

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 1885

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 3 November, 1885.

Correction.—Messages from the Governor.—Question.—*Hansard Reports*.—Federal Council (Adopting) Bill (Queensland)—consideration in committee of Legislative Council's amendments.—Railway Extension to Southport and Nerang.—Supply—resumption of committee.—Joint Committees.—Federal Council (Adopting) Bill (Queensland).—Pacific Island Labourers Act of 1880 Amendment Bill.—Licensing Bill.—Adjournment.

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

CORRECTION.

The PREMIER (Hon. S. W. Griffith) said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to correct some strange mistake that occur in the report in *Hansard* this morning, of a speech I made last evening in answer to the hon. member for Mulgrave. I thought I spoke particularly slowly at the time, and I take the opportunity, on this occasion, to correct the mistakes. I am reported to have said:—

"Did any hon. member believe that it had been the policy of the Government to destroy the sugar industry by encouraging immigration from the Continent on more favourable terms than before? It was nothing of the kind."

What I said, sir, was, "Did the hon. member really believe that it had been the policy of the Government to encourage immigration from the Continent on more favourable terms than immigration from Great Britain? Nothing of the kind." Then the report went on to say:—

"If the hon. member would look at the Immigration Act of last year he would see that it allowed immigrants to be indentured from all parts of the globe."

What I said was "that it allowed immigrants to be indentured on equal terms from all parts of Europe." Further on in the same speech there is this strange mistake:—

"The consequence was that the planters wrote an extraordinary letter as to the wages they intended to offer, and the food they would give, and so on. The Government brought that scheme before the House, exposed it, and denounced the planters."

What I said was, "Then the planters wrote an extraordinary pamphlet as to the wages they intended to offer, and the food they would give, and so on. That pamphlet was sent to the Government officially. The hon. member said that the Government brought that scheme before the House, exposed it, and denounced the planters. He (the Premier) thought hon. members knew how much accuracy there was in that statement. He had had some doubts whether that pamphlet was written *bonâ fide*, but on the whole he believed that they must have employed a man to write it, and that he did not act *bonâ fide*. When the pamphlet was brought before the House, the monstrous nature of the terms was pointed out, and he (the Premier) said at once that he would be no party to any immigrants being introduced on such terms. Yet the leader of the Opposition said that it was the planters who had all along been deceived by the Government." Another singular mistake occurs in an answer I gave to the hon. member for Mackay. I am reported to have said:—

"It was published as a supplement to a Mackay newspaper, and was never sent to me at all."

Of course what I said was that it was published before it was sent to me at all.

MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received messages from His Excellency the Governor, intimating that he had assented on behalf of Her Majesty to "A Bill to amend the 1885—4 B

Friendly Societies Act of 1876," "A Bill to make provision for regulating the width of streets and lanes, and to prevent the subdivision of land in such a manner as to be injurious to the public health," and "A Bill to enable the trustees for the time being of the will of Ann Eliza Noble, deceased, to sell and dispose of certain trust property comprised therein."

QUESTION.

Mr. WHITE asked the Minister for Lands—

1. Is he aware that from thirty to forty intending selectors have called within the past week or two at the Toowoomba Land Office asking for lithograph plans of the land open for selection on Emu Creek Run on the 16th of this month, but have been unable to obtain them: the land agent stating he had only one plan at his disposal?

2. Will the Minister inquire into this matter, and have forwarded to the Toowoomba Land Office lithograph plans of the lands on Emu Creek Run open to selection?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) replied—

1. I am not aware that any intending selectors have inquired for lithographs of the land on Emu Creek to be open for selection on the 16th of this month.

2. Inquiry has been made into the matter and supply of plans forwarded to Toowoomba Lands Office yesterday morning.

HANSARD REPORTS.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to take advantage of the few remarks made by the Premier in correcting some mistakes made by *Hansard*, to bring a matter before the House which I think is worthy of attention. I have always held that it is a wrong principle for the chief of the *Hansard* staff to send round proofs of the speeches delivered by different hon. members and allow them to correct them. My reason is this: that we ought to put ourselves into the reporters' hands. If they do not do their work properly we should find our remedy by bringing up the matter in the House. My system has not been adopted, but another system has been in force by which hon. gentlemen are invited to correct their speeches. No member avails himself of this privilege so much as the hon. Premier. When I was in office his speeches used to be sent round as samples of the elaborate kinds of corrections required to be made in speeches, and which blocked the Printing Office. He has pursued the same course all through; and I can fairly say now that he himself finds that even that system of correction will not do, but that it requires that he shall stand up in the House and elaborately correct a number of mistakes that had been made on the previous night; and, to prove my contention, the more we correct our own speeches the more responsibility we take off the shoulders of the *Hansard* reporters. That is the position the hon. gentleman and this system have got the House into at the present time. I say the Premier corrects his speeches more than any man in the House. He takes the greatest liberties with those speeches, and the consequence is perfectly plain. I believe, at all events, that my argument may be right—that in his case *Hansard* may be perhaps less particular with his speeches, knowing that the work he gives to those speeches afterwards saves them from some responsibility; and they may take liberties with those speeches that they may not take with ours. It is doing an injustice to this House, that that system should be allowed to go on. The corrections—I did not hear the whole of them—that the hon. gentleman made, rather amused me. He was told before he made that speech that he would have to correct a great deal of it. In fact the speech was simply to correct a previous one. He had been misreported before, and that speech was made to put himself

right. The speech that he made was utterly wrong, and he has given us another speech to put that right again. Where is the system to end? Had not he better take the staff into his own hands and write out his own speeches? I thought it would come to this; I have been waiting with great curiosity to see what the end of this system would be. I can quite forgive the hon. gentleman if he is ambitious to improve his English, but he should confine himself to that. His corrections have been so elaborate and so persistent that they have made us very cautious in accepting either the proof or the permanent *Hansard*. We are justified in bringing the matter before the House when we have such a glaring case as that. The hon. gentleman is not satisfied with having dummied *Hansard* to a certain extent, but actually, in addition to that, he comes and gives a speech one day in correction of a speech that had been made in correction of a previous speech. The system is never to end. It shows us how elaborately the hon. gentleman has been misrepresented throughout the country, as well as by the *Hansard* reporters.

The PREMIER: Will the hon. gentleman conclude with the usual motion?

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: I have not been asked to do so. If the hon. gentleman wishes to move the adjournment of the House I have not the slightest objection.

The PREMIER: It is not usual for a member to make an attack upon another without concluding with that motion.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: If the hon. member thinks I am sheltering myself from an attack he is very much mistaken. I have the same right to make a speech that the hon. Premier has, and he sat down without making any motion when he made those elaborate corrections. However, I will move the adjournment of the House.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I am not going to take the trouble or to condescend to answer the insinuations of the hon. gentleman that I alter any speech sent to me, except verbally. If the hon. gentleman thinks, as he says, and as he has said on other occasions, that I have altered my speeches, I will ask him in future always to look at the morning report before the speeches are sent for correction. I will accept anything that is found there, unless I have myself, on account of the error being very glaring, publicly corrected it. So much for the substance of his remarks. The hon. gentleman has made this accusation a great many times. It has been answered every time, and when he has been challenged to give an instance, and not a general assertion, he has always shrunk from the test—never ventured to do it, and he never will. It is impossible to prove the assertions he made. The absence of foundation for them is upon the records of the House—by comparing the daily *Hansard* with the corrected weekly edition. That is my answer, and I challenge anybody who ventures to assert that I ever condescended to alter a speech I have made, except to correct an obvious mistake, or such mistakes as may be ordinarily corrected when speeches are sent to speakers to make this comparison. If anybody chooses to make that assertion I will not condescend to answer it.

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—I think it is singularly unfortunate that the Premier should have seen the necessity of altering his speech of yesterday evening to the great extent he has done.

The PREMIER: I have not done so.

Mr. BLACK: I am not going to bandy words with the Premier. He interrupted me over and over again yesterday. He stated that I was

misquoting him and stating things that he did not say. I told him last night that he would probably find that he was misreported to-day. The hon. gentleman will find that amongst the remarks I made I advised him to be cool and collected, and if possible to see the reporters in the gallery before they printed what he said. I knew from what the hon. gentleman was saying that he was so carried away by his passionate temper that he really was saying things that I believe he did not intend to say. I think it is monstrous for the hon. gentleman to try and get away from the very frequent charge of being misreported. I am quite prepared to allow a slip that I may make at any time to go into *Hansard* and make the best of it; but the hon. gentleman does not do that.

The PREMIER: Yes; he does.

Mr. BLACK: On the present occasion he is trying to put into *Hansard* remarks he did not utter yesterday evening.

The PREMIER: That is a deliberate insult.

Mr. BROOKES said: Mr. Speaker,—Really this is getting beyond bounds. The hon. gentleman should really have more courtesy. I could imagine that I was among a lot of fishmongers in a low part of Billingsgate. The hon. leader of the Opposition is supposed to be a gentleman possessing some literary taste, and yet the method by which he proposes that hon. gentlemen should deal with their speeches is monstrous. The system which he would propose to substitute for the present one has no foundation in ordinary common sense. He proposes that we should trust ourselves entirely to the reporters. The hon. member for Mackay says it is his plan, if he makes a slip, to let it go into *Hansard* and make the best of it. That is not the talk of a statesman, and I hold myself at liberty to consider the leader of the Opposition a quasi-statesman, and the Premier a real statesman. What does it amount to? I have heard it before many times, and really it is about time that a gentleman of the standing of the leader of the Opposition ought clearly to understand, if he will permit me to teach him, that his plan is no plan, and will make "confusion worse confounded." I have heard several hon. members, in times past, with an air of—I do not want to use a stronger term than necessary—superciliousness, state that they did not care what went into *Hansard*. Now, let me tell them that it has been the invariable practice of leading statesmen in England to correct their spoken speeches after they have been delivered in the House. I am sure that will be news for some of our rough-and-ready colonial speakers. There was a speech made yesterday by the hon. member for Mackay, and if he will permit me to say it with all deference—I am speaking for his welfare—it would be extremely well for him if he did not only correct that speech but erased half of it. Really it was more like the speech of a person who got his living by driving some sort of vehicle. If he is a sample of the Mackay planters, that speech will not do them any credit. The sting of what was said by the leader of the Opposition lies in this—it is not the first time the imputation has been made, and it is a vile imputation for one gentleman to make against another—that the Premier in correcting the rough proof of his speech in the morning's *Hansard* alters the essential meaning of his speech. The Premier might just as well be charged with picking a pocket—one would be just as dishonourable as the other. The members of the Opposition, from the leader downwards, do really seem to be decaying. It is near the end of the session, and I believe their political fire is dying out—it is becoming only dead ashes,

giving forth a false glow with no heat. It is not worthy of English gentlemen to say such things one of another. The system the leader of the Opposition proposes to adopt would really not be practicable, because reporters are not infallible; they have their faults; and it is the most difficult thing in the world to be a good reporter. To be an efficient reporter one requires to have ears like a lynx; some members do not speak very clearly, and the reporters' gallery is in a very awkward position. They make mistakes, and I only wonder they do not make more mistakes; yet the leader of the Opposition would have us all quietly take *Hansard* with all sorts of errors, and allow them to pass. I think the object of *Hansard* is that we should have a correct account of what is really said.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: That is the object.

MR. BROOKES: How can the leader of the Opposition say that is the object, and yet recommend the adoption of a plan which would make it anything but a correct record? Why cannot we trust one another without throwing vile terms at one another? Why cannot we look through *Hansard* in the morning, make alterations where there are evidently reporters' mistakes and substitute a word here and there, leaving it to each other's honour not to turn a speech into another speech altogether for party purposes? I am sorry the leader of the Opposition has introduced this matter. I think he ought to know better, and I believe he does know better, only it just suits him to speak in this way. He seems to have what is classically called "an edge" on the Premier, and he takes every opportunity of vilifying and abusing the Premier. What did the hon. member for Mackay mean—he and the leader of the Opposition both run in harness in this vile crusade—what did he mean by saying that he anticipated yesterday that the Premier was sure to be misreported, and that his words came true? It must be allowed that neither the Premier nor the leader of the Opposition are private members; they are the two members to whom we look for a fair presentation of the two sides of a subject. I would allow to the leader of the Opposition a great deal of license in the alteration of his speech, as it comes in the rough proof from the reporters; and I might say that it is an especial duty falling upon the leader of the Opposition and the Premier to take particular care that the report of their speeches is exactly, so far as each of them know, what he said. A private man like myself need not bother; I would rather let it go, and even I sometimes find extraordinary mistakes, and have to correct them. The word "consolatory" I found in my speech one day; and it was particularly inappropriate, because I did not wish to say anything consolatory in that speech; the word I used was "conciliatory." The "consolatory" is not much in my line. That will show how easy it is for the reporters to make mistakes. I trust we shall have no more of this. It is not compatible with either the peace of the House or the dignity of the House.

Question—That this House do now adjourn—put and negatived.

FEDERAL COUNCIL (ADOPTING) BILL (QUEENSLAND) — CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into Committee of the Whole, to consider the Council's amendments in this Bill.

On clause 1—"Federal Council Act to be in force in Queensland, from 1st December, 1885, or afterwards, on adoption by three other colonies"—which the Council had amended by the insertion of the words "of which two of the colonies of New South Wales, South Australia, and Victoria are two"—

The PREMIER said the three amendments made by the Council in the clause consisted of the same words in three different places. The effect of the amendment was this: Under the Imperial Act the Federal Council would be constituted as soon as four colonies had adopted its provisions. If the Legislative Council's amendment were carried it would not come into operation in respect of the colony of Queensland unless two of the three colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia also adopted it. That would practically secure that there would be under the jurisdiction of the Federal Council the whole island of Australia with the exception of New South Wales. If the words were not put in they might have a federal council that would really be very lame and incomplete. Suppose South Australia did not adopt the Bill, a council consisting of Western Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, and Queensland, would not be as satisfactory as one including South Australia also, because it would really consist of a number of isolated colonies, which would be very inconvenient in many ways. Or, it might happen that it would be constituted of the colony of Western Australia, which had adopted the Act; the colony of Fiji, which would probably have adopted it by this time; the colony of Tasmania, which he supposed would—at least, he had no reason to suppose it would not—adopt it, and the colony of Queensland. Supposing those three adopted it and the Council consisted of the colonies of Queensland, Tasmania, Western Australia, and Fiji, that would not be very satisfactory. That could not happen if the amendment was adopted. He had said on a previous occasion that these words were in the original draft of the Bill submitted by this colony for the consideration of the Governments of the other colonies, and were afterwards omitted at the request of the Government of Victoria with the idea that before finally passing the Bill in any colony they should wait and see whether it was tolerably certain that the Bill would pass in the other colonies; if they were quite certain that two of the colonies mentioned would pass the Bill, the words would not be necessary. He thought it was not quite certain with regard to South Australia. He had asked the Premier of that colony whether it was tolerably certain that the Bill would pass, and he said "I think so." They had not, however, made much progress with it. They had not yet passed the second reading, and the year was getting old; and further, the private members had taken the Estimates entirely out of the hands of the Government and remodelled them. He thought it would be a pity that the influence of the Federal Council in its first session should be weakened by its not being a truly representative body. If they accepted the amendment he thought it would tend very much to prevent that being the case. On the whole, therefore, he thought the amendments might be accepted, because if what they desired happened they would have no effect, and if what they desired failed to happen, the amendments would save them from something which might really be injurious to federation. The balance of the arguments he thought, after full consideration, was in favour of the amendments, and he would therefore move that the amendments be agreed to.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said they must not, of course, consider those amendments

in the light of another Chamber differing from them on any point of policy; but simply that the Government, since the Bill had been before that House, had changed their own minds upon it. He regretted very much that they had done so, and he did not think they were in a better position now than they were then. The Premier had told them that he considered a long time before he came ultimately to the decision to advocate federation so long as any four of the colonies joined. He quite believed in that, and gave the hon. gentleman his hearty support, because he believed he came to a right determination; but when he harked back from that judgment to his original intention of waiting until two of the three colonies mentioned in the amendment should consent to join, he thought the hon. member had come to a wrong conclusion, and he had not given sufficient data for the decision come to. There was nothing that existed now that did not exist then to influence the hon. gentleman's decision. As to the fact of putting in the amendments being an inducement to the colony of South Australia to decide upon joining in, he did not think there was the slightest chance of it having that effect; in fact, he was afraid that possibly the effect of the amendment would be the other way, because influence might be brought to bear when it was known how the Act was passed in Queensland. It might be said that, according to the way the Act was passed in Queensland, they would not have federation at all. They did not know what influence might be brought to bear on New South Wales or South Australia. He firmly believed in federation, even without two of those colonies. He quite believed in a federation that would include Tasmania, Western Australia, Victoria, and Queensland. It would be a beginning, and a very good beginning too. It would be a great pity if they were to allow their work to be commenced over again at some future time simply because they allowed such a reason to prevent them commencing now. Western Australia, Fiji, Tasmania, and Queensland would perhaps be a more objectionable federation, but still, even that, in his opinion, would be better than nothing. Did the hon. member really think that Queensland should stand aside from a federation of Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania, and Western Australia? He thought such a federation would be very good to commence with. The amendment would prevent a federation of that kind. The whole thing was tentative and merely an experiment, and why should not the experiment be applied to a few colonies? It would, in fact, be a good thing to apply the experiment to colonies a good deal more apart than the colonies mentioned in the amendment. He thought the Government had made a mistake in the matter. It was a matter which he did not think many members of the House had thought over, and it should be remembered that it was purely experimental. Let them get a federation, and if they could get a federation of Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, and Western Australia, they should make a commencement. If the Premier would consider the matter in that light, he would see that the amendment was rather putting a bar to the federal scheme. The hon. gentleman's argument in favour of the amendment was that it might be an inducement to South Australia to federate. Well, his opinion was that it probably would have the other effect. But supposing South Australia or Victoria did not join, a splendid chance would be missed of initiating a federal union, and all the work would have to be commenced again. That was the conclusion he had come to. He had read a good deal about the matter before, and when he

saw the draft of the Bill he thought that the Premier, who was the drafter, had come to the right conclusion on the point he (Sir T. McIlwraith) had referred to. He regretted to see that the Premier had now apparently changed his mind.

