

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 20 OCTOBER 1886

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 20 October, 1886.

Question.—Motion for Adjournment—Chairman's casting vote.—Petitions.—Warwick to St. George Railway.—Adjournment.

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

QUESTION.

Mr. McWHANNELL asked the Colonial Secretary—

1. If he has received any information of a disease that exists amongst horses in the vicinity of Birdsville, in the Gregory district?
2. If so, would he cause to be laid on the table of the House any papers relating thereto?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. B. B. Moreton) replied—

1. Yes.
2. I will, at an early date.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

CHAIRMAN'S CASTING VOTE.

Mr. W. BROOKES said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move the adjournment of the House to refer to a matter which is of considerable importance, or I would not trouble the House just now, and that is with reference to the remarks made by the Chairman of Committees last night. When he was called upon to give his casting vote, he made the following singular observations:—

"There being a tie, it rests with me to give my casting vote. I am not going to say how I should vote if my vote determined the question and prevented its further consideration; but, as the final issue rests in another place, I shall give my vote with the 'Ayes,' and the question is therefore resolved in the affirmative."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am of opinion that that is a very unsound and dangerous doctrine.

Mr. DONALDSON: It was more unsound for you to walk out.

Mr. BROOKES: I think it tends to limit the free action of this Assembly, and the free discussion of matters brought before this Assembly; and that it is contrary to all usages of the English Parliament, it will not be very difficult to show very briefly. At page 410 of "May" I find this paragraph:—

"If the numbers should happen to be equal, the Speaker (and in committee the Chairman), who otherwise never votes, must give the casting voice. In the performance of this duty he is at liberty to vote like any other member, according to his conscience, without assigning a reason; but in order to avoid the least imputation upon his impartiality, it is usual for him, when practicable, to vote in such a manner as not to make the decision of the House final."

Mr. FRASER: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROOKES:

"And to explain his reasons, which are entered in the journals."

Now, Mr. Speaker, I could, if it were necessary to establish my case, give fifty instances, all of which go to show that both the Speaker and Chairman of Committees in the House of Commons invariably leave an opening for further discussion.

Mr. FRASER: Hear, hear!

Mr. BROOKES: I do not know a single exception to that rule, and therefore I demur entirely to such a statement as that made by the Chairman of Committees last night, and I trust I shall have the House with me in this matter, otherwise we are going wrong entirely, and leaving safe and sound usage and established precedent. With reference to my conduct, I do not know that I am called upon to defend that, but I will make this frank confession to the House: I won't do it any more, and I will admit at once, with such contrition as I hope meets the case, that I do not look back upon my conduct last night with the least approval.

Mr. STEVENSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I had not the advantage of hearing the opening remarks made by the hon. gentleman, but I may say that I intended to move the adjournment of the House to bring before the country and to draw the attention of the members of the Upper House to the way in which the vote was secured last night. The hon. member for North Brisbane, I suppose, has admitted that he was coerced, being a feeble old man.

Mr. BROOKES: I did not say that.

Mr. STEVENSON: Coerced by the Premier, who even went to the extent of using physical force to turn him round and keep him out of the Chamber. The Premier himself got in, and his name was recorded, but his hon. colleague was left outside.

The PREMIER: There is no foundation whatever for that.

Mr. STEVENSON: It is perfectly true, Mr. Speaker, all the same.

The PREMIER: It is perfectly untrue.

Mr. STEVENSON: I do not see very much use going on discussing railways in this House, bringing forward arguments to meet the arguments used by hon. members opposite, and not only getting the best of the argument, but being supported by members on that side—I do not see the use of wasting time by doing so if we are to be deprived of the honest vote of this House by pure trickery. There is not the slightest doubt that we should have carried the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Stanley, Mr. Kellett, last night had it not been for the action of the Premier. It would have been carried honestly and straightforwardly without the action the Chairman took at all, had it not been for the step taken by the Premier in preventing his hon. colleague from coming into the Chamber last night. There is not the slightest doubt that it was by that means that the Premier secured a division which was a tie. Then the Chairman of Committees gave his vote, as I said last night, in such a manner as no vote had been given in this House before, and I defy the Chairman to point to a single instance where he ever gave such a vote in this House before. It has always been recognised, especially where the expenditure of money is concerned, placing additional burdens on the taxpayers of the colony, that the Chairman, in giving his casting vote, gives it in such a way as to lessen the burdens of the people, rather than increase them. Though there is no written law on the subject, that is an unwritten law which has always been recognised in this House. As I pointed out last night, Mr. Speaker, the Chairman, after giving that vote, rather than let the matter be referred to you as I wished—

for I think you would have acted very differently—he prevented you from giving your decision by taking his seat where he is now and voting with the Premier. I say now, as I said last night, that it was most indecent, and I am glad the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, has brought this matter before the House, that the country and hon. members of the Upper House may know the way in which this resolution was passed last night—a resolution which would never have been passed by an honest vote of this House.

Mr. McMASTER said: Mr. Speaker,—Last night it was rather difficult to understand what were the arguments of the other side in reference to this question, and I find it difficult now to know what their argument is. It is a well-known fact that at the election which took place a few months ago in Fortitude Valley, the other side put up a candidate and placarded the whole city with the words, "Vote for Watson and the Bulimba railway."

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: The Valley railway.

Mr. McMASTER: Yes, that was it; they asked the electors to vote for their candidate and is very well known that Watson was the candidate the Valley railway. What do they mean? It date of that side of the House. I cannot understand their argument, and they give no reason for it. I am not going to say anything about the way in which the vote was taken last night. I believe it was taken honestly, and I consider that every vote taken on this side of the House has been taken honestly. If there has been any trickery it has been on the other side, as they have given no reason for their vote.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles) said: Mr. Speaker,—With reference to the remark of the hon. member for Normanby that the Premier went out and kept the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, out of the House, I may say that the hon. member knows very little about the hon. member for North Brisbane.

Mr. STEVENSON: Oh, don't I!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am perfectly satisfied the hon. member for Normanby won't move the hon. member for North Brisbane unless that hon. member likes to move himself. I am perfectly satisfied the hon. member refrained from coming into the House of his own free will. With reference to the casting vote of the Chairman, the hon. member for Normanby lays it down as a rule that it is the duty of the Chairman to vote against expenditure. Well, I look upon this question in an entirely different light. I look upon the decision of last night as a decision in favour of a reproductive work—a work that is going to return a revenue to the colony; so the hon. member's rule does not apply, and I am perfectly satisfied that the Chairman of Committees gave a correct vote.

Mr. DONALDSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I have no particular wish to speak upon this subject, but I certainly cannot refrain from making some remarks in reply to the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, and also in reply to the interjection made by the Premier. The former said that the party on this side of the House put forward a candidate, and that placards were posted in the Valley asking people to vote for that candidate—whose name was not mentioned—and the Bulimba railway.

Mr. McMASTER: The name was mentioned.

Mr. DONALDSON: I am one of the members on this side of the House, and I knew nothing of that election; I did not attend a meeting in connection with it, and knew very little at all about it until the result was made known. I did not

take the slightest interest in that election, and there have been two or three elections held here since I have been in Brisbane, and I have not taken the slightest interest in any of them. Now, the railway we were asked to agree to last night was not the Bulimba railway at all. If it had been a line to Bulimba, hon. members might have acted differently to what they did, and I daresay I might myself have given a different vote. I voted on conscientious grounds against that railway last night, because I do not believe there is the slightest possibility of it ever paying the great amount of money that will have to be laid out in constructing it. The lowest estimate given was £300,000, and that represents £12,000 a year for interest. I ask if there is any sane man in the House who for a moment expects that there will be sufficient traffic on that line to pay anything like the interest upon the cost of its construction? I am perfectly confident it will never pay, and I should only be doing my duty in trying to prevent the passing of any railway that has not first for its object the paying of the cost of working and expenditure upon it, or the improvement and development of the country through which it passes, and thus be of indirect benefit to the State. Many lines might be extended into the interior that would not directly pay the cost of their construction and working, but by enhancing the value of State property they might have a very beneficial effect indeed. That is the reason, as I have stated, that I had for voting against the railway last night, and for that reason I now object to the remarks made by the hon. member for Fortitude Valley. Then the Premier gave as a reason why this side voted against the railway, that they did so because they were voting against the Government. A lot of the Government supporters voted against the line—some who are staunch supporters on all occasions—and I believe they exercised a conscientious vote in the matter. I am not the guardian of their consciences or able to speak for them, but I certainly think I am only doing my duty in taking exception to the remark made by the Premier. Why he should have stepped out of his way to make such a remark I do not know. Why should he say that we voted against the railway because we wanted to vote against the Government? On many occasions in the past I have voted with the Government, and may do so on many future occasions. I have acted as an independent member since I came into the House, and I shall continue to do so while I remain a member of it, and shall exercise my opinion as to whether I consider a certain proposal is for the good of the country or not. With regard to the Chairman's vote, I was one of those who thought he acted indiscreetly in giving the decision he did, but I did not question it; but I think that when we came to vote afterwards the hon. member would have done better if he had refrained from voting on that occasion, because I consider he showed strong partisanship in giving his vote after he left the chair. I am not going to make a charge against the Premier of keeping the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, out. It is a well-known fact that he went outside and spoke to that hon. member, and the hon. member remained outside; so that the circumstances were rather suspicious, and it is quite possible that the Premier was the means of inducing him to remain outside. I was very pleased to hear the hon. member for North Brisbane express contrition for his conduct last night, and in consequence of his having done so I will not make any further reference to it, but will let him down lightly. Had the hon. member taken a different stand he would probably have met with very different criticism.

Mr. FRASER said: Mr. Speaker,—My conduct has been called in question, and I have a word or two to say.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: We cannot hear what you say.

Mr. ALAND: Move up to the stool of repentance.

Mr. FRASER: I do not feel inclined either to sit or stand on the stool of repentance, because I do not consider I have anything to repent of. I do not find fault with my hon. friend the member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, for his remarks, because had I had a little more time I might perhaps have added something to the reasons I assigned for the vote I gave last night. Perhaps it is not the best plan or the most constitutional plan to take shelter under what the decision of another place might be, and it would have been better perhaps if I had added that I declined to take upon myself the responsibility of determining the question last night, because I knew very well that on bringing up the report to you, sir, this House would have an opportunity of reversing or affirming the vote I gave.

Mr. STEVENSON: You prevented that afterwards yourself.

Mr. FRASER: In addition to that, I am quite well aware of the constitutional practice in connection with both the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees—that where a question involves the imposition of additional burdens upon the people it is invariably the practice to give the casting vote against it. I failed to see last night, and I fail to see still, that the vote I gave was in the slightest degree tending in that direction. The hon. member must bear in mind that the money had been appropriated already, and therefore I am quite free from any responsibility in that matter. As I said last night, on all these occasions it is my determination, as far as I possibly can, to give an impartial vote. So far as the Premier is concerned, I can only say this: that from the commencement to the end of the affair there has been no intercourse whatever between us. Now I come to the second stage, as to taking my seat here. I have yet to learn that by becoming Chairman of Committees I vacated my position as representative of South Brisbane. There I am Chairman of Committees, here I am the representative of South Brisbane, and in the interests of my constituency I had as much right to give a vote upon that question as any hon. member in this House. I may add more. I had not the slightest idea that my vote would give one side the majority.

Mr. HAMILTON: A glance at the House would have shown that.

Mr. FRASER: I did not take the trouble to count the House.

Mr. STEVENSON: What was the division before?

Mr. FRASER: I stated last night what the hon. member for North Brisbane has stated—that the Chairman of Committees or Speaker is at perfect liberty to vote as he likes without assigning any reason. I did assign a reason, though perhaps I did not make it as distinct, and clear, and full as I might have done had I had more time to consider the matter. However, I gave my casting vote last night, not to settle the question, but to give this House and Parliament a further opportunity of considering the matter.

Mr. SCOTT said: Mr. Speaker,—I was not present last night when this vote was taken, and I regret exceedingly that I was not. Had I been

here it would not have been an even vote, and that would have saved the Chairman of Committees from a very awkward position. While either the Chairman or the Speaker has a perfect right to give a vote as he pleases, without assigning any reason, I think the Chairman went beyond his duty when he referred to the other House. Had he simply given his vote with the "Ayes," saying nothing more, I should not have had a word to say against it; but he did not act as I think he ought to have done in making reference to another Chamber.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—As this matter has been brought up, I should like to say a few words on the subject. I did not hear the Chairman of Committees last night, before he gave his casting vote, make reference to the Upper House; had I noticed that statement, I should have taken exception to his vote at once. I believed at the time that the Chairman of Committees did not vote in accordance with the usual practice in this House, and I am quite sure that when he mentioned the fact that the matter would come before the other House his action was entirely contrary to the practice of this House. I am quite satisfied of that, and I am very glad to have heard the explanation made by the hon. gentleman to-day. Though I cannot acquit him, I do not want to blame him more than necessary; but I cannot acquit him of having departed from precedent. I was under the impression last night that the hon. gentleman in giving his casting vote was guided by the knowledge that the matter would come before you, Mr. Speaker, for decision. I did not think he was right in giving his casting vote as he did, and I hinted as much when the hon. the Chief Secretary rose to defend his action. If we are to accept that as a reason why the Chairman of Committees should give his casting vote in that way, he might just as well vote in the same way on all questions arising on the Estimates, for he might argue that the whole matter would come before you afterwards. Of course there is this difference: that in that case the separate items would not come before you. In this case I think the hon. member was entitled to a certain amount of consideration. No doubt he gave his vote without fully considering the effect of it, and was guided by the fact, as he explained just now, that the question would be put before you. I have taken the trouble to look into this matter this morning, and I cannot find one case during the time there has been a Parliament in this colony in which the Chairman has given his casting vote in the way it was given last night. I can find none, and I am told positively that there is no instance on record where a casting vote has been given by the Chairman in that way. For that reason I regret very much that the Chairman gave his casting vote as he did, and I think, under the circumstances, it would be almost desirable that we should put on record our refusal to accept the action of the hon. gentleman last night as one which is to be followed as a precedent. With respect to what took place last night between the two hon. members who represent this city, I saw nothing of it myself, but I did hear an hon. member say, "Why, there is the Premier preventing old Billy Brookes from coming in to vote." That screen prevented me from seeing what was going on out there, but I heard that remark; and I know the Premier came in, but his hon. colleague did not. I do not pretend to know what took place, but I think it quite possible that some sort of influence was brought to bear—perhaps not physical, but mental or some other kind of influence. Whatever it was, the hon. gentleman abstained from voting in consequence. However, I will not pursue the subject further.

Mr. HIGSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to explain the way I voted last night, because some hon. gentlemen have twitted me with voting against my own views. I rise to say that I voted in accordance with my views. I believed neither in the amendment nor in the original motion; I do not believe in any portion of the railway. Had the amendment been carried, it would have committed the Government to the construction of a part of it, which would mean, finally, the whole of it. I voted quite in accordance with my own ideas, as I always do; and I always shall vote the way I think right.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not think the hon. gentleman has any reason to justify his conduct. Many hon. members on this side of the House would have voted in the same way if they could have defeated the amendment of the hon. member for Stanley—I myself amongst the number. I think we should say no more about what the hon. member for North Brisbane did last night. After his candid confession and the act of contrition he has made, I think he should be exonerated and have complete absolution given to him. But to revert to what has fallen from hon. gentlemen, and from the Chairman of Committees himself with regard to his action last night, I think, Mr. Speaker, that owing to the difference between the position we occupy in this Chamber from that occupied by the House of Commons in the smallness of our numbers, the Chairman and the Speaker have been allowed a privilege of acting and speaking in committee which I am sure constitutional practice in England has prevented those gentlemen in the House of Commons from having. So that the Chairman and Speaker also are, to a certain extent, perfectly justified in voting in committee when the interests of their constituents or the country require it. But I do not think that the Chairman was at all justified in the action which he took last night; and certainly whatever justification he might have had for the action, he had none whatever for the reason he gave for the action. That is the part which I condemn most. Why should we in this House, through the action of the Chairman or Speaker, give to the other House the decision on questions that we should decide ourselves? That seems to me to be unconstitutional, and more especially upon a money matter—a matter which we carefully prevent the other House from interfering with at all. Now, the Chairman has stated that he did not think it was a money matter, because the money had already been appropriated. Surely that is no answer to give! Does he not know that the interest on that appropriation has to be paid by the people of the colony? Even taking the estimate of the Premier—£300,000—the interest on that will be £12,000 a year, which has to be paid by the people; so that the hon. gentleman was quite unjustified in even giving that as a reason for his decision. But then he gave another reason that left the matter to the House to decide. Well, that would have been very well, but he very carefully took occasion that the House should not have the chance of deciding, by voting himself and preventing the House from deciding. He knew very well there were twenty-five on each side, and by going on one side he made it twenty-six to twenty-five, and therefore the House—that is you, Mr. Speaker—had no chance of giving a decision. After giving the decision that he did, and the reason that he did, I think he should have refrained from voting; but neither the reason nor the vote were according to constitutional practice, and that is what I object to principally.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffiths) said: Mr. Speaker,—It is an unfortunate thing

that hon. members on the other side, who are disappointed at being unable to snatch a victory from the Government last night, should raise the question again this afternoon.

Mr. STEVENSON: Your own colleague raised it.

The PREMIER: I said last night that it was perfectly plain that all the members on the other side of the House were there; that they were got together for the occasion, every member except the hon. member for Leichhardt, and we know he is never here in the evening. It was perfectly obvious all the evening what was going on, and that hon. gentlemen opposite thought that with the assistance of some hon. members on this side they would be able to snatch a victory from the Government. That was perfectly plain, and I said so, and I thought it was to a great extent a reverberation of the votes of last week—revenge upon the Brisbane members. That was quite plain, and I spoke plainly about it. The hon. member for Townsville, however, said that I was greatly mistaken in supposing that there was anything like combined party action, and I was bound to believe him until I saw the division. Now they are smarting under what they regarded as a victory being snatched from them, and have again brought the matter forward. Some hon. gentlemen seem to think that the duty of the Chairman of Committees is always to vote with them, but if he had done so on this occasion, the vote he would have given would have effectively decided the matter finally. There would have been no resolution to report to the House, and the House could have done nothing.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: For this session.

