense. They had got it, he knew; but to speak like the hon. member for Townsville was nothing less than contemptible. The question had been pretty well thrashed out, and the decision given by the Speaker was a very fair one. He should, therefore, give his hearty support to the motion.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not think the hon. member was justified in twisting what a person spoke as his opinion into a threat or guarantee.

Mr. KELLETT: I took down the words.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not care what the hon. gentleman took down. The words were taken down right enough in the gallery, he was sure. The hon. gentleman talked about the payment of members being before the country, but he said that it was not a distinct issue, and that the question was mixed up with others. He never denied that hon. gentlemen in some cases said they were in favour of the principle. He stated that he was once, but he had changed his mind, just as some of those who were now in favour of it had changed theirs. The hon. gentlemen talked a great deal of claptrap about the Conservative party being so rich, and that they were able to spend large sums of money in securing seats, but he saw in front of him two or three members who were infinitely richer than any on the Opposition benches, and he knew there were just as many poor men on his side of the House as on the Government side. So that the hon. gentleman's argument was simply claptrap, and was delivered, as Shakespeare said, "to tickle the ears of the groundlings." That speech was not intended for members of the Committee; it was meant for the electors of Stanley. If it had been intended for members of the Committee to listen to, it would have been more reasonable and less passionate. What he said before he repeated, that a Bill authorising payment to a future Parliament should be introduced. That was the ground taken up by the present Minister for Works in 1874; and that was the ground that members could and should take up now. Let them pass a Bill authorising payment to their successors, and he stated simply as a matter of opinion that he believed such a Bill would be likely to be accepted by the other Chamber. There was no guarantee nor threat in that. If a Bill of that sort were brought in he would oppose it very slightly indeed, although he did not believe in the payment of members.

The PREMIER said he would like to say a word with reference to the statement made by the hon. member, that the conclusion that the House came to with respect to the Local Government Act Amendment Bill was an inglorious one. Any other conclusion that could have been given would have been a surrender of the privileges of the House. When the Legislative Council insisted upon amending the Bill in a way the Legislative Assembly could not allow, no other action could have been taken unless it was proposed to abandon their exclusive privileges. What were they to do? There were only two remedies—one was to lay the Bill aside, and the other was to have resort to some kind of physical force. The Legislative Council chose to resort to a form of physical force, and the only physical force with which the Assembly could retaliate was physical force in the sense in which it was usually spoken of. That, of course, was out of the question. It would not be desirable to have a revolution, and the only other possible course was to lay aside the Bill. To have asked for a conference and admitted that they were not sure about their privileges and were quite willing to discuss the question, would indeed be an inglorious and lamentable conclusion, and he himself would be the last to propose it.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said when he listened the other night to the long and elaborate speech of the hon. gentleman upon the Local Government Act Amendment Bill he understood that he meant to fight out the question, and when the motion was made to lay aside

the Bill he was more than astonished. When one man fought with another and gained everything he wanted, and the other man put his hands in his pockets and declined to fight any more, what was that but defeat? Well, that was what the hon. gentleman had done. The hon. gentleman had just given the hon. member for Townsville a rather severe scolding, but the scolding, in fact, was not meant for the member for Townsville, but was a threat held out to the other House that if they did not behave themselves he, the Premier, would take some very strong measures. Now, if the Government had tried their best to provoke a quarrel they could not have provoked one in a more ingenious way. They had debated the subject until they got the Speaker into the chair, who had decided they were entitled to vote money into their own pockets, because the question was one of State policy. The fact of his having decided that the question was a matter of State policy removed the item on the Estimates from any connection with the money Bill, and made it purely a matter of State policy. If there was one thing on which the Constitution Act was more clear than another it was that the Upper House had co-ordinate rights with the Assembly in matters relative to State policy. In fact, the Speaker had furnished the other Chamber with the best weapon they could possible use if they meant to fight that matter. But to scold the member for Townsville because he wished to speak to the other Chamber was simply ridiculous. The hon. gentleman wanted to say something to the other House, and found that the only way he could do it was by an irrational tirade against the member for Townsville, who made a rational speech. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) did not find that any new arguments had been introduced in the discussion, except those introduced by the peculiar way in which the question was now before the Committee. He himself, in order to shorten the debate, would like to see the discussion confined to the position in which they found themselves, which was that they were voting themselves a certain amount of money that was accruing daily—a large amount of which had already accrued—and putting that into a Bill and defying the other Chamber to throw it out. The only reason given to justify that action was that it was a matter of State policy. If that was the case the other Chamber might say that as a matter of State policy they did not believe in it.