The PREMIER said he pointed out in one communication that supposing Tasmania, Victoria, Western Australia, and Fiji, were to adopt the Federal Council Act, as there was every probability they would, then a federation of those colonies only would be formed. And it would not be practicable to prevent that result by refusing to appoint representatives, for the representatives of the other three colonies would constitute a quorum which would bind all the colonies in the Union. To avoid these difficulties Mr. Service proposed that the Bill should be kept going in one House or the other until they could see what the chances were of its passing in the other colonies. That, as had turned out, could not be done in Queensland, and they had therefore to choose between taking the precaution of amending the Bill as had been done in the Council or of taking the chance of joining in a federation in which Western Australia, Tasmania, and Fiji might be the only other colonies represented. Of course, in the latter case it might be practicable to prevent a session of the Council being summoned until other colonies entered the Union. He moved that the Council's amendments be agreed to, rather with a view of submitting the matter to the full consideration of hon. members. He had no very strong impression that the course now proposed was the best, and simply desired to take the advice of the Committee on the subject.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said, supposing Victoria and South Australia negatived the Federal Council Bill, and Fiji, Western Australia, Tasmania, and Queensland adopted it, a federation consisting of four colonies would be established. Of course it would look ridiculous to have an Australasian federation consisting only of those colonies. But look at the Bill. What was the principle underlying the measure? It would simply be a treaty between certain colonies in Australia. It would not be considered a federation of the Australasian colonies in the ordinary sense, but it would be a practical federation which could do a lot of useful work. The federating colonies could do nothing wrong under the Bill. All they could do would be for their own benefit, and if federation worked well for those colonies then there would be established an additional argument for inducing the other colonies to enter. The amendment, however, would block the chance of such a union. Assuming that Western Australia and Tasmania were in the federation, that Victoria and Queensland were going to be in it, and that South Australia was to stand out, the amendment would block the very practical federation or commencement of a federation between Western Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, Queensland, and Fiji, which indeed would be a very good federation to start with. A federation between Fiji, Queensland, Tasmania, and Western Australia, would not be such a good start, but one they ought to take if they could not get a better.

Mr. PALMER said that, as New South Wales had already stood aside, the amendment made it essential that Victoria and South Australia should be parties to the proposed federation. The amendment would therefore leave the question as to whether federation would take place still doubtful. The amendment would have been much more acceptable had it included Tasmania as one of the two colonies out of the three mentioned in the Bill. Tasmania

was almost one of the continental colonies; and in government, constitution, etc., was similar to the others. As the amendment stood, however, it would not be wise to adopt it, as it would probably be fatal in its results.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said there was a great deal of force in what the leader of the Opposition had said, for it was evident that under the amendment the whole of the action taken and work done up to the present time would be frustrated by any of the colonies mentioned declining to pass the Federal Bill. It would be a great pity if all the labour done in the cause of federation was entirely lost or nullified. It was at the same time highly desirable that the colonies of the mainland—at any rate, two of them—should form part of the federation. He thought the Federal Council would scarcely command that respect which it ought to command were it simply composed of delegates from Western Australia, Tasmania, Fiji, and Queensland. At least one of the other leading colonies—Victoria, New South Wales, or South Australia—should act in concert with Queensland. In that event, they might very well proceed to form the Council, with the assistance of such other members of the Australian family as might choose to come within the scope of the Bill. He did not think that Western Australia possessed in itself sufficient weight to justify them in dispensing with the other colonies, which had a constitution and responsible government; therefore, they ought to have the co-operation of at least one of the other continental colonies—either South Australia or Victoria. Federation would then stand a chance of being formed on a firm basis, and it would be possessed of more importance than would be the case if all the other large colonies were left outside.

Mr. SCOTT said they were told that Western Australia, Tasmania, and Fiji had joined the federation; but Fiji was not an Australian colony.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that, according to the Imperial Act, Fiji was an Australasian colony.

Mr. SCOTT said he was not aware of that. He thought that if one of the other colonies on the mainland joined Queensland a sure basis would be secured for federation.

The PREMIER said he was disposed to agree with the suggestion of the Colonial Treasurer, that one of the continental colonies, in addition to Queensland, would be sufficient, and if no serious objection was seen to it he would adopt it.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he fully approved of the suggestion. But even with Western Australia, Tasmania, Fiji, and Queensland the Federal Council would not be a *fiasco*, and it would certainly be a good step in the right direction towards federation. The same result, however, would be gained if the amendment was made to include two other colonies, New South Wales, South Australia, or Victoria being one. He understood that was the suggestion of the Colonial Treasurer. He did not object to it, because there was very little doubt that one or other of those colonies would join.

The PREMIER said there was no doubt that Victoria would come in; but it was a question whether they ought to rely on that probability.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that if they did it would do no harm.

The PREMIER said that in the neighbouring colony there was a strong opposition and even hostility to the scheme, and it would be just as well to have as strong a federation as possible at the beginning, so that it might acquire sufficient prestige to carry it along in the face of that

opposition and hostility. With the permission of the Committee he would withdraw the motion he had made, in order to move another in place of it.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

The PREMIER moved that the word "two" be omitted, with the view of inserting the word "one."

Question put and passed.

The clause was further amended by the substitution of the words "is one" for "are two," and by consequential amendments; and the amendment of the Council, as amended, was agreed to.

On motion of the PREMIER, the House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the amendments of the Legislative Council with amendments.

The report was adopted; and the Bill ordered to be returned to the Legislative Council, with message inviting the concurrence of that House with the amendments of the Assembly in their amendments.

RAILWAY EXTENSION TO SOUTHPORT AND NERANG.

The SPEAKER read a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that that House had approved of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the South Coast Railway from Beenleigh to Southport and Nerang, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 27th October.

SUPPLY—RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

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

The COLONIAL TREASURER, in moving £5,336, salaries paid from Loan Fund, in connection with the Harbours and Rivers Department, said the estimate showed an increase of £332 upon that of the preceding year, which was occasioned by a redistribution of officers. Instead of the three inspectors of works, which appeared on last year's Estimates, there was now only one at a salary of £234. As against the item reduced they had three inspectors of new dredge plant, at salaries amounting to £850, showing an increase on last year of £530. Those inspectors were required in consequence of the large quantity of new dredge plant that was being constructed at Brisbane and Maryborough. There was also an additional draftsman in the Brisbane office, at a salary of £250; so that the increases represented £800, and the decrease £468; the difference, £332, being the actual increase on the estimate. He might say that the report of the Engineer of Harbours and Rivers, which had been delayed on account of the great pressure of work in the department, and which he laid upon the table only last night, had been printed and distributed with remarkable expedition by the Printing Office, so as to enable members to consider it before proceeding with the estimate.

Mr. PALMER said, in the report of the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers, just placed in the hands of hon. members, he noticed this paragraph:—

"The new dredge 'Maryborough,' built by Messrs. John Walker and Company for the Government, has been completed and taken over. The work has been carried out in a very satisfactory manner, and in two months less than the time allowed by the contract. The contract price was £30,630.

"The dredge is now being got ready for work, and is expected to commence in about two weeks' time. Captain Burns is now visiting Maryborough and Rockhampton to make arrangements respecting barges, etc., to attend on the dredge."

He saw by the Loan vote of last year that there was an item of £250,000, to which, he understood, all the expenses connected with dredging were in future to be debited. The report said:—

"Since 1st July last the working expenses of dredges have been charged to the new Loan vote of £250,000 passed on last Loan Estimates."

"Separate books of account are kept showing the cost of each dredge, which will be published in next year's report."

He would like to know from the hon. the Treasurer, whether the expenses of the "Maryborough," from the time of her completion, and of all the other dredges, would be debited to that vote? If they were, he thought it would not be long before the vote was exhausted, and he looked forward with considerable apprehension to the other ports of the colony coming in for a share of it. Perhaps the hon. the Treasurer would inform the Committee on that point, and also how long the "Maryborough" would be worked in the River Mary?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the £250,000 provided on last year's Loan Estimates was supposed to cover the working expenses of the dredges then in hand for four years from the 1st July, 1885, also the working expenses of the "Maryborough," now complete, for three years, and of the new dredge under construction for two years. He considered the provision would be sufficient for the four years, not only for the dredges in hand at the present time, but for the one being built. The hon. gentleman must understand that the £250,000 was for current expenses, wages, and not for construction.

Mr. KATES asked whether the master of the dredge "Maryborough" had been appointed, and, if so, what was his name?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the appointment had not been confirmed. It had always been the desire of the Government whenever vacancies arose to give promotions to deserving officers in the service if they were qualified, and an opportunity had been given a very deserving officer in the service to qualify himself for that position. It was the desire of the Government to give him the position if he possessed the necessary qualifications for taking charge of those important vessels. An opportunity was now given for that officer to come down to Brisbane to pass his examination, and if he passed satisfactorily he would receive the appointment.

Mr. BLACK said he was very sorry that the information in connection with the harbour works at Mackay, in the report laid upon the table of the House, was so very meagre. He would ask the Colonial Treasurer as to the movements of the dredge "Lytton," whether it was still contemplated that she would complete certain works at Bundaberg, and then be sent up to the Pioneer River; and if he could give any information as to the time she was likely to be disengaged? He would point out the extreme inconvenience that the port had been suffering under for many years. Any hon. gentlemen who had tried to get in there knew the great inconveniences that even small vessels had to put up with. He knew passengers had been kept waiting there from twenty to twenty-four hours at a stretch before they could get in.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said there had been no change in the intentions on the part of the department to send the "Lytton" to Mackay as soon as she had completed her work at Bundaberg, which, however, might occupy four or five months. He could not give the

hon. gentleman any more distinct assurances on the matter. Sir John Coode was expected to reach Brisbane on the 13th of this month, and would immediately thereafter start for the Northern ports. When they had his opinion to guide them, the department would be in a better position to authorise the removal of the "Lytton" for work at Mackay.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that the last time the Colonial Treasurer brought that matter before the Committee a question was asked as to the removal of the "Platypus" to Cooktown. At that time the hon. gentleman did not inform them what were the intentions of the Government with respect to the "Platypus," and he would ask him now if he had made up his mind, and would give the information?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he would not bind himself to a promise, but, so far as he could see, the movements of the "Platypus" would be in this manner: She would be out of the dock in about ten days, and would at once proceed north. Representations had been made to him concerning an accumulation of a quantity of silt at Bowen jetty, which he was informed would take about three weeks to remove. At present steamers experienced great difficulty there, and in mooring alongside they were also very liable to haul away the jetty-head, and injure the structure. She would call there on her way to Townsville where she would be employed in improving the entrance to Ross Creek, to enable the breakwater to be proceeded with—that would probably take five or six months—and after that she would resume her work in making a basin in the Endeavour River at Cooktown. The approach to the harbour had been improved; but it did not possess the accommodation for allowing vessels to swing.

Mr. PALMER said, perhaps the hon. Colonial Treasurer would inform them why Brisbane was placed on a different footing with respect to loans for the purpose of dredging than other ports? For other places the sums were expressly stated: "Loan vote, Port Curtis, £18,000;" "Loan vote, harbour improvements, Rockhampton, £91,600;" "Mackay, £98,000;" and "Townsville, £188,000." In Brisbane they had only the actual amount expended since 1878, and it would be interesting to know what sums had been expended on the Brisbane River from loan. Could the Colonial Treasurer inform him when the new dredge would be completed, and what chances there were of a dredge being sent to carry out the proposed improvements at the Norman bar, or at Burketown? Burketown was becoming a town from which a great quantity of wool was exported, and also of copper from Cloncurry, and from a large coppermine to the west of Cloncurry. It was only in the latest paper from Normanton, the *Carpentaria Times*, that he noticed that arrangements had been made for shipping copper from Burketown; and he thought the hon. Colonial Treasurer should give him an assurance of some immediate action being taken by the department with regard to opening up those two rivers, especially considering the enormous sums that had been expended on some of the eastern sea-ports.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the reason why the expenditure appeared under a different heading was that on former Loan Estimates there was so much voted for harbour improvements generally. On the last Loan Estimate there was £250,000 so voted, which would accommodate all dredges wheresoever they might be employed. Therefore, the vote for each port would not be restricted as here. The new dredge would take about eighteen months or two years to build; but in a few weeks'

time he would be in possession of a great deal more information concerning the best mode of improving the Norman River. He could assure the hon. gentleman that it was the intention of the Government to address themselves to the question, but the information they possessed at the present time was not sufficient to enable them to proceed with the work. It was with a view to opening up the Gulf ports that the vote for the new dredge was passed. The Engineer for Harbours and Rivers, in his report, said:—

“I think it will also be necessary to consider whether further dredge plant is not required to enable the work to be carried out with something like reasonable speed.”

That opinion had not yet received the attention of the Government; but the hon. member might rest assured that as soon as the plant was in possession of the Government, and the information also had been received, the Gulf would have a fair share of expenditure.

Mr. HAMILTON said that for a long time Cairns had had a kind of half promise that it would be supplied with a dredge. He would like to know if the Colonial Treasurer could give him the other half of the promise, and say when they might expect the dredge?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the improvement of Cairns harbour was a large work; it would take at least ten months to remove the obstruction there. Had it been a matter that might be accomplished within a short time, no doubt it would have been done before. Perhaps it could be attended to when one of the dredges was *en route* to the Gulf. He did not think he could give any more definite promise to the hon. member.

Mr. HAMILTON said he would like to have some idea when the work might be commenced?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was afraid there was no possibility of Cairns receiving attention from any dredge plant till the new dredge was built. On her way to Normanston, she might be able to remove the obstruction. She would be finished in about eighteen months.

Mr. NORTON said he would like some information about the road at Port Curtis, between the township and the Auckland Point jetty. There had been a great deal of delay, and whenever he went to either the Treasury or the Department of Lands on the subject he was told the delay was caused by something he did not understand—always in the other office. Four or five months ago the Colonial Treasurer promised to send an officer to see what was causing the delay, but the matter did not seem to have advanced any further since.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he thought the hon. member had reason to be dissatisfied with the delay; but he must remember that the road should have been proclaimed before the construction of the jetty. If that had been done it would have prevented a great deal of embarrassment at the present time. The arbitration was proceeding, and the owners of some of the allotments had been very hard to get at. He had done all in his power to urge on the departments to use expedition, and he could assure the hon. member that no unnecessary delay had been allowed. He hoped that the matter would be settled in the course of a few months.

Mr. NORTON said no doubt the hon. member was quite right in saying that the road should have been declared before the wharf was begun; but his (Mr. Norton's) object was to get the wharf started. He might say that he believed it would have been far more satisfactory if the road had been taken round along the water's

edge. However, he believed the department had determined, on the recommendation of the Survey Department, to follow the road now proposed; but there had been an extraordinarily long delay. It did seem an absurdity that the wharf should be built and that all the sheds should have to be locked up because they could not yet be used. He did not see why the road could not be commenced at once. He did not think it would alter the valuation of the land. He also wished to refer to the proposed deepening of the “Narrows.” He knew the Treasurer was quite willing to go on with it, but he understood all the plant had been engaged in other works of a larger nature. Could the hon. gentleman give any idea when the necessary plant would be available?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the road referred to by the hon. member would be made as soon as the land was resumed. He could inform the hon. member that there were funds sufficient to make the road. With regard to the “Narrows,” the hon. gentleman would see that the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers said, on page 5 of his report:—

“THE ‘NARROWS.’—I have not been able to proceed yet with the deepening of the ‘Narrows,’ referred to in my last report.

“Special plant will be required to carry out this work, which is at present under consideration, and I hope to be able in the early part of next year to proceed with the preparations for carrying out these improvements.”

Beyond that somewhat vague statement he was hardly in a position to give any information; but he would ask the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers to put his views in writing as early as possible.

Mr. NORTON asked if he was to understand that the work of road-making was to be gone on with at once?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he could not give a promise. It was the custom of the department to wait until the land was resumed. He would submit the matter to the Cabinet.

Mr. ARCHER said he would like to know where the road was being taken. Was it going around the creek to Auckland Point jetty?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes.

Mr. ARCHER said he was rather surprised to hear the hon. member for Port Curtis advising the Government to carry the road outside the land and deprive the owners of the water frontage. He had a personal knowledge of the place, having an interest in some of the blocks, and he knew they would be worth two or three times as much with the water frontage as they would be worth without it. The value was given to the land by the water frontage, and the hon. member for Port Curtis now advised that the road should be made outside of it. He was very glad the hon. member had not now the ordering of that matter, or the owners of the land might suffer. He noticed that on the 30th of June, 1885, there was a sum of £5,613 still to the credit of the fund for deepening the Fitzroy. That sum must be very nearly expended by this time, as it took about £10,000 a year, as well as he could remember, to carry on the works there. What did the hon. gentleman propose to do with respect to that?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. member would know that the expenditure at Rockhampton had been formerly paid out of special votes for harbour improvements. After expending those votes the money would have to come out of the £250,000 for “working expenses—dredges.” With regard to the road, there had been some difficulty in connection with it, and the Government would deal with it on a fair and equitable basis. Some time ago

the water at the place receded, and the road might have been carried partly upon that marine or recovered land, but it would deprive the owners of the allotments of their water frontages, and therefore the Government would have to consider the equitable claims of the owners of those allotments, which originally had water frontages, and their claims to the recovered land.

Mr. ARCHER said he would point out that the Colonial Treasurer was not acquainted with the matter. In 1864, when the land they were now speaking of was possessed by Archer and Company, the Government, without giving them the slightest notice, built a wharf out from the land which was the private property of the company established in Rockhampton. They then filled in up to the wharf, and thus stopped the tide, and the consequence was that the silt accumulated. Had the Government given notice and resumed the land, and given compensation for it, nothing could have been said. But after the wharf had been built, and the tide stopped, and the silt allowed to accumulate, to propose now to make a road to the detriment of those who had water frontages was a piece of robbery which he did not think the Treasurer was capable of, though, no doubt, if the hon. member for Port Curtis was in office he would do it. He would like to call the attention of the Treasurer to the fact that in all the returns from the different towns except Brisbane the sum-total appeared. He would like to see a full statement of the expenditure. He was not speaking of that because he objected to the expenditure on the Brisbane River; but he should like to see a return of the money expended on all the different rivers, beginning, not at the time when the present Engineer took office, but from the time of the commencement of the improvements on those rivers. It would be interesting to know how much money had been wasted in effecting improvements upon the rivers to enable them to bring large steamers up to the wharves. They should have further information than they had got upon that subject.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. gentleman would find the information he desired by turning to page 10 of the report.

Mr. ARCHER: That does not include the expenditure before Mr. Nisbet took office.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said it showed it in this way: They had the amounts of the votes originally given, and the balance remaining on the 30th June. For instance, in the case of the Brisbane River, they had the amount of the vote set down as £103,000, and the balance was £2,631 6s. 5d.; so that there must have been over £100,000 expended on the Brisbane River.