The PREMIER: Of course for this session, so that if the Chairman had given a different vote he would clearly have voted wrongly. This is a matter that has to be decided by Parliament. It is referred to a committee to consider in detail, and the decision they come to is then open to be discussed perfectly freely by the House. It can be amended, thrown out, or any number of motions made upon it. I believe the amendment, if moved again, might have been carried, because there was a large majority in favour of the amendment. But if the Chairman had voted as hon. members seemed to think he ought to vote he would have effectually prevented the House from giving an opinion on the matter. I think there was a slip made by the Chairman in referring to the other House. It was a slip undoubtedly, but the reasoning in his mind evidently was that the question had to be decided by this House. Had he given any other vote he would have effectually defeated the intention of the House.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—May I make a personal explanation? The hon. gentleman has charged this side with having been present for the express purpose of defeating the Government. Now, I simply make this statement. There was no meeting on the part of members of this side. There was no arrangement made, and no members were asked or expected to vote either one way or the other. No member of this side was asked to be present by me, and I believe the hon. member for Leichhardt would have been present if he had been asked. Now, I trust the hon. gentleman will accept my explanation. I assured him last night that this question was not made a party question. I assure him so again, and make this statement to fortify what I have already said.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—As one of the supporters of the Government who voted against them last night, it is my duty to make some explanation, especially after what

has fallen from the Premier. He talks about snatching a victory from the Government. I do not want to look on these railways as either defeats or victories. I wanted to relieve the Government from what I knew would be a most unprofitable line. I was perfectly certain of that. I am perfectly aware that at any election of a member for Fortitude Valley the candidates have to promise to vote either for a Bulimba railway or a Valley railway, and the Government of the day have to say that they will bring the matter before Parliament, but that is as far as matters should go. The question should be fairly discussed and deliberately decided by Parliament. If the Government are going to make such questions party questions, we might just as well bunch the whole lot of railways, and take them *in globo*. In all my experience I have never seen such an amount of log-rolling going on in any other place as went on here last night. Members voted for this line who I know did not believe in it one bit, simply to get their own little line or because they were afraid of losing it. I voted against the line to prevent the waste of public money, although I admit the expenditure of it might do a little good in Brisbane just now. As for the line being a paying goods line, I do not believe it; and as for the passenger traffic paying, I do not believe that either, because the line will be running in competition with trams and omnibuses, which will put the people down in a much more convenient way than the train. I do not think there can be the slightest excuse for it in that direction. I have always looked with dread upon the unlimited power which a Government has in consequence of the unlimited credit of the colony in bribing constituencies. They require an almost supernatural amount of honesty to withstand the pressure brought upon them with regard to certain public works. It is a very dangerous power to be committed into their hands, and they can only be protected in the proper discharge of their duties by the independent members of the House on both sides. I do not believe that this was made a party question last night. That is evident from a glance at the constitution of the other side of the House. With the exception of the hon. member for Normanby there was not a single Brisbane man amongst them; they were men whose main interests were apart from the capital, yet who, no doubt, had the welfare of Brisbane at heart.

Mr. KELLETT said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to take exception to the remark of the Chief Secretary about this being a party vote.

The PREMIER: I said on the other side.

Mr. KELLETT: The hon. gentleman also alluded to those on this side who voted against the motion.

The PREMIER: Assisted by certain members on this side who concurred with them.

Mr. KELLETT: Dealing with questions of this kind always causes a great deal of trouble, but it would be an unfortunate thing if all were agreed on every matter which any Ministry may bring before us. If we did, we might as well stay at home and leave all the business to be transacted by the occupants of the Treasury bench. It seems to be the belief of those gentlemen that all the wisdom of the country is concentrated in their brains. I give them credit for any quantity of brains, but they must allow other people also to possess a little. Notwithstanding all the Chief Secretary's brains, there are many subjects that come before us that he really knows as little about as any man in the House; and there are members who may know very little on the subjects with which he is well acquainted, who could teach him on

many things. The members on the Treasury bench seem to think that we ought to have nothing to say on these questions, and if that was to be permitted for a moment it would be a very unfortunate thing for the House and for the country.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker, — The Premier is not used to such divisions as we had last night; and in consequence of that, perhaps, he has made an unjust accusation against this side of the House.

The PREMIER: There is no injustice in it.

Mr. PALMER: Seeing the very representative vote that was given last night he ought to have accepted it at its value, especially taken in conjunction with the vote given on the same question last year, the result on that occasion being—Ayes, 9; Noes, 28. I was quite surprised at the action of the Chairman of Committees. He certainly did not follow the example of the House of Lords, where, when the votes are equal, the question is at once resolved in the negative. The worst feature of it was that the Chairman of Committees endeavoured to throw the odium, the unpopularity, of rejecting the measure upon another Chamber, which is already unpopular enough, and which the Chief Secretary seems to take every opportunity of making more unpopular still. The decision of the House last year ought to have been regarded by the Chairman of Committees in giving his casting vote last night.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker, — The Premier has stated that this was made a party question by this side of the House. I feel certain he must know that it was not, but his reason for making the statement and having it on record is in order that he may make use of it afterwards. The hon. member for Leichhardt has stated that, although he was not here last night, he would have been present if he had been asked; and the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Brown, would no doubt have been present and voted if it had been made a party question. So far from it being made a party question by the Opposition, the motion was actually carried by the vote of a member sitting on this side of the House. How can the Premier call it a party vote after that? But it does not affect the matter very much, for the railway is not going to be made for two or three years yet; it will be dangled before the eyes of the Valley people until the next election. I was sorry to hear the Chairman of Committees express himself as he did, because there is no hope of reformation for him. If he had repented and expressed contrition, like the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, we might have had some hope of him. I was disappointed with the way that hon. member acted last night. I always regarded him as an independent member, as a member who had the courage of his opinions. The Premier has stated that he did not exercise any pressure upon that hon. member. But no doubt what the Premier said to the hon. member when he went outside to him was something like this: "We got beaten on the Land Bill the other night; if we get beaten on this question we shall burst up; keep outside." And he did keep outside. The hon. member for Normanby is quite right in what he said as to the course of procedure that ought to have been followed by the Chairman of Committees. Even if it were admitted that he was right in voting as he did, he was wrong in the reasons he gave for doing so, and his subsequent action was altogether wrong. Certainly, it was not in accordance with the practice of the House of Commons. Of course, the hon. gentleman has a perfect right to vote as

he did—as he has a perfect right to sit on the floor and rest his heels on the table—but in both cases it is a question of taste, and in the former of precedent as well. In the House of Commons, if the Chairman has had to determine a question by his casting vote in committee, when the question comes before the Speaker he always walks outside the House.

Mr. PATTISON said: Mr. Speaker, — I am one of those members who remained silent last night, and I intended to have remained silent to-day. But when the Premier gets up time after time and says he refuses to accept the assurance of the leader of the Opposition that this was not made a party question, I feel compelled to get up and confirm the statement of the leader of the Opposition. Speaking for myself, I can assure the House that neither the leader of the Opposition nor any other hon. member on this side has ever led me to believe that it was to be treated as a party question. It is one thing I have to complain of on the part of the leader of the Opposition that he has not called us together oftener. Whether the Opposition meet and confer often, I do not know. I am a new member and only upon two occasions have I attended caucus meetings, and then there were no matters of importance under discussion. Those were the only times that I have been consulted, and certainly yesterday I was not consulted. I came to the House fully prepared to be a listener—to listen to the arguments that would be adduced in favour of the construction of the line to Fortitude Valley. I listened patiently, and I say this: that there were neither facts nor figures brought forward to induce me to vote for the line. The arguments were strong upon this side. The Minister for Works appeared to know little about the cost, and the only thing which he could tell us positively was that in the Loan Bill there was £175,000 voted for the line, and he stated that he did not believe that that amount would not be required. The leader of the Government shortly afterwards got up and admitted that £300,000 would be required; but other members, who had been industrious enough to go into the matter more closely, estimated the amount at something like £500,000. Now, with a mass of evidence like that before me, sitting here, a willing listener, to give my vote—not a party vote—in the best interests of the colony—viewing the matter in that light, I failed to conceive how I could vote for the line. In doing that I thought I was helping to relieve the Government of a responsibility that they were anxious to be relieved of—they only realised the grave state of the case last night, and had not then fully realised the actual cost of the railway. There is one very important matter that must be taken largely into consideration in this House, and that is the value of the property that will have to be resumed. I am not aware that any steps have been taken to ascertain the value of it, and I think it would have been as well if this line had been allowed to stand over, at all events, for another session, as some other matters will have to stand over, until full inquiries had been made. I think it is unfair in these times to spend £500,000 upon this line. I repeat, so far as my vote was concerned, that I never have been requested to give a party vote since I have been in the House. I complain that I am not consulted, and I have no doubt that other new members can say the same. I shall vote upon all questions as I think best for the interest of the country.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) said: Mr. Speaker, — It appears that this motion for adjournment affords an opportunity for a re-discussion on the Valley railway,

and has afforded hon. gentlemen, who did not speak last night, an opportunity of giving their views. I do not rise for the purpose of prolonging the discussion upon that matter. I regret that the division which was taken last night has not been accepted by hon. gentlemen opposite in the spirit in which I think it ought to be. That is to say, when the Committee or the House has decided upon a matter, we ought to accept such decision, and not question the votes of hon. members who have contributed to that result. My hon. colleague, the Premier, has in no way led hon. members to infer that he questioned the truth of the statement made by the hon. leader of the Opposition.

Mr. NORTON : Yes, he has.

The COLONIAL TREASURER : As to the remarks made by the Premier on the statement of the leader of the Opposition, that it was not a party vote by arrangement, I think the hon. gentleman has drawn a wrong inference. My hon. colleague said it was a party vote, which was denied by the leader of the Opposition, so far as any arrangement could make it a party vote. That statement was fully accepted by the Premier. But it is evident that hon. gentlemen on that side have consolidated themselves without the intervention of their leader upon all occasions when they thought they could inflict a defeat upon the Government, and I think it was a consensual compact last night amongst hon. members opposite, possibly affected by the echo of the debate on the Land Bill, which had not terminated last week altogether to their satisfaction. My feeling is that it was not a party vote by arrangement of the leader of the Opposition, but certainly it became a party vote by a consensual compact amongst hon. members on that side to retaliate upon the Government for their want of consideration for the claims of those pastoral tenants who did not obtain all they wanted in the discussion last week. I do not intend to pursue this matter. I rise to add my opinion on the action of the Chairman of Committees as referred to in the remarks of hon. gentlemen who spoke previously. I do not think there ought to be any intimidation exercised upon the officers of this House—that is to say, the Speaker or the Chairman of Committees, as to how they shall give their votes. If it is to be insisted that upon all occasions where questions of public interest come before the House, they are to be guided by the strict lines laid down in “May,” we might as well have automata in the chair of the Speaker and the Chairman of Committees. There would not be the slightest use for any hon. gentlemen of intelligence to fill those positions. I must deprecate, therefore, the suggestion that there should be even directions or instructions given to the Chairman of Committees or to the Speaker as to how he should vote upon matters of public interest. I hold that the Chairman of Committees acted strictly in accordance with parliamentary procedure in this House. He allowed the matter to remain open for rejection or adoption by the House at a subsequent stage; but he certainly made a *lapsus lingue* in referring to another place. He should have confined his observations to any action of this House. I strongly protest against anything like a debate ensuing upon this matter which will act as an intimidation to either the Chairman of Committees or the Speaker as to how they shall exercise their privilege in giving a casting vote. With regard to my hon. friend, the member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, I may tell him that he acted wisely in not defeating such an important question as the Valley railway, and in not taking upon his own shoulders the individual responsibility of rejecting such an important measure at the present time. The hon.

gentleman need not be ashamed of what he has done, or express any contrition. He will hereafter have cause to regard his action with supreme satisfaction.

Mr. ADAMS said : Mr. Speaker,—As one of the new members, I rise to confirm the statement made by the hon. member for Blackall. I have complained on one or two occasions myself, that I have not been consulted upon matters of this kind. It was only on Tuesday, some time during the day, that I asked if there was to be any meeting of members of this side of the House to discuss these matters, simply because I was not certain of it. I do not believe there was a meeting, and I can assure hon. members that I never have been asked since I have been in this House what position I was going to take up, or how I was going to vote. Therefore, every vote I have given in this House has been untrammelled, and according to my conscience. There is not the slightest doubt that the Colonial Treasurer would like to make a great deal of this matter. He would not like to see his hon. friend, the junior member for North Brisbane, saddled with the responsibility of expending the whole of this sum. Nevertheless, he does not mind saddling it upon the hon. gentleman who occupies the position of Chairman of Committees. That is quite plain enough, as he says that he cannot blame the Chairman of Committees for what he has done. I do not think there are many members who would blame him if he had done it in a different way. It was all right in committee; but it is the usual practice that, wherever there is a casting vote to be given, the Chairman invariably gives it with the lesser sum, if it is a money vote. The Chairman of Committees has sheltered himself behind the members of the Upper House, and says that he did not consider that he had given his casting vote in regard to a money question, for the simple reason that the money had been appropriated already. When we come to look at it in this way, that he did not consider it a money vote, I do not know what he could consider it. It has been said here that there is £175,000 put down for this piece of work of about two and a-half miles of railway, while I consider myself, and I daresay there are a number of other members who consider the same, that it will be of very slight benefit to a great number, for the simple reason that they can get trams and omnibuses within 500 yards on each side of the line or even half that distance, which will put them down anywhere they liked. When we come to consider that only £175,000 is put down for that piece of work, and the Chief Secretary acknowledged last night that it may cost £300,000, I think that may be regarded as an additional burden. So, according to his own showing, the Chairman ought to have acted according to the usual practice, and to have voted with the “Noes.” I rose for the express purpose of confirming what the hon. member for Blackall has already stated. I, personally, have never been asked in what way I was going to vote. I do not wish to find fault with anybody in the House—I do not know what the general practice is—but I certainly think it was my duty to point out, in respect to what the hon. Chairman of Committees has stated, that he did not consider the £175,000 was a money vote, as it had been already appropriated, that he really voted for the whole thing—£300,000, and possibly £500,000. I am perfectly satisfied that if that vote was carried to-morrow and the work was commenced, it would do much good to the unemployed at the present time. But the unemployed all over the colony would all flock together, and the very moment the work was finished they would clamour for more. And

so I say it is far better to carry on railways where people can settle on the land, rather than here where, when the job is done, they will only ask for more.

Mr. LISSNER: Mr. Speaker,—I did not intend to take any part in this debate on the Valley railway. There is no doubt it was passed last night, so far as this House is concerned, by the hair of its teeth. The hon. member, the Chairman of Committees, stated himself he did not like to give a particularly strong vote on it, and he hopes the members of the House of Lords, the other Chamber, will settle the question effectually for all purposes. We have lost the right of saying anything more about that. I voted last night as I intended from the beginning of this question, and as I did vote last year. If hon. members look at "Votes and Proceedings" they will find that nine votes were recorded for the Valley railway last year—six Ministers, two tellers, the hon. member for Moreton, the hon. member for the Valley, and the hon. member for Bulimba. Last night there was a very full House, and, strange to say, twenty-five members voted on each side! Hon. members on the other side do not seem to be prepared for such a vote on this side of the House. Twenty-five members to vote on the Opposition side! It was simply astonishing! There must be something wrong! How can that have been? They are so used to a chronic majority on that side of the House that they think there must be something extraordinary, some conspiracy, some caucus, and everything that is bad! The member for the Valley, I know, was in a great state of excitement. He is slightly interested in the matter, and I can see him sometimes in a kind of convulsion about it. He got up to-day and pointed to members on this side of the House and said that all the dishonesty and all the malpractices were coming from this side of the House.

Mr. McMASTER: I said nothing of the sort.

Mr. LISSNER: That was a very hard statement to make, and I am sorry that some of the members did not resent it, though I am not a bit sorry about it. When the same question comes up again—I hope it will have to be debated again—I shall vote the same as before. I know the measure is not only unpopular outside Brisbane—it is not very popular in the North—but it is not even popular with the majority of the Brisbane people. I am not sorry that I voted against it, and I can assure hon. gentlemen that there was no caucus, no premeditated dishonesty in the matter. It was a straightforward vote, and it happened that the division was 25 and 25. Hon. members on the other side of the House are not prepared for that, but as we go on we may have larger majorities on this side of the House, and then we shall be told that we are extraordinarily dishonest, I suppose. I am not sorry for the way I voted, and I shall vote the same way again.

Mr. ANNEAR said: Mr. Speaker,—I listened very attentively to what the hon. member for the Valley, Mr. McMaster, said, and he never said a word about all the wrong that was done emanating from that side of the House. He said what was perfectly true—what hon. members have not forgotten—that when a gentleman who occupied for a long time the position of leader of the Opposition went before the Valley electors to oppose the late Mr. Beattie, he pledged himself to the construction of the Valley railway. "Return me as your member," he said, "and the Valley railway is secure." It is only a few months ago that an election took place in the Valley, when Mr. S. W. Brooks was returned. What was then the "ticket"

of the Opposition because Mr. John Watson received the Opposition vote? What was the ticket placarded throughout the city and the Valley, with which every cab was decorated, and which was inserted in glowing terms on all the postal cards sent out—"Vote for John Watson and the Valley railway!" Why is this turnabout to-day? Is it because Mr. John Watson was not returned for the Valley? I do not think the arguments of the hon. gentlemen opposite will hold water. I think the remark of the hon. and distinguished member for Mulgrave about this railway being made to find work for the unemployed was uncalled for. I hope no one will think for a moment that we are going to construct railways for the unemployed. I should be very sorry to give a vote to make it appear they had to construct railways to give work to men thrown out of employment. I hope we have better arguments to go before English capitalists for money to construct our railways than that we mean to construct railways to give work to the unemployed. What do we hear now? That there are no unemployed except in and about Brisbane. We have seen yesterday that application was made to Brisbane for between 200 and 300 men. Such being the case, and the depression from which we have suffered for the last few weeks is now passing away, I hope before a month is over we shall resume the prosperous times which for a long period we enjoyed. I fully understood the Chairman of Committees when he spoke to use the words ascribed to him, that he meant this House to give that question further consideration—knowing that it had to come again before the Assembly last night. He did not for a moment think that the construction of the Valley railway or any other railway rested with the Upper House at the time he spoke. He did mention that House, but he knew that in a few minutes after he had spoken the question would have to be decided by a division in this Chamber.

Question put and negatived.

PETITIONS.

Mr. FOOTE presented a petition from the trustees of the Ipswich Grammar School, praying for leave to introduce a Bill to enable them to sell, mortgage, or otherwise deal with certain land. The Standing Orders relating to petitions for private Bills had been complied with in every particular. He moved that the petition be received.

Question put and passed.

Mr. FRASER presented a petition from Susannah Wotton, widow of Samuel Wotton, who met his death from an accident on the steam barge "Nautilus," praying for such relief as the House might think fit. He moved that the petition be read.

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

On the motion of Mr. FRASER, the petition was received.

Mr. PHILP presented a petition from certain farmers, graziers, landowners, and others, residing on the Lower Herbert, praying for relief from the existing disabilities in regard to communication between Ingham and the north side of the river. He moved that the petition be read.

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

On the motion of Mr. PHILP, the petition was received.

WARWICK TO ST. GEORGE RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that you do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the following resolutions, namely:—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed railway from Warwick towards St. George, section 1, commencing at 168 miles 48 chains, near East Warwick Station, and ending at Thane's Creek, 193 miles 70 chains 44 links, in length 25 miles 22 chains 44 links, as laid upon the table of the House on Tuesday, the 12th day of October instant.

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

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed railway from Warwick towards St. George, section 1, commencing at 168 miles 48 chains, near East Warwick Station, and ending at Thane's Creek, 193 miles 70 chains 44 links, in length 25 miles 22 chains 44 links, as laid upon the table of the House on Tuesday, the 12th day of October instant.