Mr. NORTON said he would point out that not only was it not a matter of State policy, but that the Estimates were absolutely held back by the Government until the decision of the other Chamber on the question was known, and then, when the Bill was thrown out the sum of £7,000 was put on the Estimates. According to the showing of the Premier, if the Bill had been passed authorising the payment of members it would not have been necessary to put the money on the Estimates, as it would have already been provided for by Act of Parliament. It was, therefore, not a matter of State policy, but a matter of party policy. In what sense could it be a matter of State policy? Although the Bill was carried by a majority of that Chamber it was a strictly party majority. Surely a matter of State policy must have the consent of the other branch of the Legislature as well as of the Assembly. Until that was obtained it was a party policy. He was of opinion, with all due deference to the Speaker, that it was absolutely contrary to the Standing Orders of that Chamber to vote that money to themselves. The Standing Orders distinctly stated that no member should be allowed to vote in any case in which he had a direct pecuniary interest, and there was no exception in regard to matters of

State policy or anything else. Therefore, with all due deference to the Speaker, he dissented from the ruling which had been given. What, after all, was that question? It was only a short time ago that a proposal was made to sanction the expenditure of a certain sum for the direct benefit of the mining community of the colony, and the Government said they had not sufficient money for the purpose. There was an item of £2,000 on those Estimates for schools of mines, and eventually the Government decided that that paltry sum might be voted for the purpose brought before the Committee. They refused anything like a decent recognition of the advantages which miners had conferred upon the colony. The paltry sum of £2,000 was to be devoted to that object and yet hon. members were voting themselves £7,000. Was that not a paltry position for the Committee to take up? He said it was a paltry and disgraceful position for the Committee to take up. Was it not paltry for them to deal with a matter of great importance to the whole of the colony, and of direct importance to the mining community, in the way they had done, and then vote themselves that large sum of money? With regard to the question of payment of members having been submitted to the people at the general election, he was quite aware that it had been submitted in a few constituencies, but there were some electorates in which it had never been mentioned. In his constituency the matter was never once referred to by him, and he was not asked a single question on the subject. There might be some electors there who believed in it; but the interest they took in it was so small that they did not think it worth while to mention the matter, and he believed other constituencies were in the same condition. He endorsed the statement of the hon. member for Townsville; the matter was not introduced as a matter of public policy, but because they were desirous of seeing it carried out; and he did not think the Government were in a position to say whether the constituencies approved of the measure, as the general election was decided on other and far more important questions which were then before the country.

Mr. KELLETT said he wished to say a word or two in reference to the statement made by the hon. member for Townsville, that the member for Stanley used a lot of claptrap, which was intended for the mob of Stanley. He (Mr. Kellett) did not know whether the electors in Townsville were a mob, but there was no such thing as a mob in Stanley. The electors did not require any claptrap; they were perfectly satisfied with him. The Opposition exerted all their strength of men and money to upset the present member for Stanley, but they could not do it. They had better leave him alone, as the electors were perfectly satisfied with him, and it was not necessary for him to use any claptrap. But there was a matter which he thought might be termed claptrap. When a Bill was brought before that Committee, in which it was proposed that £200 should be paid to members, an hon. member opposite moved an amendment to increase the amount to £300. Nearly all the members of the Opposition voted for the £300. The sum of £200 was too paltry an amount, and so they all voted for the £300.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS of the Opposition: No.

Mr. KELLETT: Well, he would say a majority, a large majority—nine-tenths of the party, at any rate—voted for the £300. There was no such claptrap as that on the Government side of the Committee.

Mr. ARCHER said they knew quite well there was an amendment moved such as the hon

member for Stanley spoke of, but they knew perfectly well it was not moved for the reason he gave. He believed now, after having the rulings of the Chairman and of the Speaker, that the Standing Orders were not made to be carried out; and whenever, in future, he read any law of the country or rule for guidance in debate, he should consider himself perfectly justified in understanding it perfectly contrary to both the spirit and letter of what it said. He could conceive nothing more absurd than the ruling that plain words, put as plainly as they could be put, carried an exactly opposite meaning to that which they would bear to anyone who read them. He believed they had sufficient good feeling among them to prevent the House becoming a bear-garden if they burnt the Standing Orders, and they might just as well burn them.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he believed Standing Orders were made to be broken. He remembered a few years ago when a member of the House broke the Standing Orders, and when brought to book he and the hon. gentleman who now led the Government set the House and the Speaker at defiance—and snapped their fingers at the Standing Orders.