Mr. ARCHER: There is no statement here of the moneys actually expended.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: There must have been more than twice that.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he would have a statement prepared giving in full the expenditure upon the whole of the rivers of the colony. He could not promise it for this session, but he would have it prepared for next session.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he liked the innocence of the Treasurer in saying that they had spent over £100,000 on the Brisbane River. They must have spent nearer three times that amount. He would refer to a different subject, one to which the Treasurer referred rather lightly when he introduced the Harbours and Rivers Estimates, and that was the late period of the session at which the Engineer of Harbours and Rivers put his report

before the House. It was not creditable at all to the Treasurer that that should be the case; nor was it at all an apology to the House to say that the department was so full of work or it would have come down before. They ought to have had the information months ago, and have had it well digested before those votes were asked for at all. In justice to the department, however, he might say this: that it would be seen that it was a report up to date. For instance, the Commissioner for Railways gave them his report, laid on the table in July, but it was only a report up to the 31st December of the previous year. There was no reason why they should not have had the information months before; and the only redeeming point in the report of the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers was that it was made up to date—as close to the 31st October as possible—and it was therefore of much greater value than it would have been had it been only a report up to the end of last year. The reason given by the Treasurer for the delay ought not to exist. He said the department was overcrowded with work, but that was only a reason why it should have a large or a competent staff to keep the work in hand. There was no sufficient reason why Parliament should have been deprived of information contained in the report until the estimate for the department had come on for consideration. He (Sir T. McIlwraith) could account for the department being so overcrowded with work. Hon. members would find from the report that the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers was saddled with the construction of the Fortitude Valley and Milton drainage works. What in the name of common sense had the Engineer of Harbours and Rivers to do with work of that kind? He (Sir T. McIlwraith) would go farther and ask why in the name of justice they should in the present state of local government, when every municipality and division in the colony had to bear the expense of its own public works, including drainage, allow the city of Brisbane to come, year after year, as a pauper and get surreptitiously, through the Estimates, amounts of money it was in no respect entitled to? A law was passed in 1875 to provide for the construction of drains and sewers in the city of Brisbane. When the Local Government Act was passed in 1878 that other Act was virtually repealed. In 1875 the then Treasurer—he believed it was the present Colonial Treasurer—found his funds getting rather short, which was a usual thing with Treasurers of the Liberal party; and the Government could not give money for the Brisbane drainage. The Act therefore dedicated a lot of public lands about the city for the purpose. Of course it was all the same whether they voted money or lands, as had the lands been sold the money would have gone into the Treasury. The arrangement was pronounced at the time by himself (Sir T. McIlwraith) and others as a job by means of which work which should have been done by the corporation of Brisbane was done by the general Government. The next step was the passing in 1878 of the Local Government Act, the principle of which was that it placed all municipalities on equal terms; and virtually, and by implication, the Brisbane Drainage Act of 1875 was repealed. The latter became a dead-letter during the time of his (Sir T. McIlwraith's) administration. Why then should the Harbours and Rivers Department be now burdened with the local drainage works of Brisbane? In its pre-eminence and wealth Brisbane should be an example to other municipalities, at least so far as the observance of the principles of the Local Government Act was concerned. It ought to be above getting pickings from the general revenue

under old and obsolete Acts, and its drainage work ought to be undertaken by its own corporation and at its own expense. He was quite sure that when the other municipalities of the colony learned that the cost of the Milton and Fortitude Valley drainage works was paid out of the general revenue they would be very much surprised. He only did his duty in pointing out that the Harbours and Rivers Department was overburdened with work that did not belong to it, just as the colony was burdened with an expense that did not belong to it, but which ought to be borne by the locality by which it was incurred.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he desired to explain that the sum he quoted as having been expended on the Brisbane River was only what had been expended on it since Mr. Nisbet took charge, and did not embrace the whole of the expenditure in connection with the Brisbane harbour works. He admitted that the leader of the Opposition had room for complaint on account of the delay in presenting the report of the Harbours and Rivers Department. He knew that the engineer had been saddled with a great deal of work, which had fully occupied his time. That work was a *bona fide* excuse for the report being delayed. He (the Colonial Treasurer), however, would promise to issue instructions that for the future the reports of the departments should be laid on the table within seven or ten days of the meeting of Parliament. It was only right that the information they contained should be disseminated at once and before the Estimates came on for consideration.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said a better promise than the one just given was made last year, but was not kept. It was, indeed, promised that the reports should be printed and distributed before the House met if Parliament delayed meeting until after May.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he held that all the reports should, immediately they were ready, be circulated amongst hon. members. He thought, at the same time, that it was a great improvement to have, as in the present case, a report that brought the information up to almost the latest date. He would see, at any rate, that the reports for the year ending on the 30th June were placed on the table of the House as promptly as possible after the opening of the session. With regard to the work that had been imposed on the department in the matter of drainage, Mr. Nisbet had always been considered the principal authority in the colony on that subject. It was not a new thing. Ever since Mr. Nisbet had occupied the position of Engineer of Harbours and Rivers he had been referred to by the Government in all matters of public drainage; his professional advice had always been obtained to report upon plans and specifications when applications were made by local authorities for loans to provide for drainage. He admitted that that involved a very large amount of work indeed, but so long as those works were required he did not see how they were going to refer them to another equally competent authority. It was their desire, in connection with works of that kind, to have the best professional advice in the colony with regard to the plans and specifications sent in by local authorities. He was, however, in favour of those bodies providing themselves with adequate professional advice outside the department, so as to relieve the department of a great amount of work that now had to be incurred in correcting plans and specifications prepared by them. On more than one occasion he had had to impress upon local authorities that the Government did not possess a staff to revise all the details sent in by those bodies. The work which Mr. Nisbet did was

work which the Government itself undertook. The drainage works now being carried out at Fortitude Valley were but the complement of drainage works for the city of Brisbane sanctioned by the House in 1877. He could not agree with the hon. gentleman that the Brisbane Drainage Act had been repealed by the Local Government Act. But in any case the drainage works now being constructed through Fortitude Valley were not works which could be justly charged to the municipal authorities. They were to relieve the Valley of surface water which accumulated on Crown property in Victoria Park and other lands reserved for public purposes. At present, after heavy rain, the water which accumulated there occasionally swamped the lower part of the Valley, and was a source of discomfort, danger, and disease, to a thickly populated neighbourhood. Therefore the drainage of those Government reserves ought on every account to be provided for by lands which still belonged to the Crown, and which were set apart years ago by Parliament for drainage purposes. Until those reserves were drained a large quantity of land in the Valley could not be rendered fit for human habitation; but when those waters were diverted to Breakfast Creek that land could be sold at a value which at present it did not possess. Every penny now being expended in the construction of that drain would be refunded to the Government by the sale of those drainage lands, and the taxpayers of the colony would be in no way saddled with it. He wished it to be distinctly understood that had the Government not been certain of that they would never have sanctioned the scheme. It could not be said that the municipal authorities had shirked their duty, for the city of Brisbane had just borrowed £10,000 for the purpose of continuing its own proportion of the drain through the thickly populated parts of Fortitude Valley. Both the Brisbane Municipality and the Booroodabin Divisional Board were quite prepared to pay whatever part of the cost of the continuation of the work naturally devolved upon them, but they could not be expected to contribute to the cost of carrying off surface water that accumulated upon Government land to the river. The work was a most salutary one, and would be a boon to the inhabitants of the Valley in improving the health of the locality and rendering habitable a large area of land which at present was nothing but a swamp, and the proceeds of the sale of which would more than cover the expenditure incurred. The swamp at Milton had long been a source of danger and disease to the inhabitants of that locality, and the Government had a very large amount of land there which was subject to being flooded. That land, when it was properly drained, would also be vastly improved in value, and, besides, it would enable the Government to improve the construction of the railway at that place. The present viaduct there would be replaced by an embankment, by a tunnel through which the water would escape from the swamp.

Mr. CHUBB said it seemed to him that both the leader of the Opposition and the Colonial Treasurer had overlooked a very material point in the matter. As he understood the remarks of both hon. gentlemen, they referred to a drain that was being constructed to carry off flood-water from certain Crown land to Breakfast Creek. But the Act under which the work was being done provided, as he read it, for drainage in the city of Brisbane. The expenditure on drainage works could only be paid while they were within the city boundary; when the works passed beyond that boundary the country must pay for them. The first Drainage Act was passed

in 1870, and it provided for the construction of a main drain from Queen street to the river Brisbane, and it provided certain lands, then scheduled in another Act, as the means of paying for the construction of that work. In 1875 the Act referred to by the leader of the Opposition was passed. That Act gave a larger power for the construction of drains and sewers in the city of Brisbane, the funds for the carrying out of which were to be provided by the sale of Crown lands in the said city of Brisbane. The Act said it should be "lawful for the Colonial Treasurer to apply the proceeds of such sales towards defraying any charges in constructing drains or sewers in the said city of Brisbane." His point was this: That those drains were not constructed in the city of Brisbane; part of them were, and the Government could only charge the municipality with the cost of such drains as were actually constructed in the city of Brisbane, to be paid for out of the lands referred to. If drains were constructed outside the city boundary the corporation had a right to say, "These are drains for which we are not liable to pay; we will construct drains to our boundary, but beyond that you have no right to apply those lands to the payment of the cost of drainage." He understood the hon. the Treasurer to say that the cost of the drainage of Victoria Park and of Milton, large portions of which were outside the city, was to be paid for by the sale of lands in the city, which were set apart for the drainage of the city of Brisbane.

Mr. BEATTIE: No; it is a mistake.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The whole of the land is included in the schedule.

Mr. CHUBB: The lands in the schedule of the Act he referred to were all lands within the city boundary.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No.

Mr. CHUBB: Whether the lands themselves were or not did not make any difference. The Act provided for drainage within the city of Brisbane, and if those drains were carried outside the city and the corporation chose to submit to being called upon to pay for them, of course it had nothing to do with him. The point was whether the Government had any right to charge the municipality with the expense of constructing drains outside the municipal boundary?

Mr. BEATTIE said there had evidently been a mistake in introducing the term "municipal council" with reference to the drainage of Victoria Park. All the drains constructed in the municipality were paid for by the municipality out of money borrowed for the purpose. The drain from Victoria Park was outside the city altogether—not connected with the city at all, and therefore to use the word "municipal" in connection with it was entirely incorrect. As a matter of fact, the drainage of the whole of the land belonging to the Government, extending from the Kelvin Grove road—including the Oval and all round about the northern side of Red Hill—emptied itself into Victoria Park, and therefore the matter had been brought under the notice of many Governments. The ex-Colonial Treasurer, Mr. Archer, would remember that he (Mr. Beattie) brought it before him on two or three occasions. The fact of the matter was the Government had about 800 acres of land in the locality he had indicated, the drainage from which emptied itself on to the low-lying lands at the lower part of Fortitude Valley, and the representations made to the Government were these: That if they would construct a drain starting from the centre of the

National Society's Grounds, and running through to Breakfast Creek, near Bowen Bridge, it would relieve all the lower lands in that neighbourhood, and also enable them to carry off the water which accumulated on their own lands. After the Government had decided to construct the drain to Breakfast Creek, draining their own lands, the municipality called for tenders for the construction of a drain to carry off water in that portion of the municipality, and got permission from the Government to join that drain to the one running into Breakfast Creek. The corporation was doing that at the expense of the ratepayers, and the only advantage they had got from the Government was permission to join into the Government drain emptying itself into Breakfast Creek. The other drains being constructed were outside the city, making provision for carrying waters from the municipality through a division; but he was not going to speak on that matter now. It would be a matter of amicable arrangement between those two bodies. He thought it unfair to say that the city of Brisbane was getting advantages which no other town in the colony was getting.

Mr. ANNEAR: No doubt of it.

Mr. BEATTIE: The hon. member for Maryborough said "No doubt of it." The fact of the matter was, the hon. member had got such large votes for Maryborough that he believed all other members were actuated by the same desire—to loot the Treasury and ask for things they had no right to. He (Mr. Beattie) could say that he had never asked the Treasurer to do anything that the ratepayers could do themselves, and he did not believe the municipality had ever asked for anything if they could do it themselves. Therefore it was unfair to say that the municipality had benefited at the expense of the country. He would defer referring to another matter respecting which other members might have something to say.

Mr. McMASTER said the hon. senior member for Fortitude Valley had partly explained the position of the municipality with reference to the drainage referred to; but the hon. the leader of the Opposition had made a statement which he thought might be misunderstood or misconstrued. He stated, if he (Mr. McMaster) heard him correctly, that the drain that was being constructed through Fortitude Valley was being made by the Government. That was not the case, the fact being that that drain was being constructed by the municipal council. As the hon. the Colonial Treasurer had stated, the municipal council had borrowed £10,000 for the purpose of continuing that drain, and for the drains that had been constructed twelve months and two years ago they had borrowed something like £24,000 or £25,000. They could not continue the present drain through the Valley unless the Government carried off the water that came from Victoria Park. If they provided for the drainage of the municipality that was all they could be expected to do, and they called upon the Government to do the rest. As the hon. senior member for Fortitude Valley had stated, the municipal council had repeatedly waited upon different Governments in regard to the matter. He himself had agitated for that drainage for the last nine or ten years, and the drains that the council had constructed at the back of Wickham terrace and in that locality were provided for by themselves as far as the city boundary; in fact the drain that the municipal council was constructing through Fortitude Valley was draining Government lands which the Colonial Treasurer was going to sell for drainage purposes. The citizens of Brisbane were actually improving those lands

and enhancing their value. Victoria Park did not belong to the citizens of Brisbane; it was vested in trustees, and had not been placed under the control of the municipal council; and he submitted that it was only right that the Government should drain their own lands and not appeal to the citizens of Brisbane to provide for the drainage of such a large area as Victoria Park. Therefore, the municipal council had not got a single pound from the Government, except what they were paying interest for. They were paying back the whole of the money they had borrowed, principal and interest; and the drain through Fortitude Valley was not being constructed at the expense of the country, but at the expense of the municipality of Brisbane.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that to listen to the two hon. members for Fortitude Valley one would imagine that the city of Brisbane had never received any advantage at all. In fact, one hon. gentleman almost said so, and compared it unfavourably with that "cormorant" municipality, Maryborough. Both the Colonial Treasurer and the hon. member for Bowen missed the point of the argument of the hon. member for Mulgrave. His point was this: That in 1875 certain lands were set apart by an Act passed—which he remembered very well, and he also remembered the great amount of discussion which took place upon it—to drain certain places in the city of Brisbane and Fortitude Valley. His contention was that when they passed the Local Government Act of 1878, and the Divisional Boards Act afterwards, all divisions and municipalities in the colony were placed upon the same footing, and the Act which dedicated to Brisbane that land for drainage purposes was virtually repealed, and no lands were afterwards to be set apart for drainage purposes. The drainage of Brisbane should have been entirely carried out at the expense of the citizens of Brisbane, which the hon. member for Fortitude Valley maintained was now being done. He was not going into that question. There could be no doubt that Brisbane had received an advantage over every other town in the colony. But by the Local Government Act no more land was to be sold on that account, under the authority of that Act. That was the point which the hon. leader of the Opposition tried to impress upon the Colonial Treasurer, and the one which that hon. gentleman failed to catch. There was another point which the hon. gentleman also failed to catch. He said that he had tried to impress upon local authorities, when they came in for public works, that the Government officers were not the officers for carrying out those works. But he admitted that the drainage of Victoria Park had been carried out by Mr. Nisbet; and it was all very well for the hon. members for Fortitude Valley to say that that was not an advantage to Brisbane. It was a Brisbane vote. Although the Victoria Park might not be the property of the municipal council of Brisbane, Brisbane derived all the advantages from the park being where it was, just the same as if it belonged to the municipal council. It was rather unbecoming for hon. gentlemen to get up and make the assertions they had, and make the comparisons they did with Maryborough. He was not at all sorry that Brisbane had had an advantage; being the capital, it was necessary that it should have, and hon. gentlemen should not disclaim the advantages that they had had, and compare Brisbane with other municipalities. The hon. the Colonial Treasurer should mark the point made by the hon. member for Mulgrave, that no more land should be sold. It would be interesting to find out how much of that land had been sold, and what were the proceeds applied to drainage, so that they

might know how much Brisbane had been benefited above other towns. He thought that amount would reach £30,000.

Mr. McMASTER: No.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he remembered very large sales of land taking place at different times, and, speaking from memory, he thought the amount would be nearly £30,000. There was £7,000 under the head of "Victoria Park drainage," and although those lands were said to be Crown lands there were Crown lands situated in the same way in every municipality in Queensland. They might as well say the Botanic Gardens were Crown lands. He supposed they were; but who received the benefit? The citizens of Brisbane, not the citizens of Townsville. They received the benefit of whatever Crown lands were in the town and should be quite willing to bear their share of the expense.

Mr. NORTON said he quite agreed with what had fallen from the hon. member for Townsville, and he could not help thinking that Brisbane had derived a great advantage from the Act that had been referred to, all along, which other towns had not. If Brisbane was to have the advantage of having a drain made by the sale of land belonging to the Crown the same advantage should be given to other towns. In Rockhampton they had borrowed a large amount not long ago for the purposes of drainage alone, and why should not a portion of that sum be repaid by the sale of Crown land there? And why should not the same thing be done in all towns? They were mixing up two or three questions in the matter. There was the drainage of Victoria Park, the drainage of Fortitude Valley, and the drainage proposed to be carried out at Milton. The junior member for Fortitude Valley said the municipal council had been improving Victoria Park. It struck him when he was passing there one day that the stench arising from that park was abominable, and if that was the result of the improvements the sooner they were done away with the better. About the proposed drainage at Milton, it was proposed to carry that out by the sale of lands held by the Crown in the locality. Those lands were not actually set apart for the purposes of drainage by that Act, in the first place, and it was inequitable that those lands should be sold for that purpose. The drainage there was not merely a matter of drainage which concerned Brisbane and the people who lived around there. It was also a matter which affected the Railway Department. The Railway Department, in carrying their double line to Ipswich, gave a contract for all bridges along the route, and one was to be over that swamp at Milton. The contractor had his plant there, and commenced putting down piles, but could not get bottom, and the consequence was that the idea of building a bridge was given up and the present intention was to make an embankment. If the Government intended to carry out that scheme of drainage it would be a very much less cost to the Railway Department, and he maintained that whatever expense was incurred in making that embankment and running a drain underneath it should be borne by the Railway Department as part of the cost of constructing the double line to Ipswich. So far as they could gather from the Colonial Treasurer the Government were to make the drain out of funds provided by the sale of land in the neighbourhood. Really, two departments were mixed up in the affair, and the work was to be carried out under conditions which he did not think were justifiable, and it would be difficult to ascertain in the end what really had been the cost which the municipality would be compelled to pay if they

had to do the work themselves. As for the Fortitude Valley drain, he knew nothing about that.