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

—said the object of the construction of this line was to provide for the traffic along the southern border of the colony. He had no doubt it would be said that some of the land along this line was of an inferior description, and that it was subject to floods. Well, it was very possible it might be so, but they might take any line which took its departure from the coast and went towards the western interior, and they would find that it went through an inferior belt of country before it reached the black-soil plains of the West. The line before them was no exception to that general rule, but he believed it was preferable to some of their lines, so that there was not much in the objection that it would pass through a great deal of poor country. He had travelled over the Central line on one occasion when he saw the flood-marks at least fourteen feet or fifteen feet above the railway track. Then again, if they went to the Northern line: he had himself travelled on that line on one occasion, and when crossing the Reid River the water put the fires out on the locomotive. That was nothing at all unusual, and why should such an objection be made to the line now proposed? He knew the country perfectly well, and he believed it to be superior in a very great measure to the country along most of their main lines going into the Western country. The desirability of the proposed line was that it would place the southern border of the colony within easy distance, and would therefore secure for Brisbane the whole of the trade which they were justly entitled to claim should come to Brisbane as its port. The Government had no intention of running that railway for the purpose of endeavouring to take away the traffic from New South Wales. All they desired was to secure for Queensland all the traffic belonging to Queensland. They had been told over and over again that it was no use their thinking they could compete with New South Wales—that New South Wales could carry goods at this rate and that rate; but he was strongly under the impression that when the taxpayers of New South Wales got their eyes open they would begin to see that it was not judicious of the New South Wales Government to endeavour to “pirate”—he would say—the trade of the neighbouring colonies for the purpose of bringing down their produce for the benefit of New South Wales merchants. The taxpayers of

New South Wales would not stand the pressure brought upon them to carry the produce of other colonies at a rate woefully below what they could really afford to carry it at. The Queensland Government had no desire to take the traffic of New South Wales, but what they desired and what they were bound to do was to endeavour to give those living along the Queensland border every facility to get their produce to market in the most direct way possible. There were no engineering difficulties in the construction of the line, and he might as well mention as he went along that it had this advantage over many of their present lines—the line passed exactly with the current of the water. He had travelled on the Northern line specially to see the effect of the flood-waters, and he found that where the currents crossed and recrossed and left wreckage up to the top of the three-rail fence, little or none of the ballast had been displaced. Now, in the country to be traversed by the proposed line along the border, the water in flood-time was stagnant or had very slow currents, and it was not likely to damage or affect any of the embankments. There was a considerable amount of agricultural settlement between Warwick and Goondiwindi, and it only required proper means of communication to bring a great deal more. No good could be done with agricultural produce if it had to be carted any very long distance, and he believed the construction of that line would induce a large number of people to settle as grazing farmers. The cost of the line was put down by the Chief Engineer as £4,000 a mile, but he was inclined to think that that was greatly over-estimated. He knew for a fact that the whole of the tendering for the last twelve months had been from £10,000 to £12,000 under the engineer's estimates, and he was satisfied that it would not cost anything like that money. He believed £3,000 a mile would be sufficient for the construction of the line; the timber, ballast, and all necessary materials were at hand. It gave him great pleasure to bring that line forward, because he believed it would be suitable for all time to come. Hitherto, especially in the southern portion of the colony, the endeavour seemed to have been to get away from the population; but the object of the present Government was to lay down lines that would benefit the whole community. He might as well point out that the Government still had in view the direct line to Warwick; if hon. members supposed that the Government had the slightest idea of abandoning that, they were greatly mistaken. The report of the Chief Engineer would not be received in time to admit of the Government dealing with it this session; but he could assure the Committee that the Government would build that line or they would not be in office. He was satisfied that it would be unjust and unfair to handicap the whole of the southern portion of the colony by making them go sixty miles round to get to market. The Government would take the earliest opportunity of having that route thoroughly tested, because unless that was done the line he was now proposing would be of little service. If they were to have communication with the southern colonies they must shorten the route. He looked upon that line along the southern border of the colony as one which at some future time—not perhaps for some years, but eventually—would join the South Australian line at the border. The time was not far distant when they would be bound to have another line, and the direct line to Warwick would exactly suit all the purposes of a double line to ease the present one. Within the next ten years the population of the colony would be doubled or trebled. Notwithstanding all the cry about the Land Act, he was satisfied that when people came to understand the benefit to be

derived from it, the population would be largely increased; and he was not at all afraid to push ahead where the traffic would be most beneficial to the country.

Mr. NORTON said that if the expectations of the Minister for Works could always be realised, the Committee might be justified in passing that railway without very much inquiry, and also in passing the *via recta*; but unfortunately for the hon. gentleman's anticipations they were often very far wide of the mark. When the Land Bill was introduced in 1884, the Minister for Works pointed out that he expected the revenue to be received under it would soon be quadrupled, but what did they see? The Bill had been in force for a considerable time, and the Government were always pleading for it that it wanted time to come into operation.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Oh, don't introduce that again!

Mr. NORTON: It was all very well for the Minister for Works to say, "Don't speak about that again"; but the hon. gentleman had given them his anticipations.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You know the reason as well as I do.

Mr. NORTON said he had given his anticipations in respect to what would happen in a few years, and he (Mr. Norton) said that they could not place any dependence upon what the hon. gentleman anticipated when they saw the result of his anticipations about the occupation of land likely to take place under the Land Act. Of course, he had a very great regard for what fell from the hon. gentleman, but still he could not help thinking that in a matter of that kind the engineers who surveyed the line, and the Chief Engineer who had to make the estimate, were more likely to arrive at a right conclusion with respect to the cost of the line than even the Minister for Works; and he therefore thought the Chief Engineer's estimate of £4,000 a mile was likely to be more correct than the Minister's estimate of £3,000 per mile. Several cases had come before them lately, and they found the estimate of the Chief Engineer had often been a great deal below the mark. There were some cases where he had made a higher estimate than the works would cost. He did not know which they were, but in several cases the estimates had been very much below the cost. So with regard to the proposed line he thought they could hardly accept the hopeful anticipations of the Minister. Before going largely into the question, he should like to hear the opinions of several hon. members who were well acquainted with the country through which it was proposed to take the line. The Minister for Works had told them something about it, but in proposing the initiation of a line like that they must look forward, not to the building of twenty-five miles only, but the building of the other 210 miles, which went beyond it. Now, there was another consideration they should have regard to, that that particular line was a continuation—so the Minister for Works said—of the great scheme of the Government commonly spoken of as the *via recta*. That *via recta* he (Mr. Norton) opposed when the Loan Bill came before the House, and he thought, judging from the reports which had been placed before hon. members—the report of the Chief Engineer and of Mr. Phillips—the probability was that when that came to a vote the House would have the temerity to vote by a majority against the construction of the *via recta*. Judging from what he had heard from hon. members, a number of members would come from the other side of the House, and the

proposal of the Government would most likely be defeated. He had said last night that he did not believe in those lines of railway being treated as party questions. He thought it was the worst thing that could happen to the country, to make the construction of those lines of railway, and also other reproductive works, party questions in any sense whatever. Every member should be perfectly unfettered in his judgment, and allowed to vote in accordance with the information before the Committee and the knowledge he could otherwise obtain. Taking that view, he did not intend to say much about the proposed line at present; but he would like to hear, as he had said, the opinions of hon. members who were acquainted with the country, and what they had to say as to the class of country through which the line would pass. All he had heard was very unfavourable, except as to the first portion. The first portion of the country through which the line would pass from Warwick, he believed, was very good, but beyond that he had reason to believe that the whole line would pass through what was commonly called poor grazing country. In Mr. Phillips's report, laid on the table of the House last year, he spoke of three lines. One of the alternative lines was from Dalby to St. George, and that he spoke of as being the easiest of construction and the best. Now, what they had to consider in carrying out a line to St. George was, what was the best line; but before coming to that they must consider if the line was to be constructed they had to take it in connection with the direct line to Warwick, which was to cost an enormous sum of money. The first thing for the Committee to consider was whether they were prepared to vote for those twenty-five miles, knowing that if they did so they would be perfectly valueless unless the direct line to Warwick was also carried out. Another matter to be considered was the class of country through which the line would pass, and a further matter to be considered was whether they were to carry it out in order to intercept the trade which was now going from this colony to New South Wales. The Minister for Works very properly said that the object of the Government was not to take the trade of New South Wales, but to secure the colony's own; and in that he was quite right. He (Mr. Norton) did not believe in that petty warfare between the different colonies in order to secure one another's trade. He believed in the colonies working together as amicably as possible, but what he did think was that if they were to secure their trade they should make arrangements to get to St. George as early as possible. That railway the hon. gentleman said was to last for all time, but it appeared to him (Mr. Norton) that it was also to be all time before they got to St. George. That was one of the great objects to be attained. In the first place, unless they had the *via recta* constructed, then the traffic coming by that route would have to go a long way round and out of the way, and it would take so long to get to the boundary that they would not be able to intercept their trade. He must refer once more to the Land Act. At the time it was introduced the Minister for Lands explained that the reason the schedule was not extended to the border was, that there were numbers of young men in New South Wales waiting to take up land on the border and that they would form connections in the way of trade with New South Wales which it would be impossible to break without great difficulty. Now, if they were going to take a long time in the construction of the line, the people who settled on the land would favour trade connections with the other colony, which would be as difficult to break as were the connections formed between

Riverina and Victoria. It took not only years of warring on the part of the New South Wales Government to secure any portion of that trade, but it also took a very large sacrifice in the shape of revenue to be able to do it in the end, simply because the people living in the Riverina country had established trade connections with Melbourne, which, under ordinary circumstances, New South Wales would not have been able to break. In order to do so, they were compelled to lower their railway rates so much that they gave a large pecuniary advantage to people living there to deal with Sydney rather than go to Victoria. Of course they in Queensland did not desire to carry on a cut-throat policy of that kind; but if they did not strive very hard, and do all in their power to get to the far south-west border of the colony as quickly as possible, the people who settled on the land there would have their trade connection so firmly established that this colony would have to fight the same old battle that New South Wales had had to fight for the Riverina traffic with Victoria. He supposed the two routes to St. George which would be discussed would be the routes from Warwick and from Dalby, and it would be of great advantage to the Committee to have the opinions of hon. members acquainted with the facts as to their respective capabilities for settlement before entering into the discussion of the general subject.

Mr. JESSOP said he was sorry the Government had brought forward the question at present, because it was premature, and, if carried, would be the insertion of the thin end of the wedge for the construction of the *via recta*. With regard to railway lines in general, it was always said that the further they were extended the better they would pay; but with that particular line things were reversed, and the further it was carried the worse it would pay. He was not standing up to advocate any special route. Three other surveys were made to St. George in 1884, and if hon. members would refer to Mr. Surveyor Phillips's report they would be able to decide as to which was the best route of the four. As it was a settled thing that the railway should go to St. George, the one thing necessary now was that the best possible route should be chosen. The Minister for Works had told them about the grand country there was between Warwick and St. George, but the hon. member must remember the numerous floods that had occurred there during the time he had been in the colony. He (Mr. Jessop), when riding on horseback through the district, had observed flood-marks higher than his head on that very route. They must all have seen in the *Courier* during the last few days what had been happening at Goondiwindi, and he believed that when reliable and full news came the losses by the flood would be found to be very serious. It was quite possible that floods might wash away many miles of the railway before anyone could be aware of it. The nearest route and the best, according to Mr. Phillips, was that from Dalby. The distance from Dalby to St. George, as surveyed by Mr. Phillips, Government surveyor, was 181 miles, whilst the proposed line of railway, as surveyed, from Warwick to St. George was 235½ miles, showing the difference in favour of the Dalby to St. George route of 54½ miles, making a difference of at least £200,000 in cost of construction. The distance from Dalby to Yeulba was 140 miles, and the surveyed route from Yeulba to St. George was 116 miles, making a total of 256 miles, or a difference in favour of the direct line from Dalby to St. George of 85 miles. From Dalby to Roma and thence to St. George was 282 miles, or a saving of distance in favour of the direct line from Dalby to St. George of 101 miles. But there was another point to be considered—namely, the

extra sum to be paid for the carriage of goods from Brisbane. Mr. Landy, of Dalby, a gentleman who was well acquainted with the subject, had put that matter very clearly. Mr. Landy wrote:—

"I have placed a few figures together that will point out the cost of carriage of goods to St. George, according to the mileage by the different routes, as surveyed; Brisbane to St. George, *via* Warwick, is 391½ miles; Brisbane to St. George, *via* Dalby, is 333 miles, or 58½ miles less than by Warwick; Brisbane to St. George, *via* Yeulba, is 418 miles, or 85 miles more than *via* Dalby. We will take the cost now of 3 tons of goods, delivered at St. George, by the different routes, and according to the present rate per mile. The cost of 1 ton of *special rate* goods, say flour, will be, delivered at St. George, *via* Dalby, £5 11s.: 1 ton of first-class goods, say sugar, will cost £7 12s. 8d.; 1 ton of second-class goods, say drapery, will cost £11 9s.; the 3 tons will cost £24 12s. 8d. The same quantity of goods, *via* Warwick, will cost £28 18s. 8d., or £4 6s. more than by Dalby. The same quantity of goods, *via* Yeulba, will cost £31 6s. 10d., or £6 14s. 2d. more than by Dalby."

Those were matters for the Committee to take into consideration before finally deciding that the line to St. George should start from Warwick.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he regretted to think that, in speaking in favour of the proposed line, his views might not run altogether parallel with those of some of his friends on that side of the House whose opinions on ordinary political matters he was in conformity with. He rose at that early period of the debate, because he regarded the line which they passed yesterday—from Normanton to Cloncurry—and the proposed line along the southern border of the colony, as unquestionably the principal lines on the Government railway programme at the present time. He believed they would have an enormous influence upon the future prosperity of the colony, and was convinced that no future Treasurer of the colony would ever have cause to regret their being made. They would not only open up for settlement valuable tracts of country, but would conserve the trade of the colony within its own borders. He thought the debate had begun to assume a wrong turn in this respect—hon. members being engaged in debating which was the best route to arrive at St. George. St. George, to his mind, was not the ultimate destination of the railway, nor in any way would a railway to St. George commend itself to his approval at the present time as a mere line of connection between that place and Warwick. He said that a railway of the character of the proposed line was to protect the trade of the colony by running along the southern border, and therefore the mere question as to which was the easiest means of arriving at St. George was, to his mind, a very secondary consideration indeed. The question was whether they would protect their own country better by proceeding from Warwick due west along their southern border, in preference to a line by Yeulba or Dalby. He was of opinion that as a revenue line—a line protective of the commercial interests of the colony—the course from Warwick to St. George, and thence to Cunnamulla, was the one which commended itself to their approval. Of course it might be said, in the course of the debate, that they could not produce figures to show that the line would pay. If they were to accept that position as a sufficient cause for delaying public works they might at once stop all railway construction; for, unfortunately, during the past year the returns from their railways had not been of that encouraging appearance that would justify them entering upon at the present time a very large railway system of construction. But he believed that, with the returning prosperity of the colony, they would find abundant justification for the large railway policy which they were now entering upon. He regarded the line in the same light as that in which New South Wales recovered

her trade with Riverina, which had been filched from her by Victoria, by the extension of the lines of the latter colony to the Murray. It was a well-known fact that a few years ago the export trade of wool from Hobson's Bay was very largely in excess of the quantity of wool grown in the colony of Victoria. It was greatly derived from Riverina—increased by the product of Riverina—and the trade of Riverina was largely at that time in the hands of the merchants of Melbourne. But by the extension of railway lines in that district, New South Wales recovered that trade which was justly part of her own. He agreed with the Minister for Works, that they had no right to try and filch the trade of New South Wales. He did not think that was a statesman-like view to take, although, unfortunately, it had been expressed in the adjoining colony to a certain extent.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS : No, no !

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he certainly thought that the reference to it which was made in the Parliament of the mother colony by a Minister of the day was not in very good taste, and he perfectly agreed with the opinion of his hon. colleague, that in considering the question before them they should do so without any desire to filch in any way the trade of that colony. But they had also a right to protect themselves, and he thought that, undoubtedly, the trade of the colony would very largely indeed be tapped by the northern railways now being pushed on by the mother colony. Therefore, he considered they were perfectly justified in taking time by the forelock, and in protecting by that revenue railway—he called it a revenue line of railway—the trade of Queensland, and maintaining it within their own colony. Therefore, it should not be considered as a local line, or a line to St. George ; that was a secondary consideration altogether. If they could run along their southern border, *via* Dalby, he should listen with great satisfaction to the speeches of hon. gentlemen opposite. A short line from Dalby to St. George would not secure them in the true position, which was to keep within their own colony the trade of the colony, and in that light it would be regarded by all who desired to see the commercial and business interests of the colony protected.

Mr. KATES said he took that early opportunity of dispelling a misconception that seemed to be resting in the minds of hon. gentlemen on the other side in connection with that most important national railway. It was an old saying that if a man were not good, and honest, and just, he could not speak with confidence ; but in that case he could speak with the fullest confidence, because the case he had to defend was true and honest and just. There were four rivals in connection with the proposed line—four candidates, he might say. They had the Roma people, who said, "Start from Roma"; they had the Yeulba people, who said, "Start from Yeulba"; they had the Dalby men saying, "Start from Dalby"; and they had the Warwick people saying, "Start from Warwick."

Mr. LUMLEY HILL : Beauraraba makes five.

Mr. ALAND : It is not in the hon. gentleman's constituency.

Mr. KATES : With the exception of the Warwick line, none were border lines. They were at right angles—they were bee-lines—and if they admitted the necessity for a border line, there was not the slightest doubt that the line from Warwick to St. George should be accepted as such. He intended to go a little back into the history of the affair. He wished to call the attention of hon. members to the fact that in

the year 1882, when the Hon. Mr. Archer was Colonial Treasurer and Sir Thomas McIlwraith was Premier, and when the hon. member for Townsville was Minister for Works, the late hon. member for Northern Downs, Mr. Thorn, during the debate on the Financial Statement, wanted to know why the Government did not provide for a survey for the border line. His words upon that occasion were :—

"He noticed an omission altogether for railway construction in the most important part of the colony. He found there was no provision whatever made for a railway line to the southern border. He looked upon that line—the line to St. George and the country around—as the most important line that they could construct at the present time. The Government must be aware that the New South Wales Government were pushing on their line from Dubbo to Bourke, and they would soon not only hold their own with regard to the produce raised in their own colony, but they would take up from Queensland produce from a country equal in size and quality to the province of Riverina. He was surprised that hon. members from those portions of the colony had not said a word upon the matter. He thought that the line to the southern border should be carried on at once, to be afterwards extended to Cumnamulla and Thargomindah."

The then hon. member for Balonne, the late Mr. Low, was not slow to take the hint, because, on the 14th September, 1882, he moved—

"That it is desirable that a sufficient sum of money for the trial survey of a line of railway from Warwick to St. George, *via* Goondiwindi, be devoted to that purpose from whatever sum may be granted by the House for the survey of lines of railway."

The late hon. member for Balonne, Mr. Low, was well known as a man of good repute, and a man who was not capable of saying anything but what he meant, and he, after considering the lines from Roma, from Yeulba, from Dalby, and from Warwick, came to the conclusion that the one from Warwick was the best line to be adopted. The hon. member for Dalby had pointed out the matter of distance, and said that the line from Dalby was the nearest. He forgot that they had such a thing as the *via recta* on the paper, and that if a straight line were carried to Warwick the line from Warwick would be the nearest.

Mr. JESSOP : No, not by ten miles.

Mr. KATES said he should tell them what Mr. Low said at the time. He said he had known the country since 1846—forty years—and there was no other member inside or outside the House who could say that.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL : Yes.

Mr. KATES : Not that particular part of Queensland. Mr. Low said at the time :—

"There was no comparison, however, between the country that the different lines would traverse, and that was a very important matter in considering which was the best line to adopt. He was personally acquainted with all the country about those parts, with the exception of that in a bee-line from Roma to St. George, and he knew that the country through which the line he was advocating would pass would bring additional traffic to any line to the metropolis. Very large meetings had been held in Goondiwindi and in Warwick for the purpose of advocating the line. A meeting held in Warwick the other day was the largest ever held in that town, and meetings in Goondiwindi had been very largely attended. It had been stated in some of the newspapers that the country along the proposed line was liable to floods; but he had known that country since 1846, and he knew that for about 60 miles between Goondiwindi and Talwood the country was equal to any in Queensland and would grow anything. The country along the Macintyre River for a distance of 100 miles was capable of carrying 330,000 sheep, and there were now, he believed, 150,000 sheep on each side of that river. Other portions were good grazing country, and much of the land along the line could be utilised for agricultural purposes. He need say nothing about Warwick and Goondiwindi, because their capabilities were well known. If the

Government did not agree to make the line which he was now advocating, it was certain that the New South Wales Government would push on their line to the border at Mungindi, and secure a large amount of trade."