The PREMIER said he was glad to see the hon. member start another of those delusions—raking up things that had nothing whatever to do with one another. The powers of Australian Legislatures were limited by law; the Legislature in England had assumed to itself for ages the power to declare anybody guilty of contempt and imprison him; but in the colonies there was no such power. What on earth had that to do with the question of the respective rights and powers of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly? If anyone could not see the distinction between these cases, it was doubtful if he was fit to make laws.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had simply said that the Standing Orders were made to be broken, and that the hon. gentleman and a late member of the House snapped their fingers at the Standing Orders; he had not mentioned the Legislative Council. The hon. gentleman must have the Council on the brain.

Mr. NORTON said he thought some explanation of the conditions was needed. In the event of a member coming from a distance, being obliged to remain in Brisbane, he was entitled to two guineas a day for every day he was away from his own dwelling; and if he did not attend at the House during any one of those days, he was not to be paid for some certain time. What that time was he did not know.

The PREMIER: It is explained there.

Mr. NORTON: It was explained in such a peculiar way that he could not make it out. A good many people had asked him how the sum total was to be made up in a case of that kind. If a member absented himself for the whole of one week, was he entitled to be paid for the days of that week when the House was not sitting?

The PREMIER said it was explained in the 5th condition—

"For every day on which the Assembly is appointed to sit and on which a member does not give his attendance a deduction to be made from the sum which would otherwise be payable to him in respect of the daily allowance above specified of a sum bearing the same proportion to the whole of such sum as the number of days on which he fails to give his attendance bears to the whole number of days on which the Assembly is appointed to sit."

If the House sat four days in the week, and a member was absent from his home seven days a week, he would be entitled to 14 guineas if he attended the whole four days. If he attended

only two days out of four, he only got 7 guineas; if he attended only one day, he got one-fourth of 14 guineas; if he attended three days, three-fourths of 14 guineas. It was the principle adopted when the Bill was passed.

Mr. PALMER said he gathered from the argument of the Premier that the calculations must be made at the end of the session.

The PREMIER: The 7th condition was that they were to be made every month.

Mr. PALMER: The argument the hon. gentleman used was that the number of days the House sat was to be taken.

The PREMIER: The amount was to be ascertained every month by the Clerk. They might either take the seven days in the week, or the number of days in the month.

Question put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 23.

Messrs. Rutledge, Miles, Griffith, Dickson, Dutton, Moreton, Sheridan, Kellett, Isambert, Groom, Jordan, Annear, Mellor, McMaster, Foxton, Salkeld, Beattie, Aland, Macfarlane, Lissner, Campbell, Bailey, and Buckland.

NOES, 11.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Archer, Norton, Chubb, Macrossan, Hamilton, Donaldson, Govett, Ferguson, Palmer, and Stevens.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The PREMIER moved that £8,384 be voted for Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly. The vote was the same as last year; the only alteration suggested being an increase of salary to the caterer; but the proposition, however, was not made until after the Estimates were framed. He did not know the reason for the increase, except perhaps there was not so much profit on drink now.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was rather surprised at the hon. gentleman saying what he did about the caterer. He was rather inclined to ask the hon. gentleman if he were not willing, now that hon. gentlemen paid themselves, to knock off the vote for the caterer, and pay for their own food? The Premier had informed them that the caterer wanted more money. He believed that there were a great many teetotallers in the Committee, and teetotallers, as a rule, ate more and drank a good deal less than other people. He did not know whether that was the reason or not.

The PREMIER: That reason was not given formally.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said the amount down for gas was £300. Did not the Government expect to have a saving by the electric light; where was the amount put down for the electric light?

The PREMIER said the electric light was uncertain, and he thought that they had seen the last of it for that session. One of the engines had broken down altogether, and under the circumstances it was thought better not to use it further. The cost according to the contract was £12 per week, and during the time the House was sitting that would be paid. The cost up to the present only came to about £100 altogether, and was under the heading "Electric light."

Mr. NORTON asked if the Premier could give the Committee any idea as to when the building for the electric light would be completed? If he was not mistaken, the contract time expired last December.

The PREMIER said he could not understand the delay at all. The building ought to have been finished some months ago, but now he was afraid it would not be done this session. The engines had to be fixed with extreme rigidity, as

the slightest vibration would spoil the light. He did not know why it was, but until the engines were fixed in their permanent bed in the building at the back of the Government Printing Office there would be no electric light. It was to have been ready before the House met, and it was urged upon his hon. colleague to press on the work.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : What is the reason of the delay ?

The PREMIER said, as he understood it, the delay was in consequence of the building which stood upon the property at the time of the purchase being in the occupation of private persons,

whose leases did not expire until twelve months afterwards.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed ; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER, in moving the adjournment of the House, said the business-paper for to-morrow would be arranged in the same order as to-day—namely, Committee on the Victoria Bridge Closure Bill, and afterwards Supply.

The House adjourned at thirty-one minutes past 10 o'clock.