Mr. McMASTER said the hon. member had misunderstood him. What he said was not that the municipal council were improving Victoria Park, but that they were improving the lands the Government were likely to sell to carry the water off Victoria Park. He hoped the Government were not going to sell Victoria Park.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he noticed on page 3 of the report of the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers that under the head of drainage they had first Victoria Park drainage, then Milton drainage, and then Brisbane drainage, which included drainage works at South Brisbane, New Farm, Kangaroo Point, and Fortitude Valley, involving an expenditure of about £57,000. He would like to ask if any sum was set apart for drainage in other towns of the colony? for he maintained that the health, comfort, appearance, and benefit of other towns were just as worthy of consideration as those of Brisbane. He did not object to the drainage being carried out; but he objected to Brisbane being considered the whole colony of Queensland as far as drainage was concerned. If Maryborough, Rockhampton, Gladstone, and other such towns required drainage, would the Colonial Treasurer send the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers to make the plans and carry out the drainage, as he was doing in Brisbane? The report was laid on the table so late in the session that there was barely time to discuss it on its merits. If the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers had so much to do that he could not bring up that report earlier, surely he might be relieved of what did not seem to be any portion of his work, the drainage of Brisbane. The members of Fortitude Valley might say that it was only on Government land; but whatever was done in the city of Brisbane was done for the benefit of the inhabitants, and was not specially confined to Government land. The reserves in every other town of the colony had a right to the same attention.

Mr. SCOTT said he saw a little further on in the report that the Port Alma wharves had been finished at a cost of nearly £37,000. The only use to which they had yet been put was that one vessel had been alongside; certainly it was a big vessel, the "Duke of Westminster," the largest of the British-India line that had visited the colony. He would like to know what became of the goods landed at the wharf. As far as he knew there was no means of approach to the wharf.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the "Duke of Westminster" landed goods on the wharf, which he believed were subsequently removed by lighters. He could not give the hon. member information at the present time how the wharf was to be approached by land; it was a matter for future consideration. With regard to the question of the hon. member for Maryborough, the Government were quite prepared to consider the claims of all towns as to injury done by the drainage of Crown lands. If by dealing with such lands in the same way as it was proposed to deal with the Brisbane lands, the grievance could be remedied, he saw no reason why it should not be done. There was no intention to favour Brisbane. They were dealing with the Valley drainage under an Act that still remained on the statute-book. The hon. member for Townsville might say the Act was virtually repealed, but under that Act certain lands were dedicated to be dealt with for drainage purposes, and for nothing else; and seeing that the Crown reserves in that part of the suburbs inflicted very great injury on the population, and that the removal

of water from those lands would enhance their value, he thought the Government were right in taking that step. He would remind hon. members that the Milton drainage was a matter which would come on far more conveniently for discussion when the Supplementary Estimates were before the Committee. There was a sum there of £5,000 put down for drainage. The drainage of Victoria Park was, of course, dealt with under the statute, which he considered was still in existence.

Mr. ARCHER said what they complained of was that when other towns had to build any large drains they had to borrow the money from the Government and repay it, while in Brisbane certain lands were sold for the purpose of constructing the drains, which meant exactly the same as granting the money. If there were a Bill stating that in every part of the colony certain lands were to be set apart for the purpose of supplying funds for drainage, it would be perfectly fair; and it would have been right to go farther, and say that no new towns should be laid out without land being set apart for drainage purposes; but to use, for the purpose of draining Brisbane, money that should have gone into the Treasury for other purposes was perfectly unfair. Brisbane was the wealthiest town in the colony, and could better afford to do all the drainage wanted than any other town.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said, as the question of lands set apart for defraying the cost of drainage had been mentioned several times, he should like to know if the hon. the Treasurer would give the Committee some information on the subject? He wished to know the total amount of land sold, the amount reserved, the amount expended, and also the quantity of and still on hand, and if any surplus remained?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the question had been asked before the adjournment, and he promised to have a statement prepared. He found that the total receipts from sales of land amounted to £26,596, and that the expenditure had amounted to £28,997 15s. 10d., leaving a debit balance at the present time, as shown in the trust balances, Financial Statement, of £2,401 15s. 4d. The proposed expenditure on the drain through Bowen Hills was £7,000, and there would be from nine to ten acres of land—which during floods was inundated—recovered, and it was estimated they would realise over £1,000 per acre.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Then the hon. gentleman expected that the debit balance and the cost of the drainage would be met by the sale of the land that would be reclaimed?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he noticed an item in the Estimates, "Foreman in charge clam-shell dredge, £168." When the estimate was before the Committee last session a question was asked of the Colonial Treasurer whether any more clam-shell dredges were in course of construction. He believed the Treasurer replied that at least six were about to be constructed. The reason he raised the question was that two years since a promise was made that the clam-shell dredge would be sent to deepen the mouth of Wynnum Creek as soon as it could be spared. Since that time he had applied to the Treasurer on the question and had always been met with the answer that the clam-shell dredge was still at work at the Coomera. He was in hopes that he would hear of some other clam-shell dredges being at liberty from the remarks made during the passage of that estimate through Committee last session. Persons better able to

form an opinion on the subject than he was had informed him that clam-shell dredges were the most useful machines that could be employed in deepening the creeks and rivers on their eastern seaboard. He had since heard an opinion expressed that they were not so useful as they were at first thought to be. He hoped the Treasurer would enlighten the Committee as to whether any more were in course of construction.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that when the last Loan Estimates were under consideration it was stated that it was the intention of the department to proceed with the construction of two more, not six, clam-shell dredges; but the opinion of the Engineer of Harbours and Rivers in connection with those dredges had undergone a considerable change since a recent visit to the South. He was informed that the digging power of the clam-shell dredges was very weak, and that except in the case of soft mud or silt they were not efficient machines. The engineer did not recommend the construction of any more at present. In consequence of that, Wynnum Creek had not received further attention, and he was afraid that until they were in possession of dredges suitable for the work in those smaller rivers and creeks the expectations of hon. members would have to be deferred. However, the engineer would give his attention to the subject, and would recommend a class of dredge that would be suitable, and its construction would be proceeded with as soon as possible.

Mr. PALMER said that as one of the Northern representatives he was compelled to play a "lone hand" with respect to harbour improvements, though he thought most of the ports on the eastern coast were well supplied in that respect. He thought he would be only doing his duty in calling the attention of the Treasurer to the several points in connection with the Estimates. There was a sum of £5,000 put down for a jetty at Thursday Island. It was nearly two years since he and Mr. McIlwraith and other gentlemen from the North waited upon the Treasurer, and it was then proposed that a private company should be allowed to build a jetty for the express purpose of facilitating the landing of boats. No decision was come to, and although there was still a large amount down for the purpose of building a jetty at Thursday Island, people were still scrambling ashore there in a happy-go-lucky way, as best they could. There were no facilities there for landing the people who had to land there every week from steamers travelling in every direction. The information given in the report was:—

"Nothing further has been done with reference to the proposed jetty at Thursday Island."

The report last year contained a somewhat similar statement. He was further moved about it when he noticed what was being done in other places closer to Brisbane. There was the Dunwich jetty, for instance, and he found the report said, on that subject, that a contract had been let for the extension of that jetty for a distance of 240 feet, and that a tramway would be laid down between the head of the jetty and the shore; and the amount of the contract was £1,450. That would be carried on without doubt. Then there was the Cleveland jetty, 1,565 feet in length. The amount voted on the last Loan Estimates for that work was £4,000. There was £11,000 for the Queen's Wharf, and so on. Those were reasons he thought he was entitled to press the Colonial Treasurer for some reason for not supplying the people of Thursday Island with some accommodation for

landing. The sum on the Estimates last year was £3,000, and he saw that there was £5,000 down for the present year, and yet nothing was done. With regard to the graving dock, there was nothing in the report to show its cost, the percentage it paid, or, in fact, any information at all about it. Considering the time the report came out he thought they should have had more information in it than there was. If the Colonial Treasurer would not supply the return promised, of all the money expended on the Brisbane River since Separation, he would call for the return himself. He would like an answer about the Thursday Island jetty.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he had promised the Committee that he would have a statement made of the expenditure upon the whole of their ports, harbours, and rivers. Unfortunately there would not be time to have it prepared that session, but if any hon. members were particularly interested in the information he would be happy to give it to them in the recess, and on the reopening of Parliament the statement would be made a record of the House. The Thursday Island jetty had not escaped the attention of the Government. On the last Loan Estimates there was an addition of £2,000 set down, making the total £5,000 for that work, and a surveyor, Mr. Cullen, was appointed to prepare plans and specifications. He might say that the trade there had so enormously increased that the question arose whether they should not go in for something superior to a jetty, that would cost £5,000, in order to accommodate the trade that had lately developed in the Straits. It was, therefore, a question which up to the present the Government had not had time to consider, whether, instead of building a temporary structure at a cost of £5,000, it would not be better to ask Parliament to make provision for the building of a structure that would afford accommodation to the shipping entering that port. The consideration of that matter would be to some extent delayed. It was reported that Sir John Cooze was likely to take his departure for Europe from Thursday Island. If that was to be the case there would be an opportunity of obtaining from him an opinion as to what the character of the jetty should be. With regard to the jetty at Dunwich, it was necessary to enable the Government steamers to land goods for the inmates of the Benevolent Asylum; and as to the jetty at Cleveland, it was a question of either repairing the present structure or of erecting a new one.

Mr. BEATTIE said it was his duty to point out to the Colonial Treasurer a difficulty he found with reference to the answer the hon. gentleman gave to a question put by the hon. member for Darling Downs in reference to the employés in the Harbours and Rivers Department. The question asked was, who was appointed to take command of the "Saurian" at Maryborough? The answer was, no doubt, given in a manner that was satisfactory to the Colonial Treasurer himself. The Colonial Treasurer, however, went on to say that he laid it down as a rule that the employés in the Government service should be promoted to the vacancies that took place—in other words, that all superior appointments should be given to officers who were qualified in the Government service. That statement was received with great satisfaction by hon. members, but unfortunately it was not correct. The Colonial Treasurer was probably unaware of it, but it was nevertheless a fact that, for the very dredge he had given information about, an individual from outside the colony was appointed. Besides a master, the dredge required a second engineer to have charge of the machinery below. One would have thought from the remarks of

the Colonial Treasurer that some engineer in the Government service would have been appointed to the position of engineer of that particular dredge. Such, however, was not the case. The Government must go outside the colony again for a man—to New South Wales—for a second engineer for the dredge, although there were plenty of engineers—men of good character and deserving promotion—who had been for years in the Government service of Queensland. There were men in the service well qualified to fill the position, but a “new-chum” was brought in and put over their heads. The intentions of the Colonial Treasurer were, no doubt, good, and the promises he made would be carried out. Yet that appointment took place; and it was only fair to let the public generally know that the Colonial Treasurer was not responsible for a good many of those appointments. The work of the Harbours and Rivers Department was being carried on satisfactorily, but it had to be acknowledged that some disorganisation existed in that department. The employés ought to have such an interest in their work as would cause them to render the very best services for the amount of money they received. From his own knowledge and information he had received, however, he could state that that was not the case, and that disorganisation existed. He was sorry he did not do what he intended to do last session, and move for a commission to inquire into the system of working some of the Government departments. Men in the Government service looked forward to promotion, and when they found that it was not given to them after years of service, and that men were brought from the other colonies and placed over their heads, the result was detrimental to the departments in which they were employed. He hoped those remarks would be received by the Colonial Treasurer in the spirit in which they were made. If the hon. gentleman thought the matter over calmly, he would take care and see that justice was done to the Government servants, and would not allow men to be continually imported to fill positions for which there were men sufficiently qualified in the colony.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said his desire had always been to promote men from the ranks and to keep the promotions which had to be made for men who were already in the service of the Government. He had ordered that that principle should be carried out. He would honestly admit, while he was desirous to give promotion to the subordinate employés on the dredges, that however efficient they might be in their subordinate positions, he could not overlook the fact that they did not possess the necessary qualification or hold the certificate which, in the opinion of the professional head of the department, should be held by officers placed in charge of those most valuable dredges. That was the reason why promotion had not more readily descended on employés holding subordinate positions. He (the Colonial Treasurer) had tried to obtain promotion for a very deserving employé of the Port Office, and, as he did not possess the necessary qualification, he had given him leave of absence so that he might come to Brisbane to pass the examination. If he did pass the examination, he hoped promotion would follow. It was only right that duly qualified men should be placed in charge of responsible positions. He was sure the senior member for Fortitude Valley would not expect that an able-bodied seamen, however deserving or meritorious his conduct might have been, should be placed in command of a dredge without undergoing an examination and securing a certificate of competency. No employé in the dredge service would be unduly passed over.

Mr. BEATTIE said he was very glad to hear what the Colonial Treasurer had stated. The officer he (Mr. Beattie) had referred to, however, was not the one alluded to by the Colonial Treasurer, but to the officer in charge of the engines of the dredge. There were three kinds of certificates, first, second, and third class; and the second-class certificate was the only certificate required for the officers who took charge of the engines. But the officer lately appointed from Sydney as second engineer of the dredge held only a third-class certificate. There were plenty of engineers on the hopper barges, who had been a long time in the Government service, who might very fairly have been appointed to that position.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that no appointment to the Maryborough dredge had been confirmed by him; and he would make an inquiry into the circumstances complained of by the hon. member.

Mr. HAMILTON said he regretted very much that the Colonial Treasurer could not see his way to Cairns having a dredge, for there was hardly a port on the coast where so small an amount of work could produce such great results. In the report of the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers he noticed that it was intended to construct a wharf at Cairns. Could the hon. gentleman inform him when tenders would be issued for the construction of that wharf? He believed it was the intention of the Minister for Works to call for tenders very shortly for the construction of a small section of the Cairns railway, and it was very desirable that before that was done the wharf which would be used in conjunction with that work should be made.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that if the hon. member would look at the following paragraph in the report he would see that the question was to be settled by the Harbours and Rivers Department in consultation with the Railway Department. At the present moment he was not in a position to say when the wharf would be proceeded with.

Mr. HAMILTON said that in connection with Port Douglas he noticed that the “Bremer” was being removed to Brisbane to receive a general overhaul. Would the “Bremer” return to Port Douglas, or would some other vessel take her place?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the “Bremer” would not be removed until she had completed her work there. When that was done she would be brought to Brisbane to receive a new boiler and a general overhaul. He could not say whether there would be any occasion for her to go back to Port Douglas, but he was inclined to think that if further dredging was to be done there it would require a more powerful dredge than the “Bremer.”

Mr. HAMILTON said he had on several occasions brought under the notice of the Colonial Treasurer the necessity that existed for a small steamer at Cooktown, for the purpose of saving lives and property, on account of the wrecks which so frequently took place to the north of that port. When he last mentioned the matter, the hon. gentleman said he could not promise a steamer for the port, as the Government could not afford it. That appeared to him singular, when they could afford to buy a powerful steamer like the “Lucinda,” which was only used by the Government for pleasure-parties and picnics, which must have cost twice the amount that a steamer suitable for that important work at Cooktown could be obtained for. He would ask now, seeing that several fresh steamers were in course of construction for the Government, whether in the near future the department would be able to spare a small steamer for Cook-

town? The schooner at present there was utterly unfit for the work required of her. The matter was one of serious interest to the residents in the northern portion of his constituency.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the service which the hon. member required was supplied by the Port Office, not by the Harbours and Rivers Department. In the opinion of the Port Office a steam vessel at Cooktown was unnecessary, and it was considered that the vessel at present there answered all the requirements of the port. Undoubtedly a steamer would be more efficient, but the cost of the establishment it would render necessary would be too great.

Mr. ANNEAR said he noticed in the report that the dredge at Maryborough was to commence work at the Stewart's Island Flats. Would the cost of dredging those seven miles of flats be charged to the vote for improvements on the Mary River?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that as that vote was almost exhausted the work would be charged to the general dredging vote on the Loan Estimates.

Mr. ANNEAR said it had been stated that the Maryborough constituency was always trying to loot the Treasury; but was that the fact? According to the report, the vote for improvements in the Mary River had been £17,500, and the sum remaining was £3,072 8s. 6d. The amount expended in the Brisbane River had been £103,000, with a balance remaining of £2,631 6s. 5d.; and he believed the leader of the Opposition was not much wide of the mark when he stated that the improvements in the Brisbane River and the cuttings outside it had cost not far short of £300,000. Did that look like the looting of the Treasury by the Maryborough constituency? The hon. member for Townsville knew that when he was Minister for Works no constituency gave him less trouble than the constituency of Maryborough. That hon. member did not believe that Maryborough was one of the "cormorant" towns of the colony; but the money spent on the Mary River was a mere myth compared with what had been spent on the Brisbane. He quite agreed with the hon. the leader of the Opposition as to the expenditure of the money for the Valley drainage. He did not think it was an act of justice towards the other towns in the colony or the general taxpayers, because what did they see? That lands were set aside for the Brisbane bridge and for this drainage. They had a bridge in Maryborough, which was a "white elephant," and they had no land set apart to pay for it.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: No; you got the bridge for nothing.

Mr. ANNEAR: That bridge was paid for by the taxpayers of the colony, it being one of the public highways; and there had been no land set apart for maintaining that expensive structure. He wished to draw the attention of the hon. the Treasurer to the question asked a few days ago by the hon. member for Blackall respecting the cost of the "Platypus" in England as compared with the cost of the construction of dredges in the colony. The answer given to that hon. member was that they would cost 40 per cent. more in the colony. Well, there was the "Octopus";—he was not going to refer to Maryborough dredges now; Maryborough work was quite good enough to stand on its own foundation without any advocacy from him, the same as had been resorted to that evening by other hon. members;—the "Octopus" cost £31,034 8s. 11d., that sum including supervision and every other expense connected with its construction. What had the "Platypus" cost?—£34,073 5s. 2d.; and

that was only portion of her cost, because it did not include superintendence of construction in England and a great many other items. He had taken the trouble to speak to several gentlemen in the colony who were competent judges of dredges, and were able to build dredges far superior to the class of workmanship in the "Platypus," because a great part of her time was spent in the dock at South Brisbane, where she now was, and where she was likely to remain for some time, by what he saw of her state the other day; and those gentlemen had assured him that they could make a dredge of a better class at under 20 per cent. Therefore, he thought a great mistake had been made in saying that the extra cost of construction in the colony, as compared with imported dredges, made in Brisbane and Maryborough, would be 40 per cent. He should not detain the Committee longer, but he thought in justice to the contractors and mechanics of the colony, seeing the work they had turned out on the "Octopus," all work of that description should be kept in the colony even if it cost 20 per cent. more; but it could be done, as he had said, for less than that.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member appeared to be under the impression that he had spoken of Maryborough as trying to loot the Treasury.