They had also the opinion of the then Minister for Works, the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan. He said:—

"He had no doubt that what the hon. member had said about the line tapping the border country was correct. That was evident, looking at the proposed line from a geographical point of view."

There was also Mr. O'Sullivan, late member for Ipswich, who was particularly strong in favour of that line. He knew the country all the way, and he said that no other line should be adopted but the line from Warwick. He (Mr. Kates) merely stated the opinions of those gentlemen to show that the late member for Balonne, who had no particular inclination in favour of Warwick more than anywhere else, decided that *vid* Warwick and St. George was the correct route. The hon. Colonial Treasurer truly pointed out that that line would be a revenue line. He (Mr. Kates) could prove it by statistics. He held in his hand returns which had been sent in there not very long since, which showed that they were losing an enormous lot of trade already, on account of not having a line constructed along the border. From the statistics laid upon the table the week before last, headed "Imports across the border—a return for the year 1885," he found that the goods which had been brought across the border amounted last year to £105,000; while this year he found, from the return laid on the table upon the motion of Mr. Donaldson, the member for Warrego, that for the half-year it was £70,850, so that there was already an increase of £20,000 on the half-year. Now, if those goods were now brought over from New South Wales in such quantities, and at an increasing ratio, what quantity of goods might they not expect when the lines in New South Wales were actually extended to the border? They knew that the line from Narrabri to Moree would be taken in hand at once.

Mr. GROOM: It is shelved. It has been referred to a select committee.

Mr. KATES said he was very glad to hear it was shelved; nevertheless that would not stop the people from coming across the border who were determined to do so, and when the line from Moree to Mungindi was completed it would be still worse. He found that the character of the goods sent over the border was chiefly station supplies; 70,900 lbs. of tobacco were sent across the border, 11,000 gallons of spirits, 6,000 gallons of beer, 4,500 lbs. of butter, 104 tons of chaff, 114 tons of galvanised iron, 742 tons of fencing wire, and other miscellaneous articles to the amount of £105,940. That trade belonged naturally to Brisbane—Brisbane being the natural port; and he was sure all the trade would be recovered which was now passing from them, if that line should be constructed. They had resumed half of the runs on the Warrego for grazing farmers, and were they justified in allowing those grazing farmers to form business connections with Sydney when Brisbane was the place for them to deal with? He had half-a-dozen reports in connection with this line—reports from people well acquainted with it. He had one report by the late Mr. Clinton, a Government officer well known to almost every member of the House. He should not weary the Committee with reading those reports, but they were all to the same effect. They all stated that the route from Warwick to St. George was one suitable for agriculture and grazing. That the road was not so bad as some made out, he might point out that he received

a letter a few days ago from Warwick, where he was informed that on account of the late rains on the Darling Downs the carriers had actually to leave Cambooya and come to Warwick, as they found that the road from Warwick to Goondiwindi was the soundest and most suitable. A great deal had been said about the people of St. George being against that line. He had received a letter that morning from one of the principal leading men of St. George. His letter ran as follows:—

"With reference to the proposed Warwick to St. George railway line, the feeling of a good many in St. George is that if we could make sure that such line would be carried out without any delay, no obstacles whatever should be placed in the carrying out of this line. The reason that some people support the Yeulba and Dalby line is they think that a line from either of these places could be constructed quicker."

Mr. CAMPBELL: Name!

Mr. KATES: Louis Zieman, a very old established resident of St. George, and one of the leading men of the town. They had had a petition presented to the House a few days ago in favour of another line, but two years ago he presented a most influential petition signed by the principal merchants of Brisbane who recognised the necessity of a border line direct from Brisbane to St. George. That petition was signed by the following business men of Brisbane:—George Harris and Co.; Robert Harper and Co.; Berkeley, Taylor, and Co.; D. L. Brown and Co.; Elliott Brothers and Co.; Burns, Philp, and Co.; Quinlan, Gray, and Co.; John Cameron; Gibbs, Bright, and Co.; Wilson and Co.; Barker and Co.; S. Hoffnung and Co.; Henry Box and Son; and others. The business men of Brisbane knew what was good for them. The present depression in Queensland was partly due to a great deal of the border trade being taken away by the people of Sydney; and unless something was soon done to get that traffic, not an ounce of wool would be sent from Brisbane by the British India Company's boats; it would be forwarded overland to Sydney and sent to England by the P. and O. Company's steamers. He had pointed out that £105,000 worth of goods went over the border; but that did not include goods not subject to duty, because there was no record of the amount of wool, tallow, hides, and sheepskins sent across the border. The question was one of life and death so far as the trade of the southern portion of the colony was concerned.

Mr. GROOM: No.

Mr. KATES maintained that the people who opposed the line were no friends to Queensland; they would not mind if the whole of the trade went across the border. And if the railway were not soon extended to the border, the trade going across would amount to hundreds of thousands of pounds in the course of two or three years. It was perfectly true, as the Colonial Treasurer said, that the Minister for Works in Sydney distinctly stated that there was one reason why they wished to extend their line—namely, to take the trade from Queensland.

Mr. GROOM: He never said anything of the kind.

Mr. KATES: He did say it. It was reported by wire in the *Brisbane Courier*, and the particulars of the speech were also in that paper. He could find it in the Library. Of course the hon. member for Toowoomba was bound to oppose the line. Toowoomba was afraid it would suffer in some way on account of the line; but Toowoomba need not be in the least afraid—it would always be a big place. They did not interfere with the Toowoomba Lunatic Asylum; they had given the people of Toowoomba no provocation. They had voted £10,000 for that lunatic asylum, and he was informed that it

would cost £100,000 before it was completed. Toowoomba need not be afraid of the line, because it would do the people there as much good as the rest of the colony. With regard to the direct line, they had seen the report of Mr. George Phillips; but it must be remembered that Mr. Phillips had left the service, and that he had always been opposed to the direct line. He had been given to understand that a reply from the Chief Engineer would shortly appear in the papers, annihilating and demolishing every argument used by Mr. Phillips in his letter to the Government.

Mr. NORTON: There is not a better officer in the service now than Mr. Phillips was.

Mr. KATES said the hon. member would hear of it directly. There was another argument in favour of the line. They were spending a large sum of money for rabbit-proof fences; and if the line went along the border it would be very little additional expense to make it rabbit-proof. He hoped the hon. member for Logan would take up that question. The fence would then be under the supervision of the railway employes, and a lot of the expense of keeping it in repair would be saved. That had been done on a portion of the Northern line in New South Wales. The first section of the proposed line went through good agricultural country. It was an easy gradient; there was any amount of timber, ironbark of the best description, and the best road-making material alongside the line. He had received a few particulars in connection with the settlement along the route, and he found that for the first twenty-five miles the line would be close to Sandy Creek, Darkey Flat, and Greymare Creek, and on that part of the line there was not less than 3,100 acres of cultivation. He had been informed that a very successful farmer there, Patrick Higgins, sent 273 tons of produce to market last year; and there were other farmers in the district cultivating from ninety to eighteen acres of land. If the line was rejected he was sure that Brisbane would suffer more than any other place in Queensland, because it would lose its natural trade, and when once the trade was diverted and people entered into business relations with Sydney it would be very difficult indeed to recover that trade. There was sufficient land for grazing farms in the Warrego district capable of carrying 2,000,000 sheep, and if facilities were not given for the transit of produce and supplies to and from Brisbane the whole of the trade of that district would very likely go to Sydney. That would be a great loss to the colony, and he appealed to the good sense and patriotism of hon. members on both sides to accept the line in its entirety.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said that, notwithstanding the eloquent and able way in which the hon. member for Darling Downs had advocated his case, he could not see his way to support the line. The principal reason was that he had studied the comparative routes between Dalby and Warwick, and also Yeulba, Roma, and St. George, and a report by Mr. Phillips. He had taken considerable pains to acquaint himself with the individual merits of the different routes, and he could not say that he agreed with the hon. member—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You do not agree with anybody.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he did. He agreed with some members who were going to oppose the line. He had taken considerable pains to get all the information he could as to which was the best route, not only from the surveyor's report, but from people who had been born and bred in the country and who had spent the best years of their lives there, not excepting

some who knew the country just as well as the late member for Balonne. He had inquired from the most reliable sources the nature of the country which that Warwick to Goondiwindi and St. George line would go through, and he was assured on all hands that, with the exception of a few small oases, the line would pass through wretchedly poor country indeed, abounding in brigalow, bendee, and oak scrubs, a great deal of which was very much flooded; and there was very little pastoral country of any good, even on the other side of the border at Goondiwindi, by which they might possibly hope to poach or filch some of the New South Wales trade; there was really none. There were a few small cattle stations, but with the exception of Welltown there was very little produce or carriage to be got from them. From Goondiwindi to St. George he believed the line would go through the worst tract of country that any railway in Queensland had yet gone—and that was saying a good deal for it. It was most inferior country, and, in fact, fit for nothing. Now, he did not care for Goondiwindi, St. George, or Warwick *per se*; they had no weight or influence on him. He was not prejudiced or directly interested one straw in the matter, but he was interested in the expenditure of the money of the people of the colony. But he saw that an alternative route could be made from Dalby, through very much easier country, by which twenty-four miles might be saved, and although as far as he could make out the country was poor in the main, still it was better than between Warwick and St. George, and that line could be made at a very much less cost per mile.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You know nothing at all about it.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Yes, at a very much less cost per mile. Let the hon. gentleman look at the report sent in by Mr. Phillips. On the Warwick to St. George railway the highest elevation was 1,889 feet, and the lowest 863 feet, showing a variation in the levels on that line of 1,026 feet. On the Dalby to St. George line the highest level passed over was 1,178 feet, and the lowest level was 909 feet, showing a total variation of 269 feet only. That showed him that the whole length of that line must be very even, and there could be no difficult grades to pass over. St. George of itself was no more to him than Goondiwindi or any other place, but it was well known to be in the centre of a rich pastoral district, and where they would have some chance of securing, not only their own trade, but some of their neighbours', by going direct to St. George by the cheapest and most practicable route. Of course, the line was not intended to stop at St. George. The rich pastoral districts and grazing farms the hon. member for Darling Downs talked about, around Cunnamulla, would be tapped by an extension of the line to Cunnamulla, thence to Eulo and Thargomindah, and so they would secure all the trade of the southern borders of the colony that it was worth while to secure. He believed that that line would be far preferable to the Warwick, Goondiwindi, and St. George line, which was only beginning the *via recta* at the other end. The Minister for Works had himself said the other day that most of their railways and railway stations had been built "backside foremost," and the present proposal was another instance of beginning backside foremost, and committing the country by that line to the *via recta*. It would cost, he was certain, not less than £300,000, and more than the line from Dalby to St. George, which would go through the district they really wanted to tap, and from which they wanted to secure the trade of the southern borders of

the colony. He contended that the real *via recta* from Brisbane to Sydney was not by Warwick at all. He trusted the members for South Brisbane would pay attention to what he had to say, and that was that the line to Sydney should go through Beaudesert, past Wilson's Peak to Casino. That was the true line to Sydney, and he found it would be eighty-five miles shorter than the present existing route to Tenterfield, and thirty miles less than the *via recta*, which, if ultimately carried, would only succeed in making a second line to Warwick. He could not see why they should be asked to make two lines from one port to the one place, more especially when the enormous cost of the line was taken into consideration, and the difficulty there would always be in running heavy loads over it. They agreed yesterday to two lines from Brisbane to Mayne. He did hope the Committee would see the error of their ways. When they considered there were so many people in the colony and settlement of many different kinds, and that many people were absolutely debarred from railway communication by having to go 40, 50, 100, or 200 miles by land carriage to the railways, they should take into consideration the burdens already upon the taxpayers of the colony and refrain from putting additional burdens upon them for the sake of making a second line to one town that had already got a line. He considered that there was nothing more certain than that in course of time a railway from South Brisbane by Wilson's Peak to Casino would be the shortest and the ordinary mode of communication with Sydney, and right through also to the north of the colony. He did not want to offer any factious opposition to the Government, but he should be wanting in his duty to the Committee and to the people of the country who had entrusted him with their representation and the custody of the public purse if he did not again point out that the line from Warwick to St. George, *via* Goondiwindi, would be really a flagrant waste of the public money which they were not at all justified in entering upon under present circumstances.

Mr. GROOM said he had had no intention of addressing the Committee upon the question, and would much rather not have taken part in the discussion at all. However, hon. members must bear in mind that the position of a Speaker in this colony was very different from what it was in the mother-country. In former times Speakers had addressed the House of Commons when in committee, and there was one instance on record where the Speaker moved an amendment and defeated the Government of the day, but of late years Speakers were particularly punctilious in not addressing the House so that whenever they were called upon to give an opinion there would not be the slightest tinge of partiality in their decisions. The questions dealt with in the House of Commons were chiefly Imperial questions, and so far as the estimates of expenditure and ways and means were concerned, as hon. members probably knew by this time, those questions were dealt with by a Committee of Public Accounts, and when the report of that committee was submitted to the House of Commons there was not much left to hon. members to speak upon, except the general questions involved in the items under the various heads of departments. But in this colony the case was very different. He was sure that if the election of any member to the position of Speaker debarred him from raising his voice for his constituents when necessity demanded, he would meet with great difficulty in finding a seat. He did not think it fair to leave to his honourable colleague all the burden of speaking on these railways, and he therefore considered it his duty to assist him in

raising a joint protest against what they thought to be an unjust expenditure of money involved in the Warwick to St. George railway. He was not going to deal with the question from a local standpoint. If he thought his constituents desired him to oppose that line simply because it would probably injure Toowoomba, he would decline to do so, because he thought some higher considerations than that should influence a member when he opposed a particular line of railway. He opposed that line on very different grounds altogether. He failed to see that one single argument had been advanced in support of the line. If a private company desired to construct a line of railway in the mother-country a Bill authorising its construction had to be submitted to the ordeal of a select committee of the House of Commons, and they had to prove what was called the preamble of the Bill. They had to prove by reliable statistics and probable traffic receipts which would stand the test of the Board of Trade, that if the line were constructed it would pay, so that there was no fear of the shareholders being victimised. Now, he was perfectly sure that if this railway were submitted to such an analysis as that the Committee would be bound to report that the preamble had not been proved. There had not been a single particle of evidence adduced to prove anything in connection with the line. There had been no statistics except of the most infinitesimal character, and, as he would prove presently, they had been considerably mixed in order to place an erroneous idea before the country. There had not been the slightest intimation given them as to the probable cost of the line; all they had before them was simply the report of the Chief Engineer of Railways on the *via recta*. He (Mr. Groom) complained very much of the style in which that report was written, and also of the unfair way in which the plan was prepared, so that any stranger looking at it would be utterly puzzled to find out what railway the plan was for, or where Goondiwindi and St. George were situated. As far as Mr. Stanley's report was concerned, it certainly condemned the *via recta*, because he estimated the line as likely to cost a million sterling; and if that estimate was as accurate as the one for the duplication of the line between Ipswich and Brisbane, then the *via recta* would cost nearer two millions than one.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: He furnished no estimates for the duplication.

Mr. GROOM said all he knew was that when the item was going through Committee the late Minister for Works, Mr. Macrossan, asked if any further sum would be needed for that line, and the answer given was that the £85,000 would complete it. That, he knew, was in *Hansard*, and if he had thought the statement would be disputed he would have obtained *Hansard* and confronted the Minister for Works with it. As a matter of fact, the duplication would cost nearer £200,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I thought the £85,000 would complete it.

Mr. GROOM said that as far as Mr. Stanley's estimate was concerned, and as far as the general construction of our railways was concerned, in no one instance on record had the sums voted by the House been sufficient to complete the lines. There had always been a supplementary loan, sometimes largely in excess of the original one, called a loan to complete existing lines. Any hon. member who would peruse the "Votes and Proceedings" would find that fact established. Mr. Phillips's report was also condemnatory of the line in the strongest possible terms, and though Mr. Phillips was threatened with annihi-

lation in consequence of having furnished that report, he thought Mr. Phillips's high character was a sufficient guarantee that he would not have written that letter except upon the surest information.

Mr. KATES: He is no engineer.

Mr. GROOM: The hon. member was no judge whether he was or not, and it was not fair of the hon. member for Darling Downs to impugn the professional capacity of any man who could not answer for himself on the floor of the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not fair of you to say he is going to be annihilated. Where do you get your information? What authority have you for that?

Mr. GROOM said that had the Minister for Works been in the House earlier in the afternoon he would have heard his colleague the hon. member for Darling Downs say that Mr. Stanley was going to furnish a report to the papers in which Mr. Phillips would be annihilated. But something more than that had been insinuated with a view to damage Mr. Phillips. He thought it his duty to vindicate that gentleman from what he considered a very gross and atrocious slander. It had been insinuated on the morning that that letter appeared that Mr. Phillips was to receive the sum of £500 for writing it and for furnishing a report on behalf of a Darling Downs syndicate; and the name of Mr. Gore was associated with the slander. No two more honourable men than Mr. Phillips, the surveyor, and Mr. Gore, of Yandilla, could possibly have been mentioned in such a slander. Mr. Gore would no more dream of paying Mr. Phillips £500 for such a report than he would of paying him (Mr. Groom) £500 for anything he might do; and Mr. Phillips would be incapable of lending himself to anything of the kind. That slander was circulated privately—and that was the most dastardly way of circulating a slander—with the view of damaging Mr. Phillips's professional character. It had reached his (Mr. Groom's) ears from a member of the House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Name! Who offered the £500?

Mr. GROOM said he did not know. It was from the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, that he heard it. That hon. member told him he had been informed by a member of the House that Mr. Phillips was to receive £500 from a syndicate on the Darling Downs for writing a report, and that Mr. Gore's name was mixed up in it. Now, Mr. Gore's name stood too high in Queensland for such a slander to be attached to it; he would not lend himself to anything of the kind. Well, then, they had the report of Mr. Stanley and the report of Mr. Phillips, both—he would not say condemnatory of the line, but pointing out the enormous expense which would be incurred if the line were undertaken. As far as the line from Warwick to St. George was concerned, there was not the slightest information supplied to the House or the country as to what it would cost.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have stated that the estimated expenditure is £4,000 a mile.

Mr. GROOM said that was only for the first section; he was speaking of the whole line. No doubt the hon. member had all the information at his finger-ends so far as the first section was concerned; but the country was asked by that vote to commit itself to the formation of 233½ miles of railway, and he contended that the House and the country ought to be furnished with some information giving, if not accurately, at least approximately, what the cost of

the line would be. The wildest figures had been mentioned in connection with the matter; but taking Mr. Stanley's figures as far as the *via recta* was concerned, and £4,000 a mile for one part of the line from Warwick to St. George, then he unhesitatingly affirmed that by that vote the country would be committed to an expenditure of £3,000,000 of money, bearing an annual interest of £120,000. It was on that account that he addressed the Committee on behalf of his constituents, who were already sufficiently taxed without having that additional burden placed on them. The question arose whether there was any justification for the line? There had been no evidence whatever adduced in favour of it. The hon. member for Darling Downs said that the amount of duty collected for border trade amounted in 1885 to £109,000, and in 1886 to £70,000.

Mr. KATES: That is for the half-year.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: That is the value of the goods.

Mr. GROOM said that was the value of the goods. If he stated it was the duty, he made a mistake. The hon. member said the value of the goods which had come across borderwise amounted for the year 1885 to £109,000, and for 1886, £70,000.

Mr. KATES: For the half-year of 1886.

Mr. GROOM: Assuming the hon. member's figures to be correct, would it not have been better for him, and far more honest to the House to name the particular places where the duty was collected? It was all very well to name a lump sum, but what the House and the country desired to know was what was the amount of duty collected at the different places through which that border line was supposed to go, and if that was done they could form some accurate idea of what the border trade was likely to be at the places where the border trade was likely to be tapped—Texas and Goondiwindi. He would leave out Stanthorpe, because it rightly did not come into consideration. At Texas, to the 30th June, 1885, the amount collected in duty was £3 13s. 6d.; at Goondiwindi £29 10s. 4d.; and the value of the goods at Texas was £50, and at Goondiwindi £340. Why, that reminded him of a reply made by the late Minister for Lands when the late hon. member, Mr. Jacob Low, complained very much that Goondiwindi was not receiving justice in not having a land agent appointed there. The Minister was asked the amount of land revenue received from Goondiwindi, and he assured the House that the weight of correspondence from Goondiwindi represented the actual number of pounds received in land revenue—for the total revenue received for the year amounted to about £25—and yet the people were clamouring for a land agent. Now, anyone who knew anything about the population of the district, the character of the soil and its inadaptability to settlement, would easily understand the returns which he had read. In 1886 Texas contributed £10 10s. and Goondiwindi £63 6s. 6d. to the revenue by way of duty—a slight improvement—but he would ask hon. members and the country was that revenue sufficient to justify the House in spending two millions of money on such a line of railway? And those were the only statistics which were given to them.

Mr. KATES: What about Stanthorpe?

Mr. GROOM: What had Stanthorpe to do with it? It had nothing to do with the proposed line. The amount of trade could be very well gauged by the amount of duty paid, which was particularly small in the places mentioned. Then as far as the character of the country was concerned, he had not to rely upon

the statistics of any particular person, but he would take official information which might be relied upon as correct; he would take the evidence of an officer of the Lands Department; and Mr. Golden, giving evidence before the Land Board on the division of a run in the country through which the line passed, said it took 640 acres of land to feed sixteen head of cattle, or forty acres to one beast. Mr. Henry Bracker corroborated that statement, and said that on the greater part of the run it took twenty acres to support one beast.

Mr. FOXTON: What about the level flats on the river banks?

Mr. GROOM: The hon. member asked what about the level flats on the river banks. Which river did he mean?

Mr. STEVENSON: The one he has selected on?

Mr. FOXTON: Yes.

Mr. GROOM said he could not believe that they were going to construct that line of railway simply to tap the Texas tobacco settlement. That was not sufficient to justify the House in expending such a vast sum of money without more reliable information. There were agricultural settlements where the population numbered thousands, such as the Rosewood Scrub, and they were told that they could not have a railway, and yet it was proposed to spend £2,000,000 upon the construction of a railway 233½ miles in length, along which, he ventured to say, taking the last population returns, there were not more than 2,000 people over the whole of the country from the border of the Warwick census district to Goondiwindi, and thence to St. George. In Darling Downs West the total population was 1,163 according to the last census returns, and he would like to know where was the trade to come from to support such a line as that. Let them look at the Central line, where trains only ran three times a week, and yet he ventured to say that one train a week or even one train a fortnight would be sufficient to carry the whole of the trade which was likely to be forthcoming to support the line from Warwick to St. George. There had not been any information whatever to justify the extension of the line, and as to the trade that New South Wales was likely to get from us he would just read the exact statement of Mr. Lyne, the New South Wales Minister for Works, when he moved the adoption of the plans of the Narrabri to Moree railway. He did not care what telegrams had appeared in the *Courier*; these were the hon. gentleman's own words as reported in his speech, a copy of which he (Mr. Groom) had handed to the Colonial Treasurer in order to relieve his mind from the idea that Mr. Lyne desired to filch the trade of Queensland. The following were Mr. Lyne's words:—

"And if the line were extended to the border, they might get some of the trade now going to Queensland."

Well, what trade went to Queensland? Did not the return which he had quoted show that it amounted to £25 last year at Goondiwindi? They could not get over those figures. They were conclusive, and, although the hon. member for Darling Downs had thought it necessary to move the adjournment of the House some weeks ago to call attention to the extension of the New South Wales line from Narrabri to Moree, yet they now saw that that line had been rejected by the members of the Upper House. One of the principal reasons which induced that Chamber to reject the line was that the railway already running from Werris Creek to Narrabri had proved a loss last year to New South Wales of £39,000, and conse-

quently they did not think it necessary with a deficient revenue that the country should be bound to the construction of a line which could only entail further losses upon it. As far as the Narrabri to Moree railway was concerned, it was practically defeated, because the New South Wales Parliament would be prorogued either that day or to-morrow, and consequently the whole of the railways referred to a select committee by the Upper Chamber were all virtually defeated. He thought, therefore, that as far as the Moree railway was concerned nothing had been decided to justify the House in going on with the railway now under consideration. When the border trade was talked of, hon. members did not seem to remember what they were losing in the Northern districts. He ventured to say there was as much trade done in Townsville in a couple of hours as was done along the whole of the border in a month or six weeks, and yet the inhabitants of Townsville might, for all business purposes, as well be in New York or Boston. He believed in pushing the railways along the whole of the sea coast from Brisbane to Townsville; but, instead of that, what were they doing? They were absolutely driving thousands and thousands of pounds' worth of trade to Sydney by steamboats, and yet, for the sake of an imaginary border trade, they were asked to spend £2,000,000. This was a policy that did not commend itself to any thoughtful and intelligent man who desired to see their railways constructed on paying principles. That line of railway could not possibly pay, nor would it pay for the next fifty years, because the country was not adapted for close settlement. The late Mr. Jacob Low used to say that there had not been a single successful selector in his district. Nor could there be, for very often the country was for miles under water. Was that the kind of country suitable for close settlement? If it were such country as the delta of the Nile, which was irrigated and fructified by the annual inundations, it might be; but as that was not the case, to talk of settlement there was perfectly absurd, and he was sorry to hear any such argument advanced in support of the line. At a time like the present, when they had during two sessions imposed additional taxation on the people, when their railway returns for 1885 showed a falling-off of £109,000, with an addition of £40,000 more during the current year—they ought to pause before committing the country to the construction of non-paying railways. It was the duty of every member to guard his constituents against additional taxation. They were oppressed heavily enough just now—what with municipal taxes and divisional board taxes, and the ordinary taxation through the Customs—and they ought to hesitate before plunging in for lines of railway that would never pay. He said without the least hesitation that if the £2,000,000 proposed for these lines were to be spent in connecting Brisbane with Maryborough, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, Mackay, and Townsville, until daily trains were run from Brisbane to Townsville and from Townsville to Brisbane, it would be doing real good to the colony, would encourage, create, and secure trade; and perhaps if the iron band had been forged some time ago the cry for separation might never have been heard. He had been in the border districts and knew the trade there was there, the duty on which did not amount to £100 a year; and while they were proposing to spend millions to secure that minute addition to the trade of the colony they were losing in thousands by their neglect of the trade of the seaboard towns. He trusted, from what had been said, that hon. members would hesitate before they gave their sanction to a scheme of that kind. In justice to his constituents he felt bound to vote against it. He did

so on no personal grounds. He had said nothing unkind of any person or place that night, and did not intend to. He, at all events, claimed the credit, whether the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, would give it to him or not, that he was acting on the present occasion from honest conviction. Before sitting down he might remind the Committee that, according to the official railway returns, on the 5th October the deficiency in revenue was £3,500 for that one week alone. With all those facts staring them in the face, they ought to hesitate before going any further in the construction of non-paying railways. In that particular part of the country, from its want of population and its inadaptability for settlement, the proposed line of railway could never pay, and he should consider it his duty to oppose it as strongly as he possibly could.

Mr. HORWITZ said that when hon. members came to look into the long speech which the hon. member for Toowoomba had just made they would see that it really amounted to nothing at all. If that hon. member had given similar advice to the Government twelve months ago, a lot of money would have been saved which had been uselessly spent in and near Toowoomba. The hon. member ought to have protested against the Beauaraba line, which was being constructed for the benefit of one freeholder for seven miles, and half-a-dozen selectors a little further on. Why did not the hon. member protest against the expenditure of money upon the Toowoomba railway station? No; those works were, in the opinion of the hon. member, good works done for the benefit of the country. The proposed line would benefit Brisbane, not Warwick—Warwick had nothing to gain by it—but the Toowoomba people were jealous of it; they were hungry; they were afraid the line would do an injury to their city. But it would not injure Toowoomba in any way, and they were opposing it from sheer selfishness. With regard to settlement between Warwick and St. George, he would enlighten the hon. member. All the way along the line there was already a settled population upon some very good land. He was in a position to know, as he had been buying wheat from them for the last twenty years. Most of the settlers were men with large families. At Canal Creek there was a goldfield. Indeed, if the line was made, he believed there would be a population there of 50,000 before very long. The settlers were able to grow just as good wheat, oats, and potatoes, as could be grown at Warwick itself. Comparing all the surveyed lines to St. George, the line *via* Warwick had 10 miles in its favour as against Dalby, 50 miles as against Yeulba, and 111 as against Roma. Years ago the Toowoomba people professed to be their friends; but now they began to see that their friends were their enemies. There used to be such a thing as the "Darling Downs party," but there was no such party any more; it had been broken up. Warwick could do very well without Toowoomba. Warwick never was selfish, and Toowoomba was never satisfied, no matter what Government was in power. When the present Government was in power, the Toowoomba people only said "Give." When they had got as much out of that Government as they could, and could get no more, they would say to the other side, "Give us a better price and we will go with you." That had been the history of Toowoomba. He need not detain the Committee any longer; he had said what he meant. The Toowoomba people had got as much as they could out of the present Government, and he did not think they cared a great deal for them any more. The Toowoomba people had had two railway stations already, and now they wanted a third. That had been the history of Toowoomba all along. He need say no more.

Mr. ALAND said the Committee would agree that the hon. member for Warwick need say no more. He had said quite enough; but he had certainly said nothing which would help Warwick to get that line of railway. He had certainly founded some very old arguments in favour of it; but what he had done amounted to this: He had tried to stir up bitter feelings between the towns of Toowoomba and Warwick. He (Mr. Aland) very much regretted that the hon. gentleman should have taken such a course; but he fully expected that he would do so, because when the matter was before the committee on a previous occasion the hon. member said the same thing. They knew that the leopard could not change his spots, nor the Ethiopian his skin; and it appeared the hon. member for Warwick could not get out of the same old groove. The hon. member had never stood up in the committee lately without having something to say against Toowoomba, and it was very foolish of him. In discussing that railway he (Mr. Aland) was sure Warwick did not enter into the question at all. It was not a question whether Warwick had any rights or claims or whether Toowoomba had any rights or claims. As he said just now, he very much regretted the antagonism between the two towns. If there was any member in the Committee who would perhaps suffer more through giving an adverse vote upon the question, it was himself. Most hon. gentlemen knew that he had business interests in Warwick, and he would be voting against his own interests when he voted against that railway. The hon. member for Warwick said he had no interests in the matter; but he could tell the Committee that it was commonly reported that the hon. member was only waiting for that line, the *via recta*, to be carried out, and he would then sell off.

Mr. HORWITZ said he would contradict the statement of the hon. member, who knew nothing about his business, nor did anybody else. He had no intention of selling out; but would do so when he thought proper, and would not require the assistance of the hon. member for Toowoomba. He did not think that hon. member could buy him out.

Mr. ALAND said he certainly could not buy the hon. gentleman out at his own price. He would not attempt to do it. He did not say the report was true, any more than he admitted the truth of the reports of the hon. member for Warwick, who was really a very turbulent little member. With reference to the proposed line, the labour of construction would have to be paid for, and the money would circulate about the town of Warwick, and he would benefit by it, more than any other member on the Committee perhaps. He would point out—and he thought he had a right to do so—that he voted against the railway two years ago, and what was the feeling in Warwick in regard to that action? They tried to boycott him in his business, and they were threatening the same thing now.

Mr. KATES: I never heard of it.

Mr. HORWITZ: It is not the case.

Mr. ALAND said he would take all their boycotting, and if they drove him out of Warwick he would stay where he was in Toowoomba. He managed to get a living there before he went to Warwick, and he had no doubt he should continue to get a living there still. The hon. gentleman who had just sat down had attempted to correct his hon. colleague (Mr. Groom) as to the number of persons living along the line of that railway route; but he did nothing of the sort. He said there were a number of people settled on Darkey Flat, and somewhere else—he could not catch the names he mentioned—and it

was perfectly true. But his hon. colleague did not deny it. What he said was that the population between Warwick and St. George was about 1,100 people, and that was consistent with the statement made by the hon. member for Warwick. Now, there was one matter that he wanted to clear up in reference to that railway, and which was one that ought to be cleared up. When the railway was introduced by the Minister for Works that afternoon he introduced it with a threat. That threat was not consistent with what the Premier gave them to understand some time since. The statement of the Minister for Works was, "If you do not pass the *via recta*"—referring to the time when the *via recta* was coming up—and the proposed line was part of the *via recta*—"you will have to make room for another Government." Was not that a threat to hon. members on that side of the Committee, who had consistently and honestly supported the Government? He was prepared to honestly and consistently support them still; but he held himself free not to support them in all the extravagances which they chose to put before the Committee.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Wait till the proper time comes.

Mr. ALAND said the hon. gentleman had threatened them a long way off, so far as the *via recta* was concerned. He would not have made that threat if he had thought the *via recta* was coming on at once; but he (Mr. Aland) wanted to point out that the hon. member for Warwick had made use of some figures which he should correct a little bit. He wanted to place that statement as plainly before the Committee as he possibly could. There had been returns furnished to hon. members of three routes—from Yeulba, Dalby, and Warwick to St. George. He would first take the Yeulba route. From Brisbane to Yeulba was 281 miles, and from Yeulba to St. George was 116 miles—which made 397 miles from Brisbane to St. George *via* Yeulba. From Brisbane to Dalby was 152 miles, and from Dalby to St. George was 181 miles; altogether, 333 miles from Brisbane. Warwick was 166 miles by the present railway from Brisbane, and from Warwick to St. George was 235½ miles, which made 401½ miles *via* Warwick; so that, as the line at present existed, *via* Warwick, the distance to St. George was 401½ miles, *via* Dalby 333 miles, and *via* Yeulba 397 miles. Supposing the *via recta* were carried out, it would reduce the distance from Brisbane to St. George, *via* Warwick, by about 60 miles. That would make distance from Brisbane to St. George 340 miles in round numbers; so that after an expenditure of four millions of money, they would have seven miles of greater distance than by the Dalby route.

Mr. FOXTON: Say five millions.

Mr. ALAND said he had no wish to exaggerate. He would reduce it presently. That brought it down to 340 miles, which, with the exception of the Yeulba route, was the longer distance of the two; because Brisbane to St. George, *via* Dalby, was only 330 miles, and *via* Warwick 340 miles.

Mr. KATES: Border line.

Mr. ALAND: The less said about that border line the better. He did not want to say much about that, but he was surprised at the remarks of the Treasurer. He always looked upon that hon. gentleman as a man of good sound common sense, but after issuing that Treasury return the other day, how he could get up and defend the railway proposed as a border route he (Mr. Aland) was at a loss to understand. He knew it was stated that £70,850

was the amount of the value of goods on which duty was collected, but that had nothing to do with the St. George line. The whole of the traffic which the proposed line would secure was the Texas and Goondiwindi traffic until they got to St. George itself. And what had been the receipts at those two places in one year? £32 for one year, and £73 for the next, from the two places, and they were asked to go to an expense of three millions of money in order to get that trade. And now as to the saving of money: He would suppose that the railway was to be made from Brisbane to St. George, *via* Warwick; that would cost £3,000,000 at all events. Just to oblige hon. members he had dropped £1,000,000 but he knew it would cost more. If they made the railway from Brisbane to St. George, *via* Dalby, they could do it for £725,000; that was reckoning it at £4,000 a mile.

Mr. JESSOP: You can do it for half the money.

Mr. ALAND said he had put it at £4,000 a mile, and it came to £725,000. Now, supposing it was made from Yeulba, it could be carried out for an expenditure of something like £500,000. Put £500,000, or even put £725,000 against £3,000,000, and he thought the Committee must come to the conclusion that they had no right to be playing ducks and drakes with money merely because they were going to borrow it from the English capitalist. He did not think he need say more about it.

Mr. KATES: Hear, hear!

Mr. ALAND: The hon. member for the Darling Downs might well say "Hear, hear." He should like to know why the hon. member had nothing to say about the deputation which he introduced to the Minister for Works asking for the railway from Beauraraba to St. George. He (Mr. Aland) had nothing to say about the route from Beauraraba to St. George. He knew nothing of the country. Of course, it was said by the gentlemen of that deputation to be a fine route. He did not think the Minister for Works had received that deputation in his usually gracious style.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he would not come to the hon. gentleman to ask how he should receive his own constituents.

The PREMIER said it seemed to him there was a good deal of misunderstanding about the question. He could not quite follow the figures of the hon. member who had just sat down as to the cost of the railway. That hon. member's colleague had said £3,000,000; then the hon. member himself had said £4,000,000 and then £2,000,000; but he (the Premier) did not know where all these millions were to be spent. The distance from Warwick to St. George was only about 230 miles, and it could not cost all that. It would not come to £1,000,000. All those figures were beside the question, and only tended to confuse the Committee. He did not understand the warmth of the hon. members for Toowoomba in the matter. He could not see why the matter had anything to do with Toowoomba any more than it had to do with Bowen, or Townsville, or Cooktown. It was simply a question of a desirable railway along the border. It would not do any more harm to Toowoomba than to Sandgate. It was simply a question whether it was desirable to make the railway in the interest of the colony generally for the purpose of securing the trade of the southern portion of the colony. To speak of it as a railway to St. George, as the Colonial Treasurer had pointed out, was quite a mistake. He had never been to St. George, but he believed it was a very interesting little town, and that there was a certain amount of land fit for

the cultivation of cereals round it. But it was not a place of sufficient importance to make a railway to it alone. So that all the calculations about a railway to St. George from Yeulba or from Dalby, *via* the Moonie, seemed to be beside the question. The line now proposed was part of a line which would extend westward along the southern border, and which, he believed, would intercept a good deal of trade from leaving Queensland, and, he also believed, get a good deal from New South Wales. Perhaps the whole of the land through which the line would pass was not very good, but there was a great deal of very good land amongst it, and from the best information he could gather—and he had consulted every available authority—there was good land all the way along the border from Warwick to Goondiwindi at any rate; and across the border it was very excellent land—so good that the New South Wales Government intended to tap it by a railway to Moree. This line to St. George need not be complicated by another matter—the direct line to Warwick. Hon. members might vote for the proposed line whether they did or did not approve of the direct line to Warwick. They were not dependent on one another. They were both parts of the Government policy, but were in no way dependent on one another. The proposed line would be a good line, in his opinion, whether the direct line to Warwick was made or not. He believed in both, and had not the least doubt both would be carried out. One hon. member had talked about the route *via* Wilson's Peak to New South Wales, but he did not believe that there was much chance of that line being made. They had not arrived at that stage of friendliness with New South Wales that they could ask to run through New South Wales territory in order to get the trade of their own territory. He simply considered the proposed railway on its own merits. Was this a good line to make along the southern border? They would certainly have to make it some day. It was said that there need be no hurry about it, but they had passed the vote for it two years ago, and now it was the duty of the Government to bring down the plans in order to carry out the proposals of the Government.

Mr. FOXTON said they had heard rather too much of Toowoomba and Warwick in the discussion.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Who began it?