Mr. ANNEAR: No, no!

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: He had simply quoted the remarks of the hon. member for Fortitude Valley. He could quite corroborate the statement of the hon. member for Maryborough, that that constituency had given him very little trouble when he was Minister for Works.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER, in moving £18,146, by way of loan—expenses connected with Water Works and Water Supply—said the item was framed to meet the probable requirements of the year in case the department would be able to proceed with the extension of water supply throughout the colony, and was based upon the scale of expenditure that took place last year; but he must inform the Committee at once that with the present season the expenditure was not likely to be so large as was represented on the Estimates. It was quite impossible in the Western and South-western districts to proceed with the construction of dams and sinking bores; in fact, to proceed with the usual activity of the department in the present severe season; but the provision was asked for in view of the department being able to resume work to the full extent as soon as the season would allow it.

Mr. PALMER asked the hon. the Treasurer for some explanation of the item "Overseer in charge of American well-boring machinery." What were his duties, and where was he located?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the officer referred to was Mr. Arnold, who was for some years employed in boring in the United States of America and in sinking oil-wells, and latterly he had been engaged in sinking for water in the Sandwich Islands. He had had considerable experience in both those places, and opened negotiations with the Government with a view to tendering for deep sinking for water. At that time it was deemed desirable to endeavour to ascertain the extent of artesian water in the colony, and Mr. Arnold was invited to come to Queensland and the Government would be prepared to receive tenders from him. On his arrival he made a circuit of certain portions of the country, but did not seem inclined to bring over his machinery, and made an offer to the

Government to sink on certain conditions which were deemed unacceptable. Then he made an alternative offer to act as overseer of machinery to be constructed under his own supervision, and to sink, in any locality the Government indicated, to the depth of 2,000 or 2,500 feet. The machinery was constructed in Brisbane at a cost of £900, and was tested by sinking a short distance to show that it was in working order. It was now packed up ready to be forwarded to whatever place the Hydraulic Engineer and Mr. Jack, the Government Geologist, might decide upon. The day before yesterday they were at Jericho, and were now proceeding towards the Drummond Range with a view of deciding upon a promising locality for sinking; and as soon as the locality was decided upon Mr. Arnold was to follow with his machinery and commence operations.

Mr. CHUBB said he hoped if the gentlemen referred to had gone to Jericho they had not fallen amongst thieves. He thought that a proper opportunity to refer to another matter which might receive attention from the Government during the recess. Some legislation might be considered necessary next session with regard to private dams along main roads—that was with regard to dams in the interior upon creeks which in some seasons were almost dry. Of course, the law with regard to running streams would not apply in such cases, because those creeks did not run except in flood-time, and it was then that squatters took the opportunity of stopping the water. He had heard, not long ago, of cases in which squatters lower down rivers or creeks in the interior had threatened to cut the dams higher up in order to get water. Of course the right to do that was a question of law. He did not propose to discuss that point now. But he would point out that it was a very important subject for the consideration of the Government during the recess, and he trusted that if they introduced any legislation on the subject they would not overlook the matter he referred to.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the question of water conservation and legislation in that direction was under the consideration of the Government, and he was safe in assuring the Committee that it was the intention of the Government during the recess to devote their attention to a Bill dealing with the subject, which would be introduced at a very early date next session.

Mr. PALMER said there was another item connected with the vote that he would refer to. Two machines were obtained from Victoria last year, simply to bore to about 1,000 feet or 1,200 feet, at the expense of about £1,000 each. What had been the result? Were they to conclude that they had been a failure, because they had been superseded by the new American machine? With regard to the intention of the Government to consider the question of water storage next year, a similar promise had been given last session, and perhaps the session before as well. The amount devoted on the Loan Estimate of £10,000,000 for storage and conservation of water amounted to 3 per cent., whereas 5 per cent. was devoted to buildings of brick and stone which would never give any return.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that one of the machines recently obtained from Melbourne—the Australian water auger—was sent to the Hughenden and Winton road, and was now employed on Sesbania. It had been doing very good service indeed, and had reached a depth of 700 feet. But he was sorry to say that he had received information yesterday that one of the rods had broken in the bore, and it would be extremely difficult to get the drill through, and he was afraid the machine would be useless for a

time. So far as it had got, there were no indications of water, but the machine worked well. He would remind the hon. member for Burke who had criticised the amount down for water storage, that the season was very unfavourable for such operations at present. Men could not be obtained to work, and horses could not travel. Any work to be executed now must be within a few miles of permanent water. Even in the deep sinking experiments they could not go outside ten or twelve miles from water. That was the same in all works now carried on in the interior. The amount of money asked for by the Government at present must not be taken as an indication of the desire of the Government in connection with water storage in the interior.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he did not think the amount down for water conservation was one quarter enough. So great was the necessity for the discovery and storage of water in the country that he did not think any amount which might be expended would be too much. To read what had been done in other countries, and what had been done by the French in Algiers, would give them some remarkably good ideas on the subject. The French had three armies in Algiers—a fighting army first, and immediately after that, an army of engineers, whose duty it was to bore for water all over the desert, and they had turned those deserts into blooming gardens. The third army was an army of gardeners, who planted various trees—even now our blue-gum trees were flourishing there, and rendered the pestilential swamps in that country wholesome and fit places for Europeans to live in. If the Hydraulic Engineer was the man he took him to be, £700 a year was not sufficient for him—it was infinitely too little; and if the American engineer, Mr. Arnold, was as efficient as he understood, £500 a year was a miserable pittance for him. He hoped that during the recess the Government would turn their attention to the matter and not spare money in providing the very best and most efficient means of discovering and storing water in the colony.

Mr. NORTON said he did not think the Government would need any encouragement in the way of spending money. With regard to the salary on the Estimates, there were very good reasons why that should be the salary. He did not understand what the Treasurer said in answer to the hon. member for Bowen, in reference to the rights of private individuals in stopping creeks by dams. Was it the intention of the Government to take the matter into consideration, and give, so far as could be given, a right to the residents on creeks and watercourses to stop water in order to provide for themselves?

The PREMIER said the Government would endeavour to deal with the matter, but they could not undertake to do so, because hon. gentlemen who knew most about it could see most clearly the difficulties there were in the way. He did not think they were insuperable, but he would want time to consider them.

Mr. NORTON said he asked because he knew there was a difficulty. He was in a part of New South Wales where there were many of those dams which were filled by an ordinary fall of rain, while the dams lower down the creeks were not, so the owners of the lower ones took pick-axes and shovels and cut them through.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving that £7,640 be granted out of loan for Office Staff, Lines under Construction, Southern Division, said that he would take that opportunity of giving some information in reference to the extension of the Cooktown Railway. When the plans and sections were passing through the Committee,

there was some doubt as to whether the line would diverge to Palmerville or to Maytown, and he had promised to get information on the subject. He had since received the following telegram, which he would read to the Committee :—

"Your memo. twenty-first instant *re* Cooktown railway Direct route to Maytown should have diverged at about fifty miles. Parliamentary plans show route *via* Palmerville to Maytown the direct route to Maytown being nearly impracticable. I have requested Mr. Ballard to furnish further information these surveys having been executed under him during my absence.

"W. HANNAM."

From that explanation there could be no doubt that the plans which were submitted to the House were in the direction of Palmerville. On finding that, the Government requested the Postmaster-General to withdraw the plans in the Legislative Council, so that in the meantime the Government could endeavour to furnish themselves with the very best information obtainable as to whether it was possible or practicable to carry the line to Maytown direct. He had taken a good deal of trouble in looking over the various reports of the Engineer-in-Chief in connection with the survey, and they were condensed into a very small compass to the following effect :—

"The Minister's instructions, dated 17th October, 1881, authorises survey Cooktown towards the Palmer River." See attached copy of memo.

"The first section of the line to the Normanby River, about 32 miles in length, and passed 1st November, 1882, is called Cooktown to Maytown. The Chief Engineer, on September 23rd, 1882, when forwarding plans, sections, etc., for Parliament, wrote as follows :—

"Mr. Surveyor N. E. Amos reports that the mountains preclude the possibility of a more direct line towards Maytown.

"Chief Engineer's memo. of 22nd October, 1884, reporting on the second section, advocates generally the route *via* Palmerville, as the only practicable one, but no instructions were issued on this though seen by the Minister.

"Can find no trace of any approval from this office of the route *via* Palmerville.

"The instructions referred to on page 124 of annual report (1884), appear to be Mr. Ballard's instructions to his survey staff; at any rate they were not from this office."

The memorandum alluded to was as follows :—

"Brisbane, 17th October, 1881.

"Memo.

"The Secretary for Public Works desires me to instruct you to make arrangements to carry out the following railway surveys in your district :—

"Mackay to Eton.

"Central Railway to Springsure.

"Ravenswood Junction (Northern Railway) to Ravenswood.

"Cooktown towards the Palmer River.

"A. O. HERBERT,

"Commissioner for Railways.

"Chief Engineer,

"Rockhampton."

He was free to confess that when he brought down the plans he had not satisfied himself sufficiently as to the direction in which the railway was going; and there was no doubt that when he said the third section was common to both routes, he was in error. Up to the 50-mile peg was in the direct line to Maytown, and all he could promise was that the Government, having withdrawn the plans and sections of the third section, would take care to furnish themselves with the best information possible, as to whether it was advisable to carry the line direct, or *via* Palmerville. Beyond the 50 miles, no tenders would be called for until the Government had fully satisfied themselves on the point. Referring to the vote under consideration, the amount had been increased from £7,590 to £7,640 in consequence of one or two clerks having been promoted.

1885—4 S

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he would like to ask the Minister for Works if, since a portion of the third section was withdrawn in the Upper House, it was his intention to call for tenders for the construction of the second section up to the 50-mile peg, where the line was in common; and, if so, at about what time he would be prepared to do so? His reason for asking was that the first section was nearly completed, and there would soon be some 170 or 200 men paid off. If the line was not proceeded with those men would disperse throughout the country, and it would be a difficult task for the contractor to get them together again.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that if the hon. member had only waited until the next item came on he would have got all the information he required. In the report he had read from the Chief Engineer, Mr. Ballard, it was represented to the Government that it was desirable that a further extension should be proceeded with. He saw no difficulty whatever in calling tenders for the construction of the second section, amounting, he thought, to about twenty miles. He was satisfied that long before the line was constructed up to the 50-mile peg the Government would be in a position to call for tenders for a further extension. It was the intention of the Government to call for tenders for the construction of the second section at once, relying upon the assistance of the House in passing a further extension on the reopening of Parliament. He hoped that information would be satisfactory.

Mr. HAMILTON said when the plans and specifications of the third section of the Cooktown and Maytown Railway lately came before the House he was so strongly impressed with the idea that the third section was not common to both the Maytown and Palmer routes that he refused to vote for the passing of those plans until the Minister for Works assured the House that he was officially informed that the survey of the third section was common to both routes, and also gave his pledge that under no circumstances would he issue tenders for construction towards Palmerville, past the point which was common to both routes. It now transpired that they were right in obtaining that pledge, as it had been since shown that the statement of the Minister for Works that the third section was common to both routes was incorrect, as the third section led to Palmerville only. That mistake, however, instead of delaying the completion of the railway, should actually hasten it. It should have that effect in the following way: The Minister for Works had previously stated that tenders would not be issued for the construction of the second section, because it terminated at an unfit site for a station; that, in consequence, tenders would not be issued for construction of the second section until plans of the third section were passed and a permanent survey of it made, after which a tender for the construction of the combined second and third section would be issued. He would like to know from the hon. Minister for Works if that was not what he said?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. HAMILTON said that, under those circumstances, calling for tenders for the combined second and third sections would have prevented railway construction for six months. He made that statement on the authority of the Minister for Works. Delay to that extent of time would have been caused through having to wait until the permanent survey of the third section was concluded before the tender for the combined second and third sections could be called for. Now, however, there was nothing to delay the Minister for Works in calling for tenders for the

construction of the second section. The second section consisted of twenty miles, and judging by the time occupied in constructing the first section—about two years—it was evident that the second section would take at least a year to finish. Before the expiration of that time the Minister could have ready plans of the third section towards Maytown, and get a permanent survey of it made, so that when the House met next year they could pass those plans without delay and issue tenders for the construction of the third section before the second section, which the Minister for Works had stated that he would issue tenders immediately for the construction of, was finished. He might say that to take the railway to Maytown *via* Palmerville would be a perfect farce. Although he was not an engineer he knew sufficient from having travelled over both routes to Maytown to know that the road by Palmerville, in addition to being far longer, would cost much more. The railway, if taken by Palmerville, would have to cross the river there, which was very wide; as to take it to Maytown by the Cooktown side of the river, they would have to go through some five or six miles of hills. After crossing the Palmer River at Palmerville the railway would, after travelling about nine or ten miles, have to cross Sandy Creek, which was wider than many rivers. After running a few miles further it would have to recross the Palmer River to get to Maytown. The cost for bridges alone that way would be enormous, and it would be an absolute absurdity, considering the state of the country, to make the railway by way of Palmerville.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that he had already stated that the Government had been under a misapprehension with respect to the railway from Cooktown to Maytown. He had given the hon. member the fullest information he possibly could, and the hon. member ought to be satisfied. He had assured the Committee that the Government would proceed as early as possible to call tenders for the second section, and long before that was completed they would have come to a conclusion as to what direction the line should take.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he thought they had had enough discussion on that item of the Estimates. They had got a great deal of work to do yet, and if they seriously intended to finish the business that week they should go on with it at once. He did not want any further discussion upon that, but as the Minister for Works had introduced the subject he must congratulate him on having come forward honestly and stated how the facts stood with regard to the Cooktown and Maytown railway. The hon. gentleman had acted in a straightforward way in stating the exact position in which the Government were placed. The Minister for Works, in what he read to the House, had made what he considered the *amende honorable*. He had told them how the case stood—that they had been the victims of a sort of conspiracy. Wherever the source of the conspiracy might be, the story was a miserable one, because it reflected upon the character of public servants. It made them wonder what position they could possibly hold as the custodians of the public purse in the colony. He would state in a few words their position; in fact, it was just as the hon. member had read it out. The Government voted a certain amount of money for the Cooktown and Maytown Railway. The House passed the plans and specifications of two sections. Those were approved of and the construction of the railway, so far, went on. Then the Minister for Works asked for the

approval of the House for the plans and specifications of the third section—about twelve miles. Doubts were expressed at the time as to whether that twelve miles of railway went to Maytown at all or not, and whether the Government were really following out the dictates of Parliament in saying that the railway should be made from Cooktown to Maytown, and were not really saying that it should be made to some other place. The Minister for Works then honestly stated that from all the information he had at the time, the plans and specifications submitted to the House were the plans and specifications of the third section of a railway from Cooktown to Maytown. The hon. gentleman was backed up by the member for the district, who had recently been in the district, and who, from his local knowledge, might be supposed to be an authority in the matter. That hon. member assured them that the twelve miles were in a direct line, to Maytown. On the strength of those assertions, although those were grave doubts in the minds of some hon. gentlemen on the question—he was himself almost certain that the line did not go to Maytown at all—but on those assertions those plans actually passed. The Minister for Works had stated now that with the sanction of himself or of any of the subordinates in his office, so far as they could be got at at present, and with the authority of the Engineer-in-Chief or his subordinates so far as they could be reached by the Commissioner for Railways, no instructions were given to the engineer to deviate from the course approved by Parliament—namely, a line from Cooktown to Maytown; but by some unknown means it was found the department had actually sent down a section of a railway, called the third section of the railway from Cooktown to Maytown, and which the Minister for Works came forward now and plainly stated was not a section of the railway from Cooktown to Maytown at all. That showed that the Government had been grossly imposed upon, and they innocently—because he did not think they meant to impose upon Parliament at all—in the absence of any information from the department, imposed upon Parliament; so that the fact of the matter was that Parliament at the present time had put itself into such an absurd position that they were forced to arrest their action in another House. They had actually approved of the third section of the Cooktown and Maytown Railway, and it was now admitted by the Minister for Works that the plans they approved offormed a section of a different railway altogether. He gave the Minister for Works all credit for the honest way in which he had come forward and admitted the facts. The instructions of Parliament were that the railway should be made to Maytown. If it was now to be diverted from that place it would not be by any conspiracy amongst the engineers or people of the colony, but by the Government's own deliberative judgment. If they did see fit cause to alter the route let it be done by their own action, and not by fraud on the part of some people who had deluded the Government in the past and who had made the Government delude the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he would make it his business to inspect the lines of survey. He would go over the route himself. He had, in former cases, done exceedingly good service by travelling over proposed routes of railway. Once he saw a country it was no use trying to persuade him against his own opinion, that a particular route was right or wrong. He would pledge himself to the Committee that if he remained in office he would make it his duty to go over the route of the Maytown line, and he was perfectly satisfied that he would come to a proper conclusion.

Mr. SMYTH said that some six months ago the first section of the line from Gympie was approved of. At that time the House was given to understand that the second section would follow very soon afterwards—that the plans were almost ready, and that as soon as they were ready they would be placed on the table. Subsequently the Minister stated that the plans were ready, but were kept in his office, and that it was not reasonable to expect two contracts for two following sections of a line to be let one immediately after the other. He (Mr. Smyth) however, saw nothing unreasonable in that demand. There would be no trouble at all in conveying the material for the second section from Brisbane or Maryborough to Caboolture by sea. The two contracts could then have been going on simultaneously, and in a very short time that North Coast line would have been completed to Brisbane. The Minister for Works might, at all events, have called for tenders for the second section, and if he had found that the work could not be done in the way he (Mr. Smyth) suggested, for a reasonable amount, he could have allowed it to stand over. He (Mr. Smyth) was, however, satisfied that the material could be conveyed from Brisbane to Caboolture in steam vessels, and landed there so as to enable the section to be built as cheaply as in any other way.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member for Gympie was not satisfied with one section of railway at a time, but expected him to build a number of sections all at once. He could scarcely be expected to sympathise with the hon. member. He (Mr. Miles) was a man of business, and he intended to carry out his share of the business of the country in such a way as to do equal justice to all classes of the community. If the hon. member for Gympie thought he was going to get the Government to commence the railway at both ends and in the middle as well, he was slightly mistaken; he was asking a great deal too much. He would promise the hon. member that the North Coast Railway would be pushed ahead as fast as possible, and he hoped that that would satisfy him.