Mr. FOXTON said he did not care who began it: there was no excuse for continuing it. If they looked at the matter on a broad basis, instead of considering the local jealousies of different towns, it would be of more benefit to the country. A great deal had been said by the hon. members for Toowoomba with reference to the small amount of traffic as indicated by the collections of Border Customs at Texas and Goondiwindi; and the hon. member, Mr. Groom, had endeavoured to show that the allegation that Mr. Lyne, the Minister for Works in New South Wales, had intimated that it was the desire of that colony to tap the Queensland trade was an erroneous statement. That only showed that at those two particular places the traffic across the border coming into Queensland from New South Wales was very small; it did not show that the wool immediately to the north of Goondiwindi did not all go to Sydney from Queensland.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Not from Goondiwindi.

Mr. FOXTON: The district about Goondiwindi.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: There is none there.

Mr. FOXTON said there was a little. When the country was fully stocked the wool of something like 200,000 sheep was annually taken across the border there. However, it was a well-known fact that the storekeepers of St. George, which was a long way north of the border, got their stores from Newcastle and Sydney—whether they were smuggled, or whether they came by some route other than Texas and Goondiwindi, he did not know—and it was a disgrace to the colony that a town whose latitude was north of the latitude of Brisbane should be drawing its supplies from the southern colony. He might be mistaken in saying that the latitude of St. George was north of the latitude of Brisbane, but he knew that it was nearly due west of Brisbane. There was a considerable amount of valuable land at Texas, and he knew a place within a few miles of where the line would run where rent equal to £2 per acre per annum was being paid for agricultural land; and anyone who ventured to state that there was not good land along the route did not know what he was talking about.

Mr. NORTON: Is there much of it?

Mr. BLACK: Is it a Chinese garden?

Mr. FOXTON said that the land of which he spoke was used for tobacco-growing. He referred just now to the statement made by the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, that Mr. Lyne, the Minister for Works in New South Wales, did not state his desire that the railway from Narrabri to Moree should tap the Queensland trade. That hon. gentleman quoted from a newspaper report in support of his statement; but he (Mr. Foxton) held in his hand the New South Wales *Herald*, which might be deemed to be nearly as correct as a newspaper report; and though Mr. Lyne did not say it in so many words, what he said, and the paper he laid on the table of the House, which was quoted by Mr. Garrett, would convince hon. members that one great reason for the construction of the railway from Narrabri to Moree, was that it would tap the border trade. Mr. Lyne had laid the document on the table of the House, and he was reported in *Herald* to have said:—

“In addition to that, it will be found upon reference to the map on the table that this railway is in a direct line with the Queensland border, but whether it should bear to the left, in the direction of Mungindi, or to the right, or straight north, is a question for future consideration. And if it is at any time extended to Queensland, there is not the slightest doubt that a great deal of the wool and stock that at present go over the border and down to Brisbane will be brought over our lines. That, I think, is one reason why the proposal should be passed.”

It would be observed that he spoke of the wool and stock that at present went over the border from New South Wales and down to Brisbane; but as there was not a bale of wool sent across the border from New South Wales to Queensland, he must have meant wool taken across the border from Queensland to New South Wales, and the sentence was necessarily misreported.

Mr. MURPHY: That is too thin.

Mr. FOXTON said that if the hon. member could give an instance of wool coming from New South Wales to Queensland he would be much obliged; but he knew for a fact that none came.

Mr. MURPHY: Does any go the other way?

Mr. FOXTON: Yes, a great deal.

Mr. MURPHY: There is none to go, and never was.

Mr. FOXTON said he happened to know that what he stated was correct. He did not know whether the hon. member had carried on any scientific squatting in that district, but he did know that wool had gone frequently and

continuously across the border from that district to New South Wales. Every hon. gentleman in the Legislative Assembly of that colony who spoke on the question dilated on the advantages which would accrue to New South Wales by tapping the border trade. For instance, Mr. Hungerford said :—

"I think the Government are taking a very right course in proposing the construction of this line, which will undoubtedly open up a country of great resources on our borders. The line may be expected to draw trade from Queensland, and develop a market for the commodities produced on the tableland of this colony."

Mr. Garrett referred to the document laid on the table by the Minister for Works for the purpose of convincing hon. members of the advisableness of constructing the line. He was sorry he could not find the paper—it was not in the Library—but a paragraph of it was quoted by Mr. Garrett, who said :—

"One reason given in favour of the construction of the line is that it may draw the traffic from a neighbouring colony; but this beggar-my-neighbour policy is not honest—it is not creditable to the colony. We talk about the Victorians drawing away the traffic as if they were doing wrong, but are we not equally wrong in spending public money to draw traffic away from the southern districts of Queensland? To say in a State document as a reason why the line should be constructed, that in all probability it will draw the traffic away from Queensland, is discreditable in the extreme."

"Mr. GARRARD: It might be the natural outlet for the traffic from some districts of Queensland."

"Mr. GARRETT: Yes; but to ask us to spend money in the construction of an unprofitable line because it will draw the trade from our neighbours is not a decent thing to do. It is baldly stated."

Then came the paragraph in the document to which he had referred :—

"A large portion of the traffic from Southern Queensland, near our border, which now goes by way of Roma and Cambooya on the Queensland railways, will be diverted to our lines, from the fact that our rates of carriage are nearly 50 per cent. below those of Queensland, and our transit is more speedy and reliable."

That was the reason stated in the document for the advisableness of constructing the line. That document had been referred to by Mr. Lyne when he said he had gathered as much information as he could in reference to the line the construction of which he then proposed, and he had had it printed for the information of hon. members. Now, if Mr. Lyne did not actually desire to get their trade, and say that there was trade to get, he could not understand the meaning of language. It had been stated that the line should go from Yeulba or Dalby to St. George, but what good would that be? It might, perhaps, preserve the trade of St. George itself, but it would do no more; it would not help them to keep their border trade. What they wanted was a line running due west in order to preserve the whole of the trade all along the border. When the Loan Estimates were before them it was admitted by some of the members on the other side, and also by some of the members for Toowoomba district, that though the time had not arrived for the construction of the direct line to Warwick, that line would have to be made in the course of time. One evil practice they had always followed in making their lines was that they constructed them without keeping in view the ultimate completion of definite schemes, and one of the railways they dealt with last night was an instance of that. They constructed their railways for temporary convenience. Although it was true that the produce that would come by the line before them would have to go round by Toowoomba for the time being, still, if the direct line was constructed—and he believed it would be constructed one day—the proposed line would

form a part or continuation of the *via recta*, and would conduce more than anything else to keep their border trade and prevent it from going into New South Wales. The question had been pretty well thrashed out, although they had not had many statistics produced, because they were unfortunately not obtainable. He knew some of the country through which the line would pass from Warwick to Goondiwindi, and although there was a good deal of very poor country there, there was also a good deal of first-class agricultural land, and anyone who had seen the crops growing in that district on the McIntyre and on the Severn must have come to the same conclusion. The line would open up a very large amount of trade and might possibly be the means of drawing trade across the border, though if they preserved their own they would do what they were striving for.

Mr. NELSON said he thought, with the member for Carnarvon, that hon. members had considered the question very fully and that there was not a great deal to be gained by debating the matter. That line had been before the country a considerable time, and every member had got as much information on it as they could secure, and were not likely now to alter their minds on the subject. He rose only to make a remark in regard to the arguments brought forward by some hon. members, and hinted at by the Premier, to the effect that hon. members on the other side, who voted for the loan vote in 1884, would be stultifying themselves if they voted now against the railway policy of the Government. He could not see that there was anything at all in that argument. The circumstances and condition, particularly the financial condition, of the colony were very different now from what they were in 1884, when the loan vote was passed, and he considered any hon. member would be perfectly justified now in considering the present position of the colony and trying to check some of the lavish and extravagant loan expenditure which was now going on under the Government. He had been waiting patiently to hear what the Colonial Treasurer had to say upon those questions, but that gentleman had not addressed them at all upon the railway proposals until that evening. The hon. gentleman had addressed them twice that evening, but he had not given them any idea of how they were going to raise the interest to pay for the money they voted last night and were asked to vote to-night. It was a very serious question to consider how the interest was to be provided for. In 1884, when the hon. gentleman brought forward his loan vote, he could see perfectly distinctly—in his own mind, at least—that he was going to get a revenue from the land that would not only pay the interest on the present railway schemes, but which would pay the whole of the interest on the £26,000,000 for which the colony would be indebted when that loan was floated, and would also leave a margin of £200,000 or £300,000 as well. They knew now that that revenue had fallen away; all the revenue they had got in that respect was a mere nothing; it was not more than they had got before the new land policy was adopted, and it was not likely to be more. Again, instead of the revenue increasing, as it ought to do if the colony were progressing, it was actually going backwards, for it was about £36,000 less last quarter than it was the quarter before, showing that the taxation the country had now arrived at was such that the more taxation they put on, the less revenue they derived from it; and the taxation, instead of falling upon the products of the colony, was actually now infringing upon the private capital of the country, which was being dragged into the Treasury instead of being put to its legitimate use in the

employment of labour and general enterprise for the improvement of the colony. Whether by refusing to pass any of those railways they would stop the expenditure of loan money was a point he had very much doubt about. He did not think it would make the slightest difference, because arrangements at present were such that the Ministry spent loan money without any vote of the House at all—without the permission of the representatives of the people. Up to the 30th June last, without any appropriation whatever, the Government had actually taken the authority to themselves of expending no less a sum than £323,000; and they might very well ask whether they were living under responsible government or not. He did not think they were; he thought that responsible government was now a matter of theory, because the practice of it seemed dead. The arguments in favour of the particular line were perhaps very few indeed. The most important were that it was to be a trunk line, and that it would take the border traffic. Well, there was no great merit in its being a trunk line unless it was going to carry traffic, and there was no information given them to show where the traffic was to come from. All the figures given by the hon. member for Carnarvon and the hon. member for Darling Downs—the only two who had given any information on the subject—went to show that, so far as the trunk line was concerned, the traffic it was likely to get did not begin to come until the line reached St. George. It was clear from their figures that there was no traffic between Warwick and St. George.

Mr. FOXTON: There is a great deal.

Mr. NELSON: The hon. member for Carnarvon had spoken of 200,000 sheep in that direction, and the hon. member for Darling Downs said 300,000, of which 150,000 were on the New South Wales side of the border. Well, accepting either statement, those sheep were not between Goondiwindi and Warwick; they were on the other side; so that that traffic would all be tapped by making a shorter line to St. George *via* Dalby, Beauraba, Yeulba, or any other way.

Mr. FOXTON said the sheep he spoke of were, of course, beyond Goondiwindi; but between Goondiwindi and Warwick there was very rich agricultural land.

Mr. NELSON said there was some very good agricultural land in whatever part of the colony you liked to go to. The hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, had given the best figures on the subject; he had given the whole population, and that amounted to 1,200 people. If there was such an amount of traffic down there, where did it all go to? Where did all the production of the great settlement the hon. member for Warwick had told them about go to? Did not they know that the line from Warwick to Gowrie Junction was of all the main lines the one that paid the least? It seemed almost insanity to take a railway to a sparsely populated place like that. There was no possibility of it paying; the Colonial Treasurer had frankly admitted that. It was a very curious thing for the Treasurer to advocate a line of that sort, but when they looked into it, it was not so very strange after all. The fact was that the Treasurer had a direct interest in spending loan money; he was in the paradoxical position that the more he spent the better it was for him. That was a position of great temptation, and one that no man ought to be in. It only applied to money spent through the Works Office; the greater the loan expenditure the better for the revenue. It did not matter whether the railway paid or not if he could distribute £6 a head throughout the population of the colony—the

hon. member said he did, but he (Mr. Nelson) did not believe it—then his Customs revenue would increase in proportion. The Premier said he could not understand the amount of excitement shown over the matter by the hon. member for Toowoomba, since the line would do Toowoomba no harm. That was easily answered. The hon. member for Toowoomba had not said it would do Toowoomba any harm, neither did he hear any other member say so. The Premier was simply putting up a peg in order that he might knock it down. Taking the number of sheep which had been mentioned at the larger number—300,000—what traffic would there be from them? Some single runs out west had nearly that number. The weight of wool from them would not be more than 700 tons of wool a year, and were they to construct a railway to carry 700 tons? If they got the whole of the wool, even that from New South Wales, it would not provide traffic for more than one train a fortnight at the very outside. It was said that there would be a large expansion of agriculturists throughout the district. He would be very glad indeed if there were any certain prospect of that, but there was really none. The hon. member for Darling Downs was always well supplied with facts, but it was an extraordinary thing that none of his facts would stand looking into. The hon. member's statements with regard to the traffic over the border had been fully answered. He had also said that that would be the shortest route to St. George, and had quoted figures to show that. Now, he (Mr. Nelson) would quote official figures, which proved quite the reverse. The shortest route that had yet been surveyed from Brisbane to Warwick, the *via recta*—the *via rectissima* they might almost call it—was 108 miles; from there to St. George was 235 miles, making a total of 343. To Warwick by the present route it was 166 miles; add 235, and they got 401 miles. If they went *via* Dalby, it was 153 miles to where the railway would start, and 181 from there to St. George, making 334 miles; so that even if the *via recta* were finished and in good working order, the route to St. George *via* Dalby was still nine miles shorter than by the proposed new railway.

Mr. KATES: There is not so much agricultural country along that line.

Mr. NELSON: The agricultural country on one route is just as good as the other.

Mr. KATES: Oh, no!

Mr. NELSON said it was. The hon. member also said that he had been in the district forty years—longer than any other man inside the House or outside. Well, he (Mr. Nelson) could put up his friend the hon. member for Maranoa, who had been in that country since he was six years of age. Although he had not resided there continually, he had been connected with it, and he knew a great deal more about it than the hon. member for Darling Downs. Taking it from a financial point of view, or any other point of view, he could not see how the line was justified, more especially when the Treasurer told them it was not expected to be a reproductive investment. He did not know what it was expected to be, except a means for spending money. He might also add that Mr. Phillips's report wound up by saying "The easiest and cheapest line to construct, and the one that traverses the least flooded country, is that from Dalby."

Mr. KELLETT said one of the arguments brought forward by the member for Toowoomba and members on the other side was that the country along the railway route was not very thickly populated. Now, when hon. members on the other side advocated railways to the setting sun

—how many people were settled on that country? But the argument then was that the railways would open up the country, and settlement would follow. When it suited hon. members, however, they argued just the other way, and when it was proposed to send a railway through infinitely better country and in a better direction they said it was a useless railway, because the people were not on the land already. Well, he knew a good deal about a certain portion of the line as far as Goondiwindi, although not quite so far as St. George, and he knew that the line would pass through a great deal of very fine land. The hon. member for Roma, Mr. Lalor, would be able to tell them what sort of land was on the Severn and McIntyre. He would be able to tell them that the country all along those rivers would be tapped, and he would be able to say that about Inglewood there was fine rich agricultural land waiting to be developed and opened up by railway. The hon. member for Toowoomba had inveighed very much against the line, and had spoken in a very high and mighty tone. He declared that it was the interests of the country generally that he was studying, and that the interests of Toowoomba had nothing to do with what he said. But if the hon. member was sincere, why did he not vote on the previous night against the waste of half-a-million of money for a railway not required by anybody? He (Mr. Kellett) believed that the hon. member opposed the line now under consideration in the interests of Toowoomba. The farmers round about Warwick were at present handicapped to the extent of 10s. a ton on their produce in getting it to market, and in ordinary seasons when crops were plentiful they were altogether out of the market. Anyone who knew the two districts must know that for one acre of good agricultural land round Toowoomba there were 100 acres about Warwick, and the Toowoomba people did not like to think that Warwick would get the best of them when the railway was made. That was why the hon. member opposed the line, and he did not think the interests of the country had anything to do with it. Across the McIntyre and in towards Moree there was very rich and valuable country, and he thought the New South Wales people would get very little traffic on their side compared with what would come in this direction. He also considered that when the direct line was made, which he considered part of the Government scheme, they would get the whole of the New South Wales trade. They would get the whole of the trade up as far as Glen Innes, and anyone who studied the mileage must see that that must come about. So convinced was he of it that it would almost be as well to annex that part of New South Wales to Queensland, were it not for the fact that in any case Queensland would get everything good that was in it. He considered that that line and the *via recta* were the two most valuable lines on the programme of the Ministry, and he also considered that the line should go on towards Cummanulla. The sooner they stopped at the Charleville end the better, because if they went any further they only made a line towards Bourke to take Queensland goods down there instead of taking them to Brisbane; but if they made a direct line they would get all the traffic down to Cummanulla. He did not think that anything he or anyone else said would alter a single vote, but he was perfectly satisfied that the line was a good one, and that it was for the benefit of the country generally.

Mr. CAMPBELL said, after the reports they had received during the last few weeks from St. George and Goondiwindi, of the enormous downfall of rain and the floods at those places, he almost expected that the Government

would have withdrawn the plans and books of reference and substituted a scheme for a canal. He noticed that none of the hon. members who advocated the line had touched upon the real question. They had gone as far as Graveyard Flat, and stopped there. The hon. member for Carnarvon had touched upon the Severn River, and said some land there was let at £2 an acre. He believed there were a few acres let at that price. As far as Weewara Creek there was some good land, but he did not think there was any hon. member in the House—he challenged contradiction—who would say that there was much good land to go through beyond that. On Inverell there were at present about 9,000 sheep, but the country was not fit to feed wallabies. Then going down towards Warroo, it was true a little bit of good country was to be found where settlers might select. Then they came to Inglewood, an old established place, where the land had been thrown open since 1863, but it had never been taken up. He was told there were two public-houses there now, a police barracks, and a blacksmith's shop. The country round there on either side was sour and barren, and all that had ever been done with it was to raise store cattle upon it. He did not believe that the owner of Whetstone had sold 500 really fat bullocks during the last thirty years. They were all sold as stores. Then they passed round until the hon. member, Mr. Lalor's, place was reached, and it was true there was a good bit of country along the Severn on the New South Wales side, but it was barren and sterile country on the Queensland waters. And passing on to Goondiwindi what did they find? It was an old and established town, and had been for the last twenty-five or thirty years, and yet the inhabitants only numbered 290 all told. So that the country could not be much to speak of, or else the population would have increased much more rapidly. From thence to St. George they knew pretty well the character of the country the railway would have to pass through—in some instances sand ridges, and in many instances—and he challenged any hon. member to contradict him—through country where the flood-marks could be seen twenty-five feet high on the trees. For as many as ten miles at a stretch the railway would have to be built upon piles. Would £4,000 a mile do that, or go anywhere near it? Not even a railway would tend to encourage settlement in such a locality. It seemed to him strange that the Government should be commencing at the wrong end of the scheme. They proposed starting from somewhere about Rosewood, and carrying the line up the Main Range to Warwick, and thence on to St. George. But it seemed useless to build twenty-five miles of railway when they were not certain that they could ever construct the line upon the Main Range. Some four surveys had been made, but not one of the surveyors had recommended anything definite. They had merely suggested certain routes if certain things could be done, which they had never been able to recommend to be done. Taking into consideration the present condition of the finances of the colony, and the almost certainty of fresh taxation that must follow next year, they ought to pause somewhat before entering upon such a scheme. He sincerely hoped the opposition to the line would be strong enough to defeat it. If it did not it would be a very serious thing for the colony. The Minister for Works intimated to the Committee that if the motion was not carried the Government might go to the country upon it. He hoped it would not be carried, and—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member's statement was entirely incorrect. He had said nothing of the sort. It was

extraordinary that the Toowoomba members did not keep their ears open and listen to what was said. He had had to correct the whole three of them.

Mr. CAMPBELL said that perhaps the hon. gentleman might not have used those exact words, but what he said had precisely the same meaning. He had heard the hon. gentleman say the same thing a dozen times outside the House. In fact, the hon. gentleman had said in the street, "If you do not vote for the *via recta*, I'll burst up the so-and-so Government." The hon. gentleman had said that a dozen times to him, and they were getting very tired of it, and did not care how soon the Government was "burst," if those were to be their terms. He (Mr. Campbell) did not care twopence whether he returned or not, but he did not intend to be dictated to and threatened by the Minister for Works, or any other Minister, that if he did not do so-and-so he would burst the Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said they could not expect much else from the hon. member for Aubigny. Whatever tittle-tattle the hon. member heard outside he came and retailed to the House, and the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, did just the same. That hon. member had told them that he had heard this and that, and was told so-and-so. Instead of repeating tittle-tattle, why did not the Toowoomba members come to the House and talk common sense? When he (Mr. Miles) moved the resolution, he stated that no doubt exception would be taken to the inferior description of country the line would pass through, but he showed at the same time that every line from the coast into the western country had to pass through as bad, and in some case a great deal worse, belts of country, as the line on the southern border of the colony. The hon. member himself admitted that it was capable of growing store cattle. Would any hon. member tell him that the country between Warra and Roma, or between Westwood and the Comet, was any better? The hon. member—but he was not worth taking notice of; he was altogether little-minded, and so were his two colleagues. He would make some little exception in favour of the senior member for Toowoomba (Mr. Aland), because he generally took more proper views than his other two colleagues. He should like to see them rise above the little tittle-tattle business. When the Government received the sanction of the House to borrow nearly seven millions of money for the construction of railways to open up the country for settlement, they decided to construct lines that would be beneficial to the colony as a whole. They did not take into consideration Warwick, or Toowoomba, or any other town. Some hon. members seemed to want the line taken to St. George from Dalby or from Yeulba. The Government had no intention of building a railway to St. George from either of those places. What they considered most beneficial to the country was to run the line along the southern border of the colony. Surely hon. members did not suppose that the colony was always going to remain in its infancy. Judging from the past, he should not be surprised if, in fifteen or twenty years, the colony had eight or ten times its present population. In their railway policy, the Government were looking ahead—not for the next three or four years, but for all time to come. The line now proposed was one which the House ought to sanction, and he hoped the Committee would not be led astray by the claptrap of the hon. members for Toowoomba. After all, it was with those hon. members merely a breeches-pocket question; if the money had to be spent in their locality, there would not have been a single word

from them about over-expenditure or taxation. He hoped hon. members would deal with the line on its merits, and, if they did, he had no fear as to the result.

Mr. HAMILTON said that members of the Committee would have observed that, with all the personalities the Minister for Works had indulged in, he had not denied the statement of the hon. member for Aubigny that he (Mr. Miles) said to members that if they did not vote for the railway he would burst up the whole establishment. Hon. members need not believe that, because that was not the only occasion upon which he had said so. They might recollect that several years ago, when very serious charges were made by the hon. gentleman against Mr. Hodgkinson, the hon. gentleman said that if the committee of inquiry did not substantiate the allegations he made, that he would resign from the Ministry. That was within the recollection of most hon. members. But the charges were not substantiated; in fact Mr. Hodgkinson was put in a higher position and was now one of the chief wardens, and still the Minister was there. It was the duty of members on both sides to rise out of the trammels of party, and prevent the Government from squandering money upon such a large scale on political railways, which the people would eventually have to be taxed for. It was clear that the passing of those plans would commit the Committee to the *via recta*. That was evident from the facts, because they knew that the distance from Brisbane to St. George *via* Dalby was 333 miles, and from Brisbane to St. George *via* Warwick, in the proposed direction, was 401 miles. Now, by Dalby, 183 miles would have to be constructed to bridge over the distance necessary to take the present line to St. George. By the route now proposed by the Ministry, 235 miles as against 183, would have to be constructed to bridge over the distance to St. George, and the total distance would be much greater. It was therefore evident that the portion proposed to be passed that night would be perfectly useless unless the *via recta* were made, which, they would remember, Mr. Phillips had reported, would cost about a million of money. Of course, that was a mere bagatelle in the mind of the Minister for Works, who they would recollect spoke, in connection with the Valley railway, of £300,000 or £400,000 as a mere nothing considering the amount of money they had to operate upon. He noticed that the chief argument in favour of the route urged by Mr. Kates, member for Darling Downs, was that the Toowoombaites were granted a line to Beauaraba, which was a most iniquitous swindle. He was sorry to hear that that was the case, because if so he could only conclude that the hon. member was a party to that swindle, seeing that he did not vote against it. The only justification there could be for making the route in the direction proposed, which was more circuitous than any other route, would be the magnificent character of the soil or the population; but the hon. member for Aubigny explained that the only population consisted of wallabies, who could hardly live. Mr. Murphy, the hon. member for Barcoo, in answer to the hon. member for Warwick, explained that sheep could not live there, and the official report of Mr. Golden, one of the commissioners, stated that it required a square mile to keep sixteen bullocks alive.

Mr. STEVENSON said he had refrained from saying anything on the question until he had heard the arguments of both sides. He should now say a few words. It was really a very hard job to know how to vote, considering the different opinions that had been expressed. However,

he might say that he had not heard any very solid arguments on the part of the Ministers in favour of the railway, any more than he had with regard to the Valley railway line on the previous night. All they knew was that a certain sum of money was proposed to be expended on twenty-five miles of railway, from Warwick towards St. George, and further than that they knew nothing. They were not likely to know whether the railway was going to pay or not. They were told that the first twenty-five miles would cost £4,000 a mile; but beyond that they knew nothing. Regarding the rest they were left in darkness altogether, although it involved expenditure for the construction of 235 miles of railway. He believed, in this matter, he was looked upon as a kind of acting member for the district through which the railway passed—the electorate of Balonne, represented by Mr. Morehead—and so far as his looking after any matters regarding the constituency in that gentleman's absence was concerned, he had been doing the best he could, but a great many constituents in that part of the country seemed to fancy that he was going to vote for Mr. Morehead in this instance. He wished to lay before the Committee, so far as he had been able to ascertain them, the opinions of the electors of that district, and he should do so in as impartial a manner as he possibly could, but, so far as voting in the matter went, he should vote as member for Normanby, and not as acting member for Balonne. He had received one telegram and one letter from Goondiwindi; the telegram was from the editor of the paper there, and simply brought under his notice certain resolutions that had been passed, objecting to a petition being received by the House from Toowoomba. The letter was from Mr. Hunter, the chairman of the meeting, and he would not mention its contents further than to say that it was simply asking him to support the resolutions passed at that public meeting. The reason he would not read the letter was that it was simply a tirade of abuse against the Speaker, and he was not mean enough to read it. He would read to the Committee one telegram he had received from St. George. It was to this effect:—

"We are against Warwick and St. George line. We want extension from Dalby or failing that extension from Yeulba.

"T. G. LAAB.

"GOLDSTONE AND BRIGSTONE.

"STEPHEN PAYNE.

"W. B. ANDERSON.

"ARTHUR MCALISTER."

He might mention that the telegram which he would now read was in answer to one he sent for the purpose of finding out whether the other telegrams were really representing the opinion of the majority of the electors or not. This was the telegram he received:—

"Majority of electors highly favourable line Yeulba opposed Goondiwindi route."

The other telegram was also addressed to himself, and was from Mr. G. M. Kirk:—

"We favour railway extension from Yeulba or Dalby former best distance 100 miles less costly and more expeditious. Sydney intend bringing line to Mungindi on border eighty miles from here. Railway built from Yeulba via St. George."

The rest of the telegram was so mutilated that he could not understand it. Therefore the majority of the communications he had received from St. George were against the resolution proposed by the Minister for Works. He would also say in all fairness, because he had no feeling in the matter personally, that as far as St. George was concerned, one or two electors of that district had called on him—one, a storekeeper there—and said

that rather than get no railway at all, they would prefer having the line from Warwick to St. George, provided it was to be constructed at once. He had stated the communications that he had received on the subject exactly as they had come to him—what had been said in favour of the line, and what against it, so far as the St. George people and the electors of Balonne were concerned. He did not know how the hon. member for Balonne would have voted if he had been present; he did not wish to say anything in regard to that. However, he now wished to speak simply as member for Normanby. He had certainly heard no argument brought forward to induce him to vote for the proposed line. As he had said already, he had heard no better arguments brought forward in support of it than were brought forward for the construction of the Valley line on the previous night. He thought the Minister for Works and the Government had commenced at the wrong end in regard to that line. The hon. the Premier had told hon. members that if they voted for that line that night they would not by so doing be in any way committed to vote for the *via recta*. Now, he contended that that line without the *via recta* would be perfectly useless. If a section of the *via recta* had been first brought forward and confirmed in order to show hon. members that that line would be constructed, there would be some reason in voting for the proposed line; but as things were at present he did not believe there was the slightest likelihood for years and years to come of the *via recta* being constructed. Therefore, he could not see what use the proposed railway would be at all. It would simply go at right angles to another railway, and then at right angles again. In fact, it was far worse than the letter "S." They had been told several times during the course of the discussion that the line was to open up a certain amount of country, and bring a certain amount of traffic to Queensland, which would otherwise go to New South Wales. In regard to that, he had made some inquiries of people who were very well acquainted with the country, and the result was neither one thing nor the other. However, he thought that the weight of evidence went to show that the country through which the line was to pass was very poor country indeed. He did not see that there would be the slightest chance of the railway paying. Of course, at present they had only to deal with the first twenty-five miles, which the Minister for Works had stated would cost about £4,000 per mile; but they had to consider that to make the line of any use at all they would have to construct 235 miles of line, which would cost £940,000, even at the estimate of the Minister for Works of £4,000 per mile, for the first twenty-five miles. According to the showing of many hon. members that evening the country from the twenty-five mile point towards Goondiwindi was of such a flooded nature that it was impossible to construct the greater portion of it at the same cost as the first twenty-five miles. Therefore, he did not see how in the world the Minister for Works—unless he presented the whole matter before the Committee—especially what it would cost, and what revenue was likely to be derived from it—could ask them to vote that sum for the first twenty-five miles. He had very good authority for saying that the line was not likely to pay the cost of working, let alone the interest on the cost of construction. Hon. members told them that so many bales of wool came down, but they knew perfectly well—anyone who knew anything at all about the country knew—that there were only three or four small sheep stations between the twenty-five mile point and Goondiwindi. It was only very ordinary cattle country, and where the agricultural land came in

he was sure he did not know. At any rate, he knew this, that they had already sufficient agricultural land within the reach of railways, without endeavouring to encourage agriculture in such poor country as that which had been indicated by hon. members that night. One very good point had been brought forward in the course of debate by the hon. the Speaker, the member for Toowoomba, that they could very well go on as they were at present. As member for Normanby, he (Mr. Stevenson) certainly stuck to this point, that instead of sending a railway into that poor country to encourage the agriculture which the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, had spoken of, they had already plenty of agricultural land in centres of population where they should construct railways before attempting to construct that now proposed. He believed that had it not been for the bad times, the drought, and the bad legislation they had had from the present Government, the coast line would now have been in course of construction from Rockhampton towards Mackay and thence towards Townsville, where there was plenty of agricultural land, and where a railway was much more likely to pay than it was in the poor country which this line would pass through. In justice to his own constituency, in which there was plenty of splendid sugar land—between St. Lawrence and Mackay—before he could make up his mind to vote for this railway he should have to see one sanctioned from Rockhampton towards Mackay. He was perfectly satisfied that there was no likelihood of the proposed railway paying. Nothing whatever had been brought forward by the Minister for Works to show that the line could be constructed at even £4,000 a mile beyond the twenty-five mile point the hon. the Minister for Works might wish to pass in the way proposed, "because it was only a little one"; but he (Mr. Stevenson) maintained that until the twenty-five miles was extended to 235 miles it would be perfectly useless. Even at the rate of £4,000 a mile that would cost £940,000; and from what had been pointed out by the hon. member for Aubigny (Mr. Campbell), as a portion of the line would have to be built upon piles, he believed it would cost a great deal more than that, and he maintained that they were not justified in passing the resolution without some further information upon the subject. He did not feel inclined to do any injustice to any constituency in the colony, and he thought it would be a very good plan if, instead of passing or throwing out the resolutions, they referred that railway to a select committee.

The PREMIER: It cannot be referred to a committee now. You must wait till we get into the House.

Mr. STEVENSON said he had expressed his opinion on the subject, but he did not wish to do any injustice to the St. George constituency. He thought it would be better to refer the matter to a select committee for a report as to the desirableness of constructing the line, in order that they might obtain full information on the subject.

Mr. KATES said that never was a country more slandered and libelled than the country through which it was proposed to take that line.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Sit down!

Mr. KATES said he would not sit down quietly and listen to the way in which that country had been spoken of by some members on that side as well as some on the other side of the Committee. He had not intended to read any reports to the Committee, but he was now compelled to do so. He would only read one or two, although he held half-a-dozen in his hand. The hon. member for Townsville knew the author of

the report from which he would quote—namely, the late Mr. Clinton, who had for twenty years been inspector of roads between Warwick and Goondiwindi. The report of that gentleman showed that many hon. members had been talking about country with which they were not acquainted. Mr. Clinton said:—

"Thirty miles from Warwick, Canal Creek Goldfields, the watershed between Canal Creek and the MacIntyre Creek, is nearly all Crown land, yet good grazing and agricultural soil, called the Chain of Ponds: the nearer the brook the better the soil gets the whole of the way to Inglewood. Near to the town of Inglewood a bridge will be required to cross the Mosquito Creek. Hence the line would run, leaving Whetstone Station to the left on along the Severn River. The Severn falls into the MacIntyre River at Crampton's Corner. The line would therefore run parallel with said rivers for a distance of sixty-four miles—namely, from Inglewood to Goondiwindi. The soil is rich agricultural soil along the line the whole distance to the New South Wales border."

In no instance did he say the land was bad. He described it as good grazing country, and said there was a good deal of agricultural land. He (Mr. Kates) had, as he had intimated, half-a-dozen more reports of the same character and tone, but as he was asked by the Minister for Works to bring the matter to a close, he would not read any further extracts to the Committee. He must, however, protest against the remarks of members on both sides against the character of the land which the line would go through.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he could not sit still and listen to the imputation that he had been slandering or libelling any land. He had not the slightest personal interest either one way or the other with regard to that railway, and he spoke that evening quietly and moderately, merely saying that which he thought and that which he could gather from the best authorities he had met with in the colony upon that matter. He believed the country was unfortunately, like a good deal of the land in this colony, very poor, especially about Goondiwindi. He believed it was no use taking the line down there to attempt to get any trade there might be in that part of the colony, the amount of which had been shown by the Government returns. The very best suggestion that had been thrown out during the whole discussion was to refer the matter to a select committee, and he hoped that would be done when they got back into the House. He wished to take that opportunity of most emphatically denying that he had slandered or was at all likely to slander or libel any proposed railway route or any district. He desired the truth to be known and found out about every district, and he hoped judicious steps would be taken to arrive at the truth on the question now before the Committee.

Mr. BROWN said he had listened very carefully to some of the arguments brought forward in favour of that line, and he must admit that they had no weight with him. He had the advantage of having been over a great deal of the country through which it was proposed to run that railway. He had not followed the course of the line; but had been at some places which it would touch, as, for instance, Canal Creek, Glenelg, and Goolmunda. He must say that, as far as his observation went, there was not the good land which some hon. members said there was. As to the argument that the proposed line would take a good deal of the trade now going to New South Wales, that was an absurd argument—more sentimental than practical. If the New South Wales Government liked to run lines at a loss to obtain that border trade, this colony should be very much obliged to them, and not try to emulate their action. It was the very best thing that could happen to the colony for that little trade to go to their neighbours if that was going to relieve this country

from an expenditure of a million of money, and he contended they should be very much obliged to the New South Wales Government for saving them that outlay. If, however, they were to have a line to St. George it should go from the nearest point on the existing line. The making of a duplicate line was monstrous and absurd. Duplicate lines should be resisted in every form and shape. The railway policy of the country, as enunciated by the present and other Governments, was to have certain trunk lines and a coast line. They had got the trunk lines, and it was very absurd to run another line into the interior which would take away part of the trade of one of those railways. In every long line there would always be a certain portion unproductive, perhaps 50 or even 100 miles, and instead of building another expensive railway it would be far better to draw traffic to the existing line, even if the route was a little longer, and to reduce the charges for freight on the existing railway. From a personal knowledge of the country, he could say there was nothing to justify the expenditure of a million of money on a railway from Warwick *via* Goondiwindi to St. George.

Mr. JESSOP said he would not make any remarks as to the good or bad quality of the land through which the railway would pass. He wished to state that a week or ten days ago he received a letter signed by the chairman of the Wambo Divisional Board asking him to protest against that railway. Unfortunately he had mislaid the letter, and was therefore unable to read it to the Committee.

Question put, and the Committee divided :—

AYES, 27.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Rutledge, Miles, Dickson, Dutton, Moreton, Sheridan, Foote, Bulcock, Isambert, Smyth, Jordan, Kellett, Buckland, White, Wakefield, McMaster, Kates, Annear, Foxton, Salkeld, Macfarlane, S. W. Brooks, Wallace, Midgley, Bailey, and Horwitz.

NOES, 26.

Messrs. Norton, Macrossan, Chubb, Philp, Hamilton, Groom, Lumley Hill, Nelson, Black, Adams, McWhannell, Stevenson, Pattison, Govett, Donaldson, Lalor, Palmer, Lissner, Stevens, Aland, Higson, Brown, W. Brookes, Murphy, Campbell, and Jessop.

Pair :—For—Mr. Mellor. Against—Mr. Ferguson.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that before the Chairman left the chair he wished to ask a question. It was currently reported that there was a gentleman in the Committee who had sent in his resignation to some person other than the Speaker. That other person must be the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government. The gentleman referred to had been absent from the House for several weeks; he had come there that night to give his vote, which he was thoroughly entitled to do as long as he was a member of the House.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS : Hear, hear !

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the rumour should be set at rest by the Premier giving denial to it. It came to him (Mr. Macrossan) unasked and unsought for. It had come to other members as well as himself. He thought that the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government, out of deference to the position he himself held, ought to say whether the rumour was true or not.

The PREMIER said he did not presume to know where the rumour came from, but it was absolutely without foundation.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS : Hear, hear !

The PREMIER said he could guess where it came from. There was no foundation whatever for it.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not think the hon. gentleman could guess where it came from. It came to him in that House, and by one of the hon. gentleman's own supporters. He did not think he (the Premier) was able to guess, and certainly he would not know from him.

The PREMIER said there was no foundation for it.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that the report be adopted.

Mr. STEVENSON : Mr. Speaker,—I wish to move an amendment to the resolution for reasons which I gave to the House when in committee. I do not think the House has had sufficient information before them to pass the resolution they have passed in committee. Therefore, to enable this House to get more information, I will move—

That all the words after the word "that" be omitted with the view of inserting the following words: "the plans, section, and book of reference be referred to a select committee with power to send for persons and papers, and with leave to sit during any adjournment of this House to inquire and report upon it, and that such committee consist of the following members :—Messrs. Norton, Kates, Aland, Donaldson, Miles, Philp, and the mover."

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said : Mr. Speaker,—I think this is a subject of such importance, involving the expenditure of so vast a sum of money, that it ought not to go to a solid vote without any argument.

The PREMIER : We have been talking about it for four hours.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL : I know that it has been argued for four hours, and carried by a majority of one in the dark. A great many hon. members, myself among the number, are considerably in the dark in this matter. We do not know what we are going to get out of this money; but we know that the same effects can be produced by the expenditure of a very much smaller sum, and I really think it would be only reasonable for the Government to accede to the suggestion just made. It is a most important matter affecting the interests of the taxpayers, and I say that in addition to calling for persons and papers the Committee should be instructed to go over the country and see it for themselves before the country is committed to the frightful expenditure of money on the strength of one vote.