Mr. HAMILTON said he wished to call attention to the very great number of curves on the North Coast line. At about the 18-mile peg the engineers who marked out the line appeared to have gone curve-mad. It seemed to have been done simply to dodge a few earthworks and save money; but it would in the end prove to be false economy by increasing the wear and tear of rolling-stock. It was also attended with increased danger, and would practically increase the distance between Brisbane and Gympie, because the Chief Engineer would not let the trains travel so fast over a narrow-gauge line full of curves as on a straight course. Owing to the same cause the journey from Maryborough to Gympie took about four hours, when it ought to be done easily in half the time.

Mr. JORDAN said that apart from the question of lengthening the Dry Dock, as to which, he repeated, he had had a distinct promise from the Minister for Works, he wished to mention another matter, about which, as that might be the last opportunity he might have that session, he felt it his duty, at the risk of detaining the Committee, to say a few words. On the second day of the present session, he asked the Minister for Works a plain question, of which he gave notice. It was, whether the exact route of the extension of the South Brisbane branch of the Southern and Western Railway into Melbourne street had been determined, and when the extension was likely to be commenced? To that question the hon. gentleman replied the next day, that the plans would be submitted for approval during the

present session. That was a distinct promise, not made to him as one of the representatives of South Brisbane, but made to the House. Where were those plans? Wherever they were it was too late now to submit them for approval during the present session. He had a perfect right to ask why that promise had not been fulfilled. Towards the close of last session the extension of the South Brisbane branch was approved of by the House; it was a part of the Works policy of the Government. One or two hon. members on the other side at first made some objection to it, on the ground that the line would get no passenger traffic; but when he called their attention to the fact that they had already approved of the railway to the Tweed, to Southport, to the Upper Logan, and to Cleveland, and that when those railways were completed there was bound to be a large passenger traffic, for which the railway station beyond the Dry Dock at the further extremity of Stanley street would be exceedingly inconvenient, no further objection was made, and the resolution was passed without further remark. They had a right to expect that that extension would be proceeded with immediately, especially as a distinct promise had been made by the Minister for Works that the plans would be submitted to Parliament for approval during the present session. He feared it was impossible to make any impression on the Minister for Works; but he would appeal to the Committee, and especially to the Premier, against the injustice, as he considered it, which had been suffered at the hands of the Minister for Works by the people of South Brisbane.

The PREMIER said personally he did not remember the promise being made that the hon. gentleman had referred to, which appeared to have been made on the second day of the session. No doubt at that time it was the intention of the Government to lay those plans on the table of the House during the present session, and to ask Parliament to approve of them; but it was no uncommon thing for the intentions of the Government at the commencement of the session to be somewhat frustrated or modified during the progress of the session. The thing happened every year. The Government no doubt intended to do that during the session, but they had been compelled to modify their intention. He had this to say with respect to hon. members objecting to various plans not having been laid upon the table: that although a large loan was authorised last year it was clear that it could not be all spent at once. They could not raise all the money at once, nor would it be desirable, if they could, that they should do so. The expenditure of that money must be spread over a certain time. It would be extremely injurious to the interests of the colony that all the expenditure should take place in one year. The Government were obliged to regulate the expenditure and keep it from becoming too large in any one year, because otherwise it could only lead to subsequent collapse. The Government were bound to consider those things, and to see that no more than a proper proportion of expenditure for public works took place in one year. In considering what were the most urgent public works it was thought that, as a general rule, it was better to push on with railways at a distance than so push on with those near the terminus. One exception to that rule was the proposed extension to Fortitude Valley, which was not approved of by the House. That was the only exception the Government had made this session. The extension into South Brisbane would be required when there was a large passenger traffic, but having regard to the condition of the existing lines leading into

South Brisbane—seeing that it would be a considerable time before a large passenger traffic would come in, and that there was ample time before that to provide for that extension—the conclusion the Government came to, towards the end of the session, was that they would be justified in allowing that line to wait a little longer. The Government had not changed their intention in any way with respect to that line, but, seeing that the circumstances were as they were, they thought they were justified, not in breaking faith with the inhabitants of South Brisbane any more than with other parts of the colony, but in not laying the plans on the table during the present session. That was how the matter stood. He did not think that the constituencies simply regarded the expenditure of public money within their borders as the only one object for which the Government existed. He had much higher faith in the intelligence and patriotism of the electors of the colony. He was quite sure that—he could not say no constituency, but he was satisfied that there were few constituencies that would not willingly recognise reason in a matter of that kind. They might be annoyed, impatient, and irritated, as people generally were when they did not get what they wanted; but he was sure that the intelligence and patriotism of the people in the different parts of the colony would enable them to see that there were quite sufficient reasons for the course the Government had adopted, and that under the circumstances they were not in any way to blame, but had only done what was right.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said if the hon. gentleman had made that speech at the commencement of the session instead of at the end, when they expected to finish work this week, he would not have found his majority so very pliable as they had been all through the session. The hon. gentleman now deigned to talk about the intelligence and patriotism of the majority supporting him, but what did their patriotism consist of except the desire on their part to get a certain amount out of the £10,000,000 loan? That was all they wanted, and the moment they found they could not get it the majority would be transferred to the other side of the House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS on the Government side: No, no!

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: He knew what it was.

The PREMIER: From sad experience.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: The hon. gentleman had raised his Frankenstein—his majority; he could not go on and quarrel with his Frankenstein, but now Frankenstein was quarrelling with him, as was illustrated by the speech of the hon. member for South Brisbane. The hon. gentleman's majority was held together by the £10,000,000 loan and the promises that had been made in connection with it, and now he said of course they could not spend it all at once. But he could not bind his majority together unless he did spend money. The Government had been living on spending money all through. It suited the hon. gentleman at the beginning of the session to commence with promises. There was nothing said then about not spending money on the South Brisbane line or any other line that had been promised. Then the Minister was quite prepared to lay the plans on the table and ask the approval of Parliament during the present session, but members now saw the session drawing to a close and it was not done. The Government commenced by promises, but when they saw their Estimates pretty well through, and that they were safe—at all events, for the recess—they turned round and said, "We cannot

fulfil the promises we made." Hon. members on the Opposition side knew all along that they would not do so; and if the hon. member for South Brisbane thought he was going to get his "whack" sooner than others he was very much mistaken. If the Premier came to the same conclusion with many more of his supporters he would find that he would have a great deal more trouble in burying his Frankenstein than in raising him.

Mr. JORDAN said he was not satisfied with the answer of the Premier.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: There are a good many more in the same position.

Mr. JORDAN said the hon. gentleman had given the people of South Brisbane a great deal more credit for patience than he thought they were entitled to. He was afraid the hon. gentleman would find they were not the mild sensible people he imagined they were. They were not satisfied to wait, and on this ground especially: There was a distinct promise made at the beginning of the session that the plans for that line should be not merely laid upon the table of the House, but submitted for the approval of Parliament during the present session, and they were dissatisfied that that had not been done. That was only part of the injustice they had had to submit to from the Government. It was promised eighteen months ago that the wharf should be extended by 700 feet; they got a grant from Parliament for that specific purpose last session, which was pleaded for, not by himself alone, but by the hon. member for Mulgrave, on the ground that it was needed to develop the coal trade of the colony; but it had not been done or attempted to be done. Then they had something like a promise that the Dry Dock should be lengthened, but nothing had been done in regard to that either. On those three grounds the people of South Brisbane were dissatisfied—three distinct promises that had been broken.

The PREMIER said the hon. the leader of the Opposition had said that the Government were kept together by spending money—

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: I beg to correct the hon. gentleman. I said his Government was kept together by promises.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman had no warrant for that except the warrant of his own experience. He (the Premier) had a far higher opinion of the gentlemen of the colony who supported the present Government. He should be very sorry, indeed, to be the head of a Government that was kept together by promises of spending money. He should scorn to occupy such a position, and if the Government was to be kept together in that way he hoped they would get somebody else to lead it—he certainly should not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that the hon. member for South Brisbane had accused him of having broken a promise in connection with wharves and in connection with bringing the railway into South Brisbane. He looked upon it as the duty of the Government not to spend money unnecessarily; but there was something more than that. A syndicate had been put up to purchase the land, and to endeavour to fleece the Government to an enormous extent. He was under the impression that with a little waiting and a little patience the Government would be able to resume that land at a fair and reasonable price. If the hon. member for South Brisbane thought he was going to rush the Government into all kinds of extravagance, he was mistaken—woefully mistaken. He was perfectly satisfied there was not one single member in the Committee who would not admit that, so far as passenger accommodation was concerned, South Brisbane had got all

that was necessary for the present. It was true he had promised; but if the whole community was to suffer for that one promise would it not be worth while to reconsider that promise? The junior member for South Brisbane was under the impression that South Brisbane was the whole of Queensland, and no place but South Brisbane had a right to consideration; but he was painfully mistaken. So long as he remained in the Works Department South Brisbane would be treated the same as any other part of the colony. He did not care if the hon. gentleman did accuse him of lying; he would not force him to do what was wrong. He hoped the hon. gentleman, old as he was, would yet learn a little common sense and wait, and South Brisbane would have all it was entitled to.

Mr. CHUBB said the Minister for Works had stated that the hon. member for South Brisbane was trying to persuade him to do what was wrong. The hon. gentleman was only trying to make the Minister for Works keep his word. But he did not rise to deal only with that matter. He rose to point out that if the constituency of the hon. member for South Brisbane had received an injustice at the hands of the Minister how much more had his (Mr. Chubb's) constituency suffered! When the £10,000,000 was passed last session certain works were provided for, amongst which was the work referred to by the hon. member for South Brisbane. But nearly four years ago a large sum of money was voted for the construction of a railway in his (Mr. Chubb's) constituency. He did not complain so much that that work had not been gone on with, because of what the Minister for Works did when he took office? More than two years ago he promised that he would substitute a railway to a coalfield in the district, which he said was a good one, and would be a permanent benefit to the constituency. At the commencement of that session he knew that the hon. gentleman had the plans and specifications of upwards of fifty miles of that railway in his possession, and he could have tabled them if he had been so inclined. When he asked the hon. gentleman when he was going on with the railway he said the matter required further consideration. He waited for some time, and during the interval a discussion arose on some other matter and the hon. gentleman then said that the coalfield had turned out a decided success, and the whole thing was all arranged. The session was now nearly over, and the hon. gentleman had not taken a step forward in the construction of that railway. He did not expect the hon. gentleman to table the plans that session, or any other session. He should be very much surprised when he did.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had not the slightest objection to the hon. gentleman talking to his constituents. He would be reported in *Hansard* and show his constituents the interest he took in them. If the hon. gentleman thought he was going to drive him into any course that he thought injurious to the colony, he was much mistaken. He had done his level best to do justice to all classes of the community, and he would not be pushed or hampered.

Mr. HAMILTON said he would ask the hon. gentleman whether the engineers received their expenses also? The Chief Engineer received £900 a year, and the Engineer for the Southern and Western Railways received £800. In the case before them the Chief Engineer received £500 and the others £450. He wished to know if there was any special sum put down out of which their expenses were paid? At page 72 the Chief Engineer was put down for £900 a year, and at page 91 £500 a year. That

was the total he received. His reason for asking the question was that, when the estimates for Harbours and Rivers was on, the Colonial Treasurer said the duties of the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers were far more responsible than those of the Engineer for Railways, and he said the Engineer for Railways had a much larger remuneration. The Colonial Treasurer was slightly in error in making that statement, because though Mr. Nisbet got only £1,200 a year salary his expenses were paid out of contingencies, while the Engineers for Railways, who got as salaries £1,400 and £1,300 a year, had to pay their own expenses; that was to say, the more highly paid engineer had to pay £200 or £300 for his expenses, whereas Mr. Nisbet had £1,200 a year clear, and his expenses amounting to £200 or £300 a year were paid out of a distinct vote.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers simply drew travelling expenses when he had to travel, and the Chief Engineer for Railways did the same.

Mr. HAMILTON said he had another question to ask. He would like to know why the accountant, who was put down for £325 last year, only got £300?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the former officer had resigned, and his place had been filled by someone else.

Mr. HAMILTON said that was not the case. The salary last year was £325. There was a change of officers during the year, and the present occupant was put down at the rate of £300 a year, with the distinct understanding that if he gave satisfaction he would get the salary his predecessor received. He had every reason to believe that officer had given satisfaction, but the understanding entered into had not been carried out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he could only assure the hon. member that the accountant's salary had not been reduced. He was getting a higher salary than he received last year.

Mr. HAMILTON said the peculiar gestures which the Minister for Works was entertaining the Committee with indicated that he was suffering from St. Vitus' dance. At all events he was making a mistake. He (Mr. Hamilton) knew very well that a distinct breach of faith had taken place, not only in that case, but also in several other cases. Officers were appointed during the year to fill posts vacated by other clerks, and were told that though at first they would not get the same salaries as their predecessors, if they gave satisfaction they would the following year get those salaries. In nearly every instance a distinct breach of faith had taken place.

Mr. BROOKES said he thought the senior member for Cook was going rather too far. He was asking questions "no fellow could understand." He would ask the hon. member as a gentleman not to go on?

Mr. HAMILTON said he did not expect the hon. member for South Brisbane to understand any sensible question. He was asking plain questions, and as the answer had been refused, he had supplied it himself.

The PREMIER said it was commonly the custom when a clerk was promoted to a new appointment to give him a salary lower than that on the Estimates. It was then a question for the decision of the Government, when the next Estimates were being framed, whether he should receive an increase or not. When the Government determined to give no increases, of course those officers got no further increase that year.

Mr. HAMILTON: There was a distinct understanding in this case.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he supposed that as that question was disposed of there was a chance of getting to matters of importance. On the present estimate, the Chief Engineer was paid £500 a year for the construction of railways. A few nights ago they voted the same officer £900 a year; for what purpose? His only employment at present was the construction of railways. The whole of construction was paid out of Loan, and why was not that gentleman's salary wholly debited to Loan? There was a difference, of course, when he had charge of lines, not only under construction, but actually existing. The Chief Engineer's only work was in connection with construction, and he should be paid wholly from Loan.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member for Townsville must be well aware that the Chief Engineer was almost entirely relieved of the work in connection with construction. Railways were in course of construction from Point Danger to the Gulf of Carpentaria, yet the hon. member wanted to know why the Chief Engineer did not superintend all that. It was absolutely impossible that he could do so, and a third officer would have to be appointed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he understood the question to be why the whole salaries were not charged to Loan, and he believed that the maintenance of some of the lines such as the Maryborough and Gympie and Bundaberg lines, was charged to Revenue and the balance to Loan.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that might be an explanation, but he found that they had now an officer at £800 a year in charge of existing lines, an item which had not existed before.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. gentleman must know that the Chief Engineer was under the Civil Service Act, and received £500 a year from Revenue and the balance from Loan. It would be an injustice to place the whole of his salary to Loan.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said it came to this: that because Mr. Stanley was an officer of the Civil Service he still received £900 a year from Revenue, when it should be paid from Loan. He thought that was hardly fair, and that Mr. Stanley's services ought to be paid for according to the work he did.

The PREMIER said his impression was that they charged a great deal too much to Loan. The salaries of the permanent officers ought to be charged to Revenue.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he believed they did charge too much to Loan. Anyone would believe that who heard that they charged such items as the Duke of Edinburgh's expenses to Loan.

The PREMIER: Who did that?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: The Government of the day.

The PREMIER: Did they really?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said when they employed an officer who was engaged on the work of construction his salary ought to be charged to Loan, just as the salary of any engineer or overseer engaged on construction was charged to Loan.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that the sum of £11,965 be granted for Construction staff.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked if there was any reason why the amounts asked for should be larger than last year?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said four additional officers had been appointed. The Government were pushing on railways in all directions, and that could not be done without additional expense.

Mr. PALMER said the question had been raised as to what should be paid out of Loan and what out of Revenue. There was an item, "Inspector for permanent way," put down on the Estimates, and if that should not be paid from Revenue he did not know what should.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the principal inspector of permanent ways was employed on construction, and he was paid out of Loan.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked who the inspector was? He could understand inspectors of permanent way upon different lines under construction; but a principal inspector over those gentlemen he could not understand.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that the name of the principal inspector for permanent way was Mr. Atwell, who was at present superintending the work of changing the gradient on the Sandgate line.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he supposed he was called "principal inspector" simply because he was the senior inspector, and not because he had charge of the other inspectors. He saw that the next inspector had the same salary.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it had been found absolutely necessary to have someone to superintend the work of altering the gradients on the Sandgate line, and Mr. Atwell was in charge of that work.

The PREMIER said he understood also, that besides being in charge of that particular work, he had to travel on the different lines. It was desirable that the Chief Engineer should know more of what was going on than he could see by travelling himself. The officer in question had, in addition to the work mentioned, to travel over lines in course of construction.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Engineer-in-Chief had the district engineers to do the work for which it appeared a travelling inspector of permanent way was appointed. If the Chief Engineer saw that the district engineers did their work, there would be no necessity for that inspector to look after the other inspectors.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that the sum of £10,150 be voted out of Loan for Extension of Surveys. The sum voted last year for Extension surveys was £9,475, and the only increase was for three additional surveyors.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that the sum of £1,600 be voted out of Loan for the Engineer for Existing Lines. He might mention that the sum was made up of the salaries of an assistant engineer, a superintendent of signals, draftsmen, and inspectors. The amount was provided for out of Loan, the work done being in connection with station buildings, sidings, and signals, on lines under construction.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Minister in charge of the estimate gave no reason for the appointment of quite a new staff of six individuals, costing the country £1,600. The only information they had had from the hon. member was that the money was provided out of Loan. The officer in charge of existing lines and stations should be paid from Revenue and not from Loan.

The PREMIER said that the same thing occurred to him, and he had asked the Commissioner about it. The reason given to him was that it was for the extension of existing lines. There was a great lot of work in connection with existing lines in the way of new work, and that work had hitherto always been charged to Loan, but the salaries were not formerly placed on the Estimates. As he had said before, he believed they charged too much to Loan. A great many of those small extensions of existing lines might be charged to Revenue, but it had never been the practice to do so, and hitherto, though charged to Loan, they had not been voted by the Committee.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the men mentioned in the Estimates were permanent officers of the Government, working on existing railways that were earning interest, or trying to earn interest, and they should not appear at all on the Loan Estimates.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said they were told that the work of those officers was confined entirely to work of new construction.

The PREMIER: That is the information given to me.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked why the heading was "Engineer for Existing Lines"? The heading was an unfortunate one.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that, besides that, the information given was wrong.

The PREMIER: What information ought I to get?

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that the hon. gentleman should get proper information, and he had not got proper information. The information given to him was incorrect. The heading was right, but the information given was wrong; those engineers were employed upon permanent work on existing lines.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the information he had was that the greater number of those officers were employed on account of new work, the expenditure for which was provided out of Loan. The assistant engineer did a considerable amount of work upon lines under construction, and that was why his salary was placed on the Loan Estimates. In consequence of the new system of signalling, the expenditure in connection with those salaries was necessarily connected with new works.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said they were told by the Premier the previous day that "any stick would do to beat a dog." It seemed now that any statement was put forth to satisfy that Committee on the last day or two of the session, when the Government were hurrying through the Estimates.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH asked whether, from the information the Premier had now received from the engineer, he could say whether it was the proper thing to charge those salaries to Loan? On the face of it they ought to be paid from Revenue.

The PREMIER said that, looking at the question as an abstract question, he thought too many things were charged to Loan, but in accordance with the system previously adopted with regard to their railways those salaries were properly chargeable to Loan, and the Government were not going to make any change in the system at present.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: These are new billets.

The PREMIER said they were not new billets. Those officers had been employed for some time, and paid out of Loan; but their salaries had not been formally voted on the Estimates.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: What were they paid from before they were put on the Estimates?

The PREMIER said they were paid out of contingencies of Loan. Works, as they knew, were continually going on on nearly all existing lines, and it had been the practice to pay out of Loan the salaries of the officers in charge of those works.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that in looking over the Estimates it struck him as very extraordinary that those salaries should be charged to Loan, and on inquiring into the matter he was informed that it was the usual practice, and it was considered a legitimate thing to charge stations, sidings, and signals to Loan. He did not think so himself, but that was as he found it. There was nothing new in the proposal.

Mr. STEVENSON said the Committee were perfectly satisfied with the explanation given by the Minister for Works, and if the Premier and Colonial Treasurer, who did not appear to understand the matter, had not interfered with the hon. gentleman, it was very probable that the estimate would have been passed long before by the Committee.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he understood the Premier to say that the Assistant Engineer for Existing Lines was an old appointment, and the salary simply appeared formally on the Estimates.

The PREMIER: Yes; of all the officers.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: How are their salaries paid?

The PREMIER: Out of Loan.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Without appearing on the Estimates at all?

The PREMIER: Yes.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: What is the name of the assistant engineer?

The PREMIER: Mr. Labatt.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: How long has he been Assistant Engineer for Existing Lines?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: For about five years.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he had not the slightest doubt that those gentlemen whose salaries were placed on that vote might have been employed in the Government Service five years, but he denied that there had been such an appointment as assistant engineer for existing lines for the period. Why was the salary of the Engineer for Existing Lines charged to Revenue, and the salary of the Assistant Engineer for Existing Lines charged to Loan? That seemed a ridiculous arrangement.

The PREMIER said there was an engineer and an assistant engineer for existing lines, whose salaries were paid out of Revenue, because they were employed in connection with the work on existing lines; but in addition to that work there were additions continually being made to existing lines, and following the practice of the department, the engineer in charge of those additions was paid from Loan.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that on the Estimates-in-Chief, on page 72, there was an engineer for existing lines whose salary they had voted when they passed that estimate. They now proposed to vote salaries for new billets that had not been before the Committee at all—namely, an assistant engineer and other officers for existing lines. Why should their salaries be paid from Loan, and the salary of the Engineer for Existing Lines from Revenue?

The PREMIER said if the hon. gentleman would take the trouble to read the Estimates, on page 72, he would see that there was an assistant engineer for existing lines paid out of Revenue, and other officers also. He (the Premier) had pointed out that in addition to those officers, whose duties were expressly confined to the maintenance of existing lines, there was an assistant engineer for existing lines to look after the construction of additions, and it had been the practice to pay the salary of the officer superintending those additions from Loan, but it had not previously been placed in the Estimates.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman was now giving them information which he had received from the Ministers' gallery, and he did not think it was correct. He would give his version of the matter from memory. It was only a short time ago that the Engineer for Existing Lines was appointed. The hon. gentleman would no doubt admit that. The present Chief Engineer was then Engineer for Existing Lines as well as Engineer for Construction, and he had an assistant. The present Government created a new department entirely—a construction department—and they left the staff in connection with engineers for existing lines still under the control of the gentleman who was no longer Engineer for Existing Lines. That was how that £1,600 was to be accounted for. If the hon. gentleman would inquire into that, probably he would find that his statement was more correct than the one made by the hon. gentleman.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member for Townsville knew perfectly well how those things were managed. Last year those salaries were paid from Loan, but were not placed on the Estimates. The department, however, came to the conclusion to put them down separately and have them voted by Parliament. If he had chosen he might have paid those officers from Loan, and hon. members would never have known anything at all about it, but the Government did not want to deceive the Committee, but to give them full information. He hoped the vote would be allowed to pass.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said the Minister for Works was quite right in putting those salaries on the Estimates, and the same reason that induced the hon. gentleman to put them on the Estimates actuated them in wishing to understand why they placed them there. What he should like to know was, whether the staff they were voting the £1,600 for was under the Engineer of Existing Lines or under the Engineer-in-Chief?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that they were under the instructions of the Engineer of Existing Lines, and were employed on sidings, station buildings, and signal stations.

Mr. STEVENSON said he hoped the Government would no longer obstruct business. It was time they got on with something else.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he hoped the Minister for Works would inquire after the House rose as to whether there were not two engineering staffs in the Railway Department for doing the same work.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that £8,429 be voted to pay the salaries of the office staff for lines under construction in the Central and Northern Divisions. Hon. members would notice that an additional Chief Engineer had been appointed. The Government had come to the conclusion that it was utterly impossible for the Chief Engineer to supervise the whole of the works under construction, and had therefore

appointed Mr. Hannam as Chief Engineer of the Carpentaria and Cook Division at a salary of £800—the same amount that was received by the Chief Engineer for the Central and Northern Divisions. Mr. Hannam would supervise the construction of the railways from Cairns to Herberton, from Cooktown to Maytown, and from Normanton to Cloncurry. His appointment accounted for most of the increase in the vote. Formerly he received £600 a year with £400 as an allowance. He now received £800 and an allowance of £500. Hon. members would come to the conclusion that the Government had done right in appointing Mr. Hannam to supervise the construction of those lines. The Chief Engineer for the Southern lines had recently been very active. He had travelled over and inspected almost every line under his supervision. Mr. Ballard, Engineer of the Central and Northern lines, had not been so active, and he (the Minister for Works) would pay him a visit to see if he could not stir him up. He held that chief engineers ought to travel a great deal more than they did to see that the officers under them were doing their duty.

Mr. HAMILTON asked the Minister for Works when he would call for tenders for the first section of the Herberton Railway?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he would promise that tenders would be called for as quickly as possible.

Mr. HAMILTON said his object in asking the question was to get the Minister for Works to state publicly what he had told him privately. The information would give very great satisfaction to his (Mr. Hamilton's) constituents.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he hoped the hon. member would be satisfied with his assurance that tenders for the line would be called for as soon as possible.

Mr. HAMILTON said he was quite satisfied with the assurance the hon. gentleman had given.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH said that chief engineers were getting as common as Crown bailiffs. The fact that the Minister for Works could not stir Mr. Ballard out of his office was not a sufficient reason for the appointment of a third chief engineer. It was not the actual salary of the Chief Engineer himself that need be objected to, but the Chief Engineer must have a staff, and that fact did not come out in the Estimates in the way it ought. He was inclined to think that the appointment was scarcely necessary. Was it not possible to alter the present arrangement, and poke up Mr. Ballard and get the work done without creating an additional chief engineer and staff? Did the new chief engineer live on the line—had he become a denizen of the North?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the appointment of a chief engineer for the Carpentaria and Cook division had become absolutely necessary. Mr. Hannam was at present located, in a tent some seven miles from Cairns, on the work. It was his duty also to supervise the Cooktown Railway, and some months ago he was sent out to inspect a route that was being surveyed from Normanton to Cloncurry. He did not pretend to say that Mr. Hannam was superior to everybody else, but he had come to the conclusion that the time had arrived when the work should be divided, Mr. Ballard being unable to attend to the whole of it. The present Government were endeavouring to do all they could for the North, and yet, because they had appointed a chief engineer to look after the railways of the North hon. members opposite took exception to it. He was surprised—extremely surprised,

as he had hoped some little credit would be given to the Government for what they had done. The Government were extremely anxious to push on railway construction in the North, and he trusted the leader of the Opposition would not object to the appointment of Mr. Hannam to carry on that very desirable work.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was as anxious as the Minister for Works or the Government that railways in the North should be pushed on; but they would not be pushed on one mile faster per annum by the appointment of Mr. Hannam as chief engineer.

The PREMIER: Yes, they will.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman must know as well as he did that they would not be made a bit faster and would cost a great deal more.

The PREMIER: They will cost less and be made faster.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said they would cost more, because Mr. Hannam would have a staff in spite of the Premier; and then they would have the spectacle of three chief engineers and three staffs for the construction of 400 or 500 miles of railway per annum. It was all very well for the Minister for Works to appeal to hon. members to pass the vote because it was for the North. That might be an argument for territorial separation. The hon. gentleman admitted that it was impossible to carry on the work of railway construction in the colony without a special engineer for the North. It might be similarly argued that it was impossible to carry on the administration of the colony with only one Government located in the South. He maintained that there was no necessity for three chief engineers and three staffs in Queensland. What they wanted was more railways and fewer engineers. Those three gentlemen cost between them, in the shape of salaries and allowances, £4,050 a year; whereas, in New South Wales, where there were more miles of railway to construct, and where £2 were spent for every £1 spent in Queensland for railway construction, there was one chief engineer with a salary of £1,800. The staff of the chief engineer of New South Wales cost about £12,000 a year, while the two staffs that Queensland already had cost £18,000, and when Mr. Hannam got his staff that sum would be still further increased to £24,000 or £25,000. It was utterly absurd to tell the Committee that it was impossible to carry on the work of the country without a third chief engineer. If they would only make Mr. Ballard do his duty and leave his office, there would be no necessity for the appointment. As for Mr. Hannam having been sent to inspect the route for the Carpentaria Railway, that was his duty as inspector of surveys, under his old title. All the work that Mr. Hannam would have to do as chief engineer with an expensive staff was done by him before, under Mr. Ballard, without any staff and at a smaller salary. He had no patience with the Government going into gross extravagance like that. According to what the hon. gentleman said, Mr. Ballard could not be made to leave his office. Then why not order him to either do so or leave his position? He got £1,350 a year and travelling allowances, yet another individual must be appointed to do his work. They might as well appoint a chief engineer for the Maryborough district, and say that Mr. Stanley could not be got to leave his office.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was extremely sorry that nothing he did seemed to please the hon. gentleman. A night or two ago, when discussing the Estimates, the hon. gentleman charged him with reducing the salaries

of men in the North, saying that he paid them at a lower rate than those in the South; but to-night he compared the salaries paid in New South Wales with those paid at the Gulf of Carpentaria. Was the hon. gentleman consistent? The hon. gentleman knew very well that if ever the Railway Department was managed in a sensible way that time was now, and it was not fair for him to harp and harp on the management of the department. He maintained that it was absolutely necessary that there should be a third chief engineer, and that the appointment would pay the country tenfold; and the hon. gentleman knew that just as well as he did.

Mr. NORTON asked how the appointment originated?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that Mr. Ballard had a long time ago pointed out that it was impossible for him to be responsible for the various railways under construction. He was now going to give the Committee some information he hardly liked to give. Mr. Ballard had told him that he had raw and inexperienced engineers to supervise the work of contractors; and he hoped the hon. gentleman would give him credit for endeavouring to do what was fair between man and man. The Government were desirous of getting full value from the contractors, but they had no desire to harass them.

Mr. NORTON said he knew something about the appointment of the engineer in question. It originated with Mr. Ballard, by whom the recommendation was made before the present Minister for Works came into office. At the time the hon. member for Townsville resigned, Mr. Ballard was in England; he had a year's leave of absence on full pay, and during that time his place was filled up by Mr. Hannam. Almost immediately after his return he sent a letter to the Minister asking that a third engineer should be appointed. In addition to that, he asked that his salary should be raised, that he should receive so much for house-rent; and he made other recommendations which would have run the Government into considerable expense in addition to the amount already incurred in connection with his appointment. The reason Mr. Ballard gave was that, on account of the critical state of his health, he was not able to carry out his work as well as he wished, and that, in designing new works, it was absolutely imperative that he should be left perfectly to himself. On that account he asked for a diminution of his labours and an increase of his pay. The reply Mr. Ballard got was to the effect that he had received ample consideration for his services, which were admitted to have been of great value, but which had been recognised by a grant of £5,000. Mr. Ballard was also allowed a year's leave of absence on full pay, but directly he came back he found his health not sufficiently restored to enable him to carry out his work satisfactorily, and he therefore asked for a diminution of work and an increase of pay. There could be only one reply to that, and that reply was that if Mr. Ballard's health was in such a state that he did not feel able to carry on the work satisfactorily to himself it was quite within his power to send in his resignation. If he could not get out of his office, and still wished for the appointment of another engineer, surely he could not be as strong as he ought to be. He (Mr. Norton) thought it would be far better for the colony, if the condition of Mr. Ballard was such, that he should resign at once. He thought Mr. Ballard could carry out the work with Mr. Hannam under him to supervise it. Mr. Hannam was a very good officer; he had always done his work well, so far as he (Mr. Norton) had ever heard; he carried it out well during Mr. Ballard's

absence, and had always had the name of being a very competent and trustworthy officer. He supposed Mr. Hannam would still have charge of the Gulf surveys, and that he would supervise the construction of the Cairns railway, and was it necessary to appoint him chief engineer in order to have charge of that simple work? The whole thing was preposterous. There was not the slightest excuse why that fresh appointment should be made; and after all the statements that had been made that night it was pretty evident that the whole arrangement was Mr. Ballard's doing from first to last.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was sure the hon. member for Port Curtis would pardon him when he told him that the Railway and Public Works Department was now presided over by a Minister far superior to himself. He (the Minister for Works) said, with the greatest confidence, that he was far superior to the hon. member for Port Curtis, and that neither Mr. Ballard nor anybody else was able to get to windward of him. He always tried to protect the public interest, and he could assure the hon. member that as long as he (the Minister for Works) remained in office he might rest contented that the colony would be thoroughly protected.

Mr. NORTON said he should not think of placing himself in comparison with the hon. gentleman.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I apologise; the hon. gentleman was a far better Minister than I am.

Mr. NORTON said he did not know whether the hon. gentleman thought that was funny, but it was not. He had been funny in a peculiar way all the evening, but it was a funniness he had no occasion to be proud of. He (Mr. Norton) did not wish to say more or to call attention to it, more than that. He would point out that, when the hon. gentleman professed to be so very anxious to protect the best interests of the country, and not to be under the influence of Mr. Ballard, he ought to be able to give some better explanation of the railway to Maytown than he had given yet. He would advise the hon. gentleman to be a little more cautious. He was an excellent Minister in his own opinion. He had an immense fund of information with regard to the details of his office, which they were never able to extract from him. By any amount of questioning and badgering, it had been absolutely impossible for hon. members on either side to get the very smallest information from him with regard to the office of which he was in charge. There was not one question that had been put to him during the whole of the time the Estimates had been going through committee, which he had been able to answer without consulting his subordinates in order to get the answer from them. During the present discussion he had repeated the same thing over and over again—about his great desire to push on railways in the North; and, at the same time, simple, straightforward questions which had been put to him by members on both sides of the Committee had to be answered by his colleagues, the Premier and the Colonial Treasurer; and even after the hon. gentleman left his place and went over to the gallery to consult his subordinates he could not give answers when he came back. He thought if any proof of incompetency was wanted the hon. gentleman had given the greatest proof of it that evening, and of his value to the department and to the country.

The PREMIER said the question of appointing a chief engineer for the Northern division of the colony was considered very fully by the whole of the Government before the appointment

was made. It had become apparent—to his mind, at all events—that the Engineer in Rockhampton could not look after all the work under construction from there northward. There was the Central line, with its branches, and also the Mackay, Townsville, Cairns, Cooktown, and Gulf railways; and it was quite impossible for one man to look after all those works, they being so far apart from one another. It was no use comparing the position of the Engineer in the North with the Chief Engineer in New South Wales, because, with the exception of about sixty miles between Sydney and Newcastle, the Chief Engineer there could travel over the whole of his work by train. The work in New South Wales could not be compared to the work in this colony. No doubt the work there was larger from a money point of view than the work done in Queensland, but it had not to be done in so many different directions. A man might supervise the expenditure of a large sum of money on one railway, and yet not supervise with equal satisfaction the expenditure of a very much less sum on ten railways in ten different places. It was no use the hon. member for Townsville telling the Committee that the expenditure on railways in New South Wales was so much less than here, because, as had been pointed out on a previous occasion, the comparison he made was on a wrong basis. He took the revenue expenditure of New South Wales and compared it with the total revenue and loan expenditure in Queensland. Of course the revenue expenditure in New South Wales was less than the revenue and loan expenditure together in this colony, but if he took the same basis with regard to both colonies he would see that the expenditure in New South Wales was very much larger than it was here. As to whether another chief engineer was necessary in the North, that was, of course, a matter of opinion, but the Government had come to the conclusion, after full consideration, that it was; and he believed that Mr. Hannam would have a very fair amount of work to do in supervising the railways in his district, considering the great distance they were apart and the great care that would have to be exercised in their construction.

Mr. NORTON said he wished to refer to a matter that had been mentioned by the Minister for Works respecting the raw and inexperienced engineers under Mr. Ballard. If those men were inexperienced, whose fault was it that they had been appointed? Mr. Ballard himself recommended every one of the appointments that had been made, as far as he (Mr. Norton) knew; and in what way would the appointment of Mr. Hannam to the Northern Division alter that? The only difference would be that Mr. Hannam would be taken away from Mr. Ballard, and would not be in a position to help him. In that respect the railway lines under Mr. Ballard would be still in the hands of inexperienced engineers appointed by Mr. Ballard himself. If that gentleman would look after them, perhaps that would get him out of his office. The whole thing was absurd. The Premier had tried to disguise the fact that there was an unnecessary expenditure, because in New South Wales, with the exception of sixty miles between Sydney and Newcastle, the inspector could always travel by rail. The time occupied in travelling from Rockhampton to Cooktown would not take very long; the Engineer could go from one port to another, and the steamer would give him time to inspect each line of railway as he went up. What more could he want? He did not want to do that work; he wanted to get out of the northern work altogether.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the reason why Mr. Ballard only had raw and inexperienced engineers under him was simply

because the hon. gentleman had starved the department. He was sorry that the hon. gentleman had dragged out those matters; but he would not draw him out any more; he did not want to quarrel with the hon. gentleman.

Mr. NORTON said he did not know why the hon. gentleman should charge him with having starved the department. He remembered one particular occasion when he had to insist that the salary of one of the officers appointed by Mr. Ballard should be raised—the gentleman who had to take charge of the extension to Charters Towers. He was being paid a much smaller sum than any other man in the department, and he insisted that his salary should be made equal to that of others appointed at the same time. All the appointments were made on the recommendation of Mr. Ballard, and he did not fancy that the hon. gentleman or any other Minister for Works would make appointments without the concurrence of the engineer in charge of the line. He was sure that, so far as he was concerned, the department was not starved.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Premier had told them that the appointment was brought before the Cabinet and deliberated upon coolly and calmly before it was approved of. He was very sorry for the judgment of the gentlemen who composed the Cabinet—that they had nothing else to do but to appoint engineers, because Mr. Ballard would not leave his office. If the hon. Minister for Works had asked Mr. Hannam if he were willing to undertake the whole of the work which Mr. Ballard was supposed to do, he would have said "Yes," and would have been able to do it. He was certain of that because he did it well enough when Mr. Ballard was away. The fact of the latter not being able to be dragged out of his office was not a sufficient excuse for making the appointment. The hon. gentleman had taken exception to his comparison with New South Wales, because he said the Chief Engineer there could visit the lines in his charge by rail, except between Sydney and Newcastle. What difference was there between that and visiting the lines under Mr. Ballard? Mr. Ballard had not a foot to travel, unless by steamer or by rail. There was only one Engineer of Harbours and Rivers, and he had to visit the whole of the harbours and rivers in Queensland in the course of a year. Mr. Ballard had charge of only one-half of Queensland, and had more opportunities of visiting the different harbours where railways were being built than the Engineer of Harbours and Rivers; he had only to travel a little way by rail afterwards. If he was not satisfied with the comparison with New South Wales, he would make a comparison with South Australia, where there was only one engineer, and different lines radiating from different places. It was a similar country to Queensland in size, revenue, and population. Yet it had not gone to the extravagance of two engineers, whereas in Queensland they had gone into the extravagance of three. He never had heard any complaints against the railways there not being constructed as they ought to be. It was simply because the Government wanted to make billets. That seemed to be their sole endeavour since they came into office—new appointments and more Civil servants. He had not the slightest doubt, in his own mind, that had Mr. Ballard been called upon, either to do his work or resign, he would have done his work. If it was thought that Rockhampton was too far from the centre of his district why not locate him at Townsville? He might, perhaps, have been sent to Hughenden; but he believed Townsville would be much better. The Minister for Works had told them about Mr. Hannam being camped in a tent; but Mr. Ballard lived

in a tent also until he removed to Rockhampton. Still he had a staff, and every chief engineer must have a staff. It was not merely the appointment of the chief engineer that was objected to; it was what followed—the staff—that created the expenditure. The difference between Mr. Hannam's present salary and what he had been receiving was only £300, which was nothing to cavil at; but what would follow?

The PREMIER: How would that follow?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said it would follow the same as morning followed night and night followed morning. Mr. Ballard would have no engineer about him unless it was Mr. Hannam. He did all his work, with inspectors, under Mr. Hannam's supervision. Even the officer on the Townsville and Charters Towers Railway referred to by the hon. member for Port Curtis was paid a salary less than an inspector, until Mr. Ballard was compelled to raise it from £150 to £250. Mr. Ballard did not regard men as engineers, but simply as persons to carry out his instructions. He frequently told him that the only engineer he wanted was Mr. Hannam—his right-hand man, as he called him. So that if he were surrounded by raw and inexperienced engineers it was his own fault, and it should not have been allowed as a reason to be urged by him for the appointment of another man to do his work.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he would express his extreme regret for having said anything to offend the hon. member for Townsville and the hon. member for Port Curtis. He would say now that they were the best and most efficient Ministers for Works that ever held office.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he thought the best thing they could do was to adjourn or let some other Minister take charge of that estimate. There was nothing else for it. When the Minister for Works got up and set himself time after time to insult members who did not believe in the estimates under discussion, it was time for them to leave the Committee until the Minister for Works came to a better disposition of mind. He would certainly move the adjournment of the Committee if that sort of thing went on. They had stood it too long that night, and had stood it many nights before.

Mr. PALMER said he thought the Premier would admit that the colony was growing too large for one Government. With regard to the item under discussion—the Chief Engineer of the Carpentry and Cook Division—it was a fresh addition to this year's Estimates. That gentleman no doubt would have ample time to give his full attention to the department he would have in hand. The Cairns-Herberton Railway consisted of a few miles just passed; the extra extension of the Cooktown and Maytown Railway had been withdrawn, and he did not believe the survey of the line from the Gulf to Cloncurry had been started yet, so that Mr. Hannam would have plenty of time for a display of his talents. There was no doubt that he had plenty of capacity; he had evidenced that by the report he gave the other day on the route of the line from the Gulf of Carpentaria to the Cloncurry. In the space of two or three weeks he collected information that another surveyor might have taken six months to obtain and then not have arrived at as correct a conclusion as Mr. Hannam. With regard to that line, he believed that if the Government did not take a fresh departure this generation would pass away before it was completed. The old system of construction was not adapted to that part of the country; an entirely new system would be required. It was timberless country, it was a

level country, and the engineering difficulties were of the smallest. The greatest difficulty would be with regard to the timber. Mr. Hannam, in his report, stated :—

“As a rule the country is simply destitute of timber fit for railway purposes. A few good-sized gums, blood-woods, and ti-trees fit for bridge-girders are to be found on the banks of the Flinders. On the Cloncurry, Corella, Dugald, and Leichhardt they are more plentiful, but still the supply is very limited. Timber fit for piles or for fencing is very scarce. A few thousand sleepers might be sawn out of big stuff, but there is hardly any timber that would supply the half-round sleepers in ordinary use in Queensland.

“At the Batavia River, some 400 miles north of Normenton, it is said that there is an abundant supply of first-class timber.”

That was only theory. No one knew about that Batavia River. He was certain, from his own information and from the reports of explorers, that the timber supply at the Batavia River was theoretical. If the Government hoped to carry out that railway they would have to abandon the idea of wooden sleepers in such a country and go in for iron sleepers. There was no doubt that under proper management such a railway might be carried out at the rate of almost a mile per day. It might be constructed within a year with sufficient energy. The timber supply was certainly insufficient for such a railway. He was informed that iron sleepers could be laid down almost without any disturbance of the surface of the soil, and with such conditions it was blamable on the part of the Government if they did not construct the railway almost at the rate of a mile per day, at the very smallest expense.

The PREMIER said there was no pleasing hon. members. When the Government took steps to push those railways along by appointing a man who was to devote his sole attention to them they were blamed for extravagance. If they had not taken such steps they would have been told that they took no interest in the work. The complaint of the hon. member who last spoke seemed a little unreasonable. He said they were not going along fast enough with the Gulf line. It could not go on until it was surveyed, and in order that there might be no unnecessary delay in the survey the Government had made the appointment now under discussion. With regard to the question of iron sleepers, the time had not yet come to decide upon that. The Government had had it under their consideration, and for his own part he had no doubt that iron sleepers would have to be used for a great part of that line, as well as on some other lines in the interior where timber was very scarce. What the Government desired was to have an opportunity of going on with the line, and it was much more likely to go on quickly if it was under the charge of an engineer who could devote his personal attention to it than under an engineer 2,000 miles away.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said he did not know what the Premier was getting angry about. Was the hon. gentleman practising a separation speech? It was as good a speech in favour of the separation of North and South Queensland as he had heard. The proposition of the Government was a ridiculous one, and there was no reason given for it. The Opposition had shown that, in proportion to the amount of work done, the engineers' staff in Queensland had cost a great deal more than the engineers' staff in New South Wales.

The PREMIER : You have asserted it.

The Hon. Sir T. McILWRAITH said they had proved it. If the hon. member wanted it proved it would require very little time to get the statistics from the papers published during the last Parliament, which had all been verified and brought

forward by the hon. member for Townsville. He gave the figures and he could give them a great deal more in detail, showing how much more the Queensland staff cost than the New South Wales staff. The hon. member was not satisfied with that and challenged it. Then South Australia was referred to, and it was shown that the staff cost a great deal more than in that colony, where they had fewer engineers. Well, what reason had the Government given for it all? The Minister for Works had blurted out the truth, and had said that an engineer had been appointed for the North simply because Mr. Ballard could not be dragged away from the Central district. But why should the Government not do their duty and see the work done? There was not the slightest necessity for an additional engineer, but it was not simply the amount of additional expense entailed by his salary alone. It was the additional staff of an engineer which was necessary if the appointment was made. The Premier had said that the Opposition were only performing the ordinary functions of an Opposition in objecting, but he could tell the hon. gentleman that they hoped to go beyond the ordinary functions of an Opposition and persuade the Ministry that they were pursuing a wrong course. If the Premier thought he was pushing forward railways in the North by appointing a chief engineer he was greatly mistaken. They were now appointing a chief engineer to superintend the construction of two railways, but Mr. Ballard was quite competent to do that. He was quite competent to superintend the construction of the whole of the railways in Queensland, and if the question was put to him and a sufficient consideration shown him he would undertake the superintendence of the whole of the railways in Australasia, and probably perform his work as well as he did in the Central district. He had no objection to Mr. Hannam, because he believed he was a good professional man, but he believed the Government were making a great mistake in appreciating that gentleman's services in such a way, and making him a chief engineer when no chief engineer was wanted.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the railways of the North had been pushed on as other railways had been pushed on—by the appointment of a district engineer for each railway. The appointments were entirely unnecessary, either for Cairns or the Gulf.

Mr. HAMILTON asked if the Minister for Works was in a position to inform him when it was expected that the permanent survey for the first section of 28 miles of the Cairns line would be finished?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he could only repeat what he said before—that the Government would proceed with the second section of the Cooktown Railway with as little delay as possible. He could not tell the hon. member for Cook the exact date on which tenders would be called, but he might take his assurance that there would be no delay.

Mr. HAMILTON said if the Minister for Works would only take the trouble to ask his Under Secretary, perhaps he might give him a reasonable reply. He had noticed that the statement the hon. member for Port Curtis made was perfectly true, that although the Minister for Works had on nearly every occasion to go to his Under Secretary for information he had been unable to give that information on his return to his seat. But that was not the hon. gentleman's fault; it was his misfortune, because he was not able to retain in his memory the answer put into his mouth by his Under Secretary. The information the Minister had given to

him that night was that the tenders for a portion of the second section would be called for as soon as possible; but he had previously been informed by the Minister for Works that it was the intention of the Government to call for tenders for the first 10 miles of that section. The first section—the plans of which had been approved—was 28 miles in length, and his reason for asking when the permanent survey of the whole section would be finished was to find out, as it was the intention of the Government to call for tenders for the construction of the first 10 miles within the next three or four weeks, if the permanent survey of the whole 28 miles would probably be finished in five or six weeks; for, if so, it might be desirable to delay the calling for tenders until the whole survey was complete, if by the delay of an additional fortnight tenders for the whole 28 miles could be called for. Of course, if the Minister for Works was unable to give him the information he required he would have to do without it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member wanted to know when the Government would be able to call for tenders for the second section of the Cairns-Herberton railway. He had given all the information he was possessed of privately to the hon. member; but he would take care that he would give no such information to him again. Mr. Hannam reported to him that if the plans and sections passed during the session he would be in a position to call for tenders within a short period—he could not say whether it was a month or six weeks—but he would call for tenders for the first section of 10 miles. He had had a conversation with Mr. Hannam, and told him that he was extremely doubtful whether he would be likely to get a tender for such a small section. However, he came to the conclusion that there would be no harm in calling for tenders, and unless the Government got a reasonable tender it would have to stand over until some future time. He assured the hon. member that the Government were extremely desirous to push the work on. He had given the hon. gentleman all the information in his possession with regard to the Cooktown line, and he had also assured him now there would be no delay in calling for tenders for the Cairns-Herberton line, and he hoped he would be satisfied.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said: I think it is proper, Mr. Fraser, that your attention should be called to the way in which the debate is proceeding. We are wandering very much from the subject under discussion.

Mr. HAMILTON said he wanted to get a fair and straightforward answer to a straightforward question. The Minister for Works had said that he had given him information privately, and would take care that he never gave him any more information. The hon. gentleman had come to the table where he (Mr. Hamilton) was sitting and volunteered the information that the Government were going to call for tenders in four or five weeks for the first section of the Cairns-Herberton railway. He (Mr. Hamilton) had asked if he might wire that statement to Cairns, and the Minister said he might. That was the private conversation referred to by the hon. gentleman. Where was the private information in that? That was not the question, however, he asked the hon. member now; but as he evidently had not the capacity to understand the question, he would repeat it. He knew that the Government were going to do as the hon. member had stated—call for tenders for the construction of a portion of the first section of that railway—namely, 10 miles. The first section consisted of 28 miles, and he wanted to know if the permanent

survey of that first section of 28 miles was nearly completed? If the hon. gentleman did not know, let him say so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had not got the information.

Mr. HAMILTON: You will stop up all night until you answer that question.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had no desire to keep back any information from the hon. member, but he could not force him to give information he was not in possession of.

Mr. HAMILTON said, if the hon. member was not in possession of the information, that was all right, he could not expect him to give it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I gave all the information I had.

Mr. HAMILTON: That is very little.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The less you get the better.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that there be granted out of Loan the sum of £9,565 towards defraying the expenses of the Construction Staff of the Central and Northern Division. There was a small increase of £535, which was simply caused by promotions.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that there be granted out of Loan the sum of £7,464 for Extension Surveys. There was a slight increase upon the last estimate, and it was caused by an increase in the number of surveyors from sixteen to nineteen. There were no increases in salaries.

Question put and passed.

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

JOINT COMMITTEES.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that the Council had agreed to the resolution of the Legislative Assembly with reference to joint committees acting during the recess.

FEDERAL COUNCIL (ADOPTING) BILL (QUEENSLAND).

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that the Council had agreed to the Legislative Assembly's amendments upon their amendments in this Bill.

PACIFIC ISLAND LABOURERS ACT OF 1880 AMENDMENT BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council intimating that the Council insisted on their amendment omitting clause 11—

"Because there was no evidence of any miscarriage of justice resulting from unpaid magistrates adjudicating under the Pacific Island Labourers Act."

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

LICENSING BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:—

"The Legislative Council having had under consideration the message of the Legislative Assembly, of date the 2nd instant, relative to the amendments made by the Legislative Council in the Licensing Bill, beg now to intimate that they—

"Agree to the Legislative Assembly's amendments on their amendments in clauses 7 and 32;

"Insist upon their amendment in clause 115, line 11—

"Because the proportion of ratepayers whose preliminary concurrence is required in order to put the provisions of the sixth part of the Act into operation should be sufficiently large to prevent a poll being required except where there is a reasonable prospect of the requisitionists being successful in their movement;

"Do not agree to the amendment on their amendment in clause 115, subsection 2—

"Because the change would be too sudden and great to be equitable, and would act unfairly towards those who have vested interests in the area, especially as there is no provision for compensation;

"Insist on their amendment in clause 119—

"Because it is more equitable to give the ratepayers the same relative power in dealing with the question as they possess in cases of other municipal matters as provided for in clause 118."

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: I beg to move that this House do now adjourn. We propose to take to-morrow the two messages from the Legislative Council and then go on with Supply, and I hope we shall get through with it.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said: I hope the hon. gentleman will make a further statement in regard to the state of business.

The PREMIER: I will make a further statement to-morrow. I do not see my way through Committee of Supply this week if we do not make more rapid progress than we have made during the last four or five days.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said: I quite agree with the hon. gentleman, but I think he should give us a little more information. I have expressed publicly my desire to forward the business so as to close the session this week. The majority of the members I have consulted desire that the session should close this week, and I think that the leader of the Opposition having expressed himself in that way it is only right that the Premier should come forward and make a statement with regard to the business. The hon. gentleman is pledged to give the committee who sat in the "Forest King" case an opportunity of discussing that matter in a formal way.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: The hon. gentleman knows at the same time that we wish to work in with what we believe is the desire of the Government—namely, that the session should be closed this week. There are only two or three days left, and it is time now that the Government gave an expression of opinion with regard to the progress of business. Virtually we have nothing before us except the Estimates. If the hon. gentleman will inform the House what will be the order of business in the event of Supply being finished to-morrow, he will greatly forward the business of the House. I do not think it is asking too much to request him to extend that courtesy to the House. Will the hon. gentleman tell us plainly what will be the arrangement of the business in the event of the Estimates passing to-morrow?

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I hope the Estimates will go through to-morrow, but I cannot be confident that they will, judging from the way the work was done last week and this week. If they do go through we propose to give part of Thursday to the consideration of the business of the committee—

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: What committee?

The PREMIER: The motion about the "Forest King." I have had it present to my mind that that business must be done during this session, after the Appropriation Bill has passed this House. I undertake to keep the promise I gave in respect to the matter, and, as far as I am concerned, to give ample time for discussing it. I hope to be able to take that on Thursday.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Then I understand the hon. gentleman to say that if the Estimates pass to-morrow the Government are prepared to give up Thursday for the consideration of the "Forest King" case?

The PREMIER: I believe there is some other business on Thursday that will take a short time.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: What business?

The PREMIER: The Appropriation Bill.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: The Appropriation Bill? Does the hon. gentleman believe that he is going to pass the Appropriation Bill before dealing with the motion in reference to the "Forest King"? If he does he is more verdant than I thought he was.

The PREMIER: It is proposed to do that, and for obvious reasons. The hon. member told us the other day that we should have lots of time after the Appropriation Bill left this House.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: After the Appropriation Bill passes?

The PREMIER: Yes; the hon. gentleman said that.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: You must have taken advantage of a laches you did not believe in.

The PREMIER: I understood the hon. gentleman to mean it.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Nonsense!

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman certainly said it, and I thought he meant it.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: You know what passing the Appropriation Bill means.

The PREMIER: The hon. member said it, and I thought he meant what he said, and I believe that every hon. member who heard the statement thought the same. I apprehend that the debate on the "Forest King" will take more than one evening; and I certainly hope that the Appropriation Bill will pass before that is disposed of—that it will go through after the Estimates are passed. I undertake, so far as the Government have it in their power, to make a House on Thursday and the next day after that. I have given my word for that and will keep it.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I do not accept the hon. gentleman's word that he will give us time after the Appropriation Bill has passed to discuss the case of the "Forest King." We will take care to discuss it before the Appropriation Bill passes.

The PREMIER: You can sit all next week if you like, and the next two weeks.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Very well. I am quite prepared to sit next week and the week afterwards, too, but if the hon. gentleman thinks we are going to throw ourselves at his feet he is greatly mistaken.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at five minutes past 11 o'clock.