The PREMIER : Take another division.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL : If we take another division the result will probably be the same. Let me tell the Chief Secretary that I have not the slightest intention of obstructing; but I believe that if we take another division the Government can carry their motion just upon the log-rolling principle upon which the Valley line was carried last night.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS : No, no !

Mr. LUMLEY HILL : The hon. member for South Brisbane let the cat out of the bag last night when he told us that if that line was defeated we would not get the railway into Melbourne street. There are several other members who have axes to grind, and I am certain that if this question goes forth to the public, carried by a majority of one, the public will not endorse the action of the Government in forcing it on the country, on the strength of a bare majority. I have no intention of obstructing, Mr. Speaker, and I shall not open my mouth again on the question to-night.

Mr. DONALDSON said : Mr. Speaker,—We have had two very important resolutions brought before us last night and to-night, and I have refrained from addressing the House on either of them, but have simply given my vote according to my convictions. I have no desire to obstruct the motion, but I desire to enter my protest against having railways shoved down our throats without sufficient information being given. We have had two railways brought before us without information, committing the country to the expenditure of two or three millions of money.

The PREMIER: Anybody can say that.

Mr. DONALDSON: That is true. But can anybody contradict it? Can the Premier bring forward any figures in support of either line? I maintain that he cannot. And the Minister for Works has not submitted any statistics whatever in support of the railways he has brought forward. Is it possible that we can be expected to vote for such matters without information? I think it is quite time to enter a protest against anything of the kind. If the suggested inquiry is to be refused, what will be the inference? That the Government are afraid of an inquiry, and that the line cannot be a good one, otherwise there would be no danger to be apprehended from an inquiry. I have no personal desire to be on the committee; I would rather not. I was not consulted by the hon. member, and it was only at the last moment that the list was shown to me.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We know very well where it came from.

Mr. DONALDSON: It was only at the last moment that the hon. member, Mr. Stevenson, asked my consent to act on the committee, and I was not going to shirk the responsibility then. The hon. member assures me that he has not consulted anyone with regard to the constitution of the committee; and, speaking for myself, I can say that he did not consult me. If six members were taken out—namely, yourself, Mr. Speaker, your hon. colleague (Mr. Aland), the member for Aubigny, the two members for the Darling Downs, and the member for Warwick—if those gentlemen were excluded, I should not care if all the members of the committee were chosen from one side of the House, and I should not care which side. If that committee were to go over the country where it is proposed to make the railway, I am convinced that no railway would be constructed there for many years to come. I was pleased to hear the Treasurer express his satisfaction at being able—

The PREMIER: Let us get on with the business.

Mr. DONALDSON: I wish the Premier would not interrupt me when I am speaking. I do not interrupt him. If he has any desire to prevent me from speaking, I have no hesitation in saying that I will speak for an hour. I do not wish to be obstructive; I have never obstructed in this House, but have always addressed myself to the question before the House, and it is very bad taste on the part of the Premier to attempt to put me down at the present moment. I was remarking that I was pleased to hear the Treasurer say that he thought it desirable to conserve the trade of this colony by constructing a railway along our border, but he did not adduce any facts to show that the proposed line would protect the trade if there is any trade. The returns already referred to prove that there is hardly any traffic across the border, also that the district is thinly populated, and that there is no probability of there being a large population in the district at any time on account of the railway. If the Government are

anxious to conserve the trade of the colony they might do more in that way by extending the Western line more rapidly and to a greater distance than that proposed. A railway carried out west beyond Charleville would annex to this part of the colony a new territory—a territory which at the present time does not do any of its business with Brisbane. The whole of the trade of the country for some distance beyond Charleville is done with New South Wales, and the returns in connection with Wooroorooka, Hungerford, and Wompah show that an immense amount of goods comes from those three places. Our present railway system if only carried on rapidly would save that trade, but there is no desire to push it on rapidly, and it is allowed to go on at a snail's pace. Last night we voted away money that would construct hundreds of miles of that railway, but that money is going to be spent on railways which will not pay their working expenses, let alone the interest on the cost of their construction. I trust there is no intention to burke this matter, and I think a full inquiry should be made into it. If the Government had brought forward proper statistics, which they ought to be able to obtain, to show that this line would pay, we could not object.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You got all the information.

Mr. DONALDSON: From whom?

The PREMIER: The information should have been asked for in committee if it was wanted, but it was not wanted at all.

Mr. DONALDSON: I am not speaking for the purpose of annoying the Premier, but the Minister for Works said we got all the information, and I asked him "From whom?"

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You never asked for it.

Mr. DONALDSON: The Minister for Works should have supplied it. He said, "The estimate is that this railway will cost £4,000 per mile, but I am perfectly satisfied it will cost nothing of the kind, that it will be a great deal less." Are we to be perfectly satisfied with any assertion the hon. gentleman may make? Do we not remember that two years ago he was perfectly satisfied that £85,000 would complete the duplication of the railway to Ipswich, and what has been the result? We are perfectly satisfied now that another £85,000 will not complete it, and yet the hon. gentleman was satisfied, and other hon. members—myself amongst the number—were satisfied at the time that his estimate was a correct one. When, therefore, I see this estimate for this railway, and hear the Minister for Works say he is perfectly satisfied it will be less, I say the estimate is not reliable, and we are perfectly right in protesting against the construction of any railways until we have full information before us. We have no information as to the trade of the district, the population, the number of stock, or the value of the land there. I know that a great deal of the country is flooded, and I will go a little further and say some of it is a desert; there are ninety square miles of country there which are actually unoccupied, and it is not possible that we shall get much wool from that country; we are certainly not likely to even get a population settled there. I wish to see railways carried out, because I wish to see the country developed. I am not standing here for the purpose of trying to prevent the construction of this or any other railway. I have no interest in it, and if it could be shown that it is a national line, and one which will develop the resources of the colony, I would cheerfully vote for it. It

does not come into collision with any line that I have any interest in, nor into collision with the interests of my constituents, but I am perfectly sure I would not be doing my duty if I did not enter my protest against the paucity of the information we have been supplied with. If the information is supplied I will cheerfully accept it, and will vote for the line. If I am satisfied that it will be a paying one—not exactly a paying one, because we can hardly expect a line in the interior, where there is but a sparse population, to be a paying one—but if it has the effect of developing the country, and increasing the value of the Crown lands, I think the House will be perfectly justified in voting for it, because it will be indirectly of very great benefit to the State. Is there anything unreasonable in asking for such information, and can any hon. member say it has been given? I have no intention of stonewalling, but as I did not speak last night or to-night, I think I am perfectly justified in getting up to enter my protest against having these railways shoved down our throats without any information, and simply because a very small majority of the other side have combined for the purpose of carrying them in a body.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not think the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government can charge me with detaining the House, as I have not spoken on the subject before this evening. I think the request made, although a very reasonable one, will not be granted, judging from the temper which the hon. gentleman shows he is in at present. Nevertheless, the information should be given, as there are certain points upon which both sides of the House disagree. I think that I ordered the survey of this route, and in fact of all these rival routes, and I have as much right to get information as the Government have to retain the information, and any hon. member of this House is in the same position. Arguments have been used on both sides of the House for and against the line, and although I was Minister for Works for four years, and ordered the survey, I am not able to say, from my own knowledge, which of the arguments is correct. We ought to get the information asked for, and it could be obtained by a committee such as has been moved for by the hon. member for Normanby. There are a number of points upon which we should get information. First, as to the trade which exists on the border, and which might be expected from the country through which the line would go; as to the amount of trade which goes from our side of the line, which goes at present to the New South Wales side of the border line; and as to the amount of trade which is likely to come from the New South Wales side of the line—if any—if the railway were made. These are all points upon which we should be informed. We have been left, as we have been left in all the debates that have taken place in this House for the last two years, to grope in the dark, because the members of the Ministry have not been willing to give any information to any member of this House, either on that side or on this. Then again, as to the cost of the line, and the nature of the country through which the line goes. That is a disputed point on both sides of the House: some hon. members say it is very fair country, and some say it is a desert. Then, as to the nature of the country for making a line of railway, I have heard one hon. member, who knows the country, say that it is many feet under water for many miles in extent. Others, again, say it is not so; and these are facts which can be ascertained by the Government, and the information should be given to this House. Then as to the total cost of the line, we are told that the section asked for

will cost £4,000 per mile; but that is no criterion of the total cost of the line. If we take that as the average cost per mile we may very easily make a calculation, but we may be making the calculation in the dark, because we do not know whether that will be the cost right through or not; and from the statements made by many hon. members as to the nature of the country we know it is likely to cost very much more. These are facts which we ought to have, and I say we have great reason to complain that we have been kept in the dark all along in regard to these railways. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government said some time ago that some hon. members said the line would cost £2,000,000, some £3,000,000, and some £4,000,000. I do not think it will cost either £3,000,000 or £4,000,000, but I think it will cost—not this line alone, but this and the line which hon. members connect with this, the *via recta*—the two lines together will cost £2,000,000. The line from Rosewood to Warwick and Warwick to St. George, taking the engineer's estimate of the one, and taking the average cost of this section to be the average cost of the whole of the St. George line, will cost £1,900,000. Now, knowing as we do that engineer's estimates are very often exceeded, we can very easily arrive at the conclusion that it will cost £2,000,000. It is a very serious matter for the House to face an expenditure of that kind cheerfully, as the Treasurer seems to be doing, without knowing where we are going or what we are doing.

Mr. NORTON: The Treasurer does not look cheerful.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: He looked very cheerful when he was making his speech in the early part of the evening—

Mr. NORTON: That was only put on.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Too cheerful, I think. All this money must be paid whether these lines pay or not: that is an inevitable fact. The fact which is not inevitable, and which we are all in ignorance about, is whether the lines will pay the interest or not. I should like to know whether there is any reasonable probability of the lines paying the interest within a reasonable time. The interest upon these two lines will amount to £80,000; that is not a very simple or very easy sum to throw away. We have to pay that every year whether the lines pay or not; and considering that our lines are not paying—considering the many lines we have at present, as mentioned by the Commissioner for Railways in his report, which have not even paid their working expenses—it is a very serious matter for us to enter into the consideration of this line and the other lines we are to make, which according to many hon. members will not pay the cost of working. There are five or six lines mentioned in the Commissioner's report which have not paid the working expenses. There is one of our lines—a line which was forced through this House by a very small majority in a very peculiar way—which has never paid since it was opened, and I do not know when it is likely to pay. Every year seems to be as bad as the year preceding. I need not mention what line it is; hon. members opposite are responsible for it. I do not blame them as a Government for being responsible for it, because I think there has been no Government which has not made non-paying lines. That has been a mistake we have been guilty of from the very beginning of making railways—that we have made political railways, and not commercial railways. I think this railway is a political railway, and the *via recta* which is to follow it is also a political railway, which cannot, during this century at least,

be expected to be a commercial success. I hope the hon. member will not relegate the inquiry into this line to the other House. We know that when the plans and sections go to the other Chamber, by a Standing Order there they are remitted to a committee for inquiry; but why should we remit to them the duty we ought to do ourselves? We are able to do it than they are, and we ought to do it. Certainly there is this to be said—that the Government will be able to say to the people on the Darling Downs, who wish for these lines, "We did our best; we passed this line for you, but these gentlemen in the other Chamber in their wisdom threw it out. We will bring it up again by-and-by."

The PREMIER: They will throw it out, then! Are you in their secrets?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: No; I am saying it is very likely it will be so. I do not pretend to be in their secrets. I take no interest in their proceedings further than any other hon. member of this House, and far less than the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government. I never go to listen to their debates. I never go outside the bar to ask a member to come in and vote, nor to keep him out. I say it is very likely it will be so; and then, this being a political railway, the hon. gentleman will be able to say, "We passed this line, but then we could not control the gentlemen of the Upper Chamber." Then it will be brought forward again. Now that we have recovered our senses, as we have to a certain extent since 1884, we ought really to inquire into the lines which the Government have placed before us for consideration. It is no use for the hon. gentleman to show that he is impatient; it is no use for him to show that he is irritated. No matter how impatient or irritable he may be, we have a duty to perform in this House, and we ought to do it independently of any irritation which is shown by the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Now, I have put the case very clearly. We want information on certain points I have mentioned. I know this much: that during the time the late Government was in office, when I myself was Minister for Works, I would never have dared to bring forward a line for consideration without giving every information that could possibly be asked for.

The PREMIER: You never gave as much information about any line.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I appeal to the records of *Hansard* to show the information I gave.

The PREMIER: I remember well enough.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Every member in this House remembers it. I say there was never a line brought forward by myself or my successor on which full information was not given; in fact, hon. members were anticipated in their questions by the information that was given. I ask hon. members if that has been the case this session? Was it the case last session? These plans have been laid on the table of the House, and no more information has been given than the bare plans themselves give. I ask any hon. member, even if he understands the plans, what information is to be obtained from the plans on the table of the House as to whether the line should be made or not, whether it will be payable or not, or as to the character of the country through which the line goes? I think the hon. member should concede what the hon. member for Normandy asks. It will not delay the business more

than two weeks, or three weeks at the most, and then there will be still sufficient time to pass the line through the other Chamber, if the Committee bring forward a favourable report.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—There is a very evident difference between the tone of hon. members in discussing the vote last night and that before the House now, and their tone when discussing the railway the Minister for Works brought forward first yesterday afternoon—the Normanton-Cloncurry railway. The Assembly assented unanimously to that proposition; it was inevitable that the line would recommend itself to the House. But, as one of the members who are concerned in the railways of this colony, I myself am quite dissatisfied with the information the Minister for Works has brought forward this evening. I would ask you also, Mr. Speaker, to consider this—that it is all on a par with the information we had before the House when what is well known as the £10,000,000 loan was brought before it, and all these railways were carried almost in a bunch. We asked for information then, not only with regard to this line, but also with regard to the direct line to Warwick, and a good many other lines, and there was the same want of information then as we complain of this evening. I cannot conceive how the head of the department can be himself satisfied with the scanty information which he has given us, and I am quite sure that the department must be in possession of some more information than has been given to us.

Mr. NELSON said: Mr. Speaker,—We were told by a Minister this evening that we ought to accept the votes which were given last night as the voice of the House without any further comment and be satisfied. Well, we have heard a great deal about the practice and usage of the House of Commons, and it strikes me we should take the House of Commons as our guide, because when the Ministers of the day bring forward a resolution which is carried by a majority really consisting principally of official members they accept it as the voice of the country being against the resolution and against them. Well, there are over 10 per cent. of Ministers or official members in this House; and I think, therefore, that it would be well to fall back on the practice of the House of Commons, and for the Government to accept the vote as a sure indication that the country is against them.

The PREMIER: Then we ought to resign.

Mr. NELSON: The Government need not act on the resolution, just in the same way as they decline to act on the resolution for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act, which was carried by a small majority.

Mr. W. BROOKES said: Mr. Speaker,—I am in a very peculiar and delicate position. I am a colleague of the Premier, and it has always been my sincere desire to follow him wherever I could safely do so, and I will say this, that last evening and this evening have been the most painful days in my parliamentary life. Last night I did not know what to do for the best. I have already told the House that I thought I acted in a half-hearted kind of way, but now I do not intend to have any more of that; I will speak my mind plainly on this matter. I think the Government are forcing this House. I think it is not fair to ask hon. members of this House to accept this railway on the data placed before us. Everything combines to make this a time when the country should be very cautious. We cannot tell whether our financial position as a colony may not be a great deal worse very speedily. Our credit has been good so far, but how long it will remain good we do not know, and I think

on financial considerations that this demand or request of the hon. member for Normanby is a perfectly reasonable one. It commends itself to my mind very much indeed on account of its reasonableness, and I do say this, and mean it: that I think the Government will make another false step if they reject this so reasonable a demand. I do not know how long it will take—this committee of inquiry.

The PREMIER: Two years it is intended to take.

Mr. W. BROOKES: The hon. member for Townsville said it would take three weeks, and I think a good deal can be done within the next month. But, now, is there a valid reason why the request should not be granted? Supposing the Government consider that they have perfect liberty at once to proceed with this railway, they do not intend to proceed immediately. It will be some years—it will be many years—before the 235½ miles are made, and is it reasonable or befitting to ask us as business men, who have some little experience of the ins and outs of life, to sanction the making of twenty-five miles of a railway, which will involve us in the construction of 210 following miles, without any consideration whatever? We are in the dark; we do not know the right route; we have no accurate information about the population or the character of the land; we know nothing that we ought to know before we commit ourselves to this railway. Now, let me speak quietly. No one can respect the members of the Government more than I do. I consider they are the best Government this colony has ever seen. That may be my fanaticism; but I ask them not to imperil a reputation that they have done so much to earn by a little irritability when the House wants what I think is a reasonable thing to be granted.

The PREMIER: The House does not want it.

Mr. HAMILTON said: I quite agree with the hon. member who has just sat down that the Government ought not to force this question down our throats. We have been told that we ought to accept the decision of the majority, but when another important matter was decided the other day—the resolutions for the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act—the Government very properly decided that they would not act upon the division recorded in the House, although the majority were favourable to a certain course. Now, I think the Minister for Works is rather wanting in courtesy in not answering the reasons given by prominent members on both sides of the House in support of the case we are advocating—that is, the appointing of a select committee to inquire into and report upon this question. The Premier has stated that a committee would take two years to do that, but that is simply nonsense. The committees which the other House appoint only take a fortnight for such work, and I do not think that this House possesses less intelligence or less capability in the performance of such a work. It is a most important question, involving the expenditure of a million of money, and we know very well that it is simply the *via recta* commencing at the other end.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: It involves two millions.

Mr. HAMILTON: I notice Mr. Phillips in his report says that a million at any rate, will be involved in the construction of a portion of the line, and when we see that it is proposed to expend such a large sum of money upon a line which literally is nothing more than a duplication of an existing line, it is only fair that we should obtain the fullest information possible, and all the information that is in the possession

of the Government. If the Government are so confident that they are right in the information they have, then if we were put in possession of the same facts that are in their possession, it is possible that we might also be convinced of the justice of the case and vote for the railway. The Government should not be afraid to give all the information they have to the House, and I think in a case of this kind it is inadvisable to relegate to the other House what we can do ourselves—namely, appointing a select committee to inquire into the whole question. The only reason I can see for objecting to such a course is that suggested by the hon. member for Townsville. We may be pretty certain, looking at the closeness of the division last night, that the Valley line will be thrown out by the Upper House as a matter of course. But I do not suppose the Government will care very much about that, as it will suit them to keep on dangling it before the eyes of the constituency, so that at the next election the Premier may be able to say, “I passed it through the Assembly; I am not responsible for what the Upper House does; and I promise you to bring it in again.” It will be only a fair thing to give what is asked for, not only by the hon. member for Normanby, but by half the members of the House.

Mr. ANNEAR said: Mr. Speaker,—The railway from Normanton to Cloncurry, which we had before us yesterday, is very nearly as long as this, and hon. members had just as much information about it as they have about this, yet because it suited hon. gentlemen opposite they saw their way very easily to vote for a railway in the electorate of the hon. member for Burke. We have quite sufficient information, I think, about this Warwick to St. George railway—in fact, we have more information about it than we had about the Cloncurry railway. This line has been before the House for two years—ever since it was placed on the loan vote—and it seems clear to me that this demand for information now seems very much like obstruction.

Mr. ALAND said: Mr. Speaker,—I should like to point out that the difference between the Cloncurry line and the line now under discussion is this: Very few members of the House, besides the hon. member for Burke, knew anything at all about the Cloncurry line, and we accepted it upon the *ipse dixit* of the Minister for Works. But with regard to this proposed line from Warwick to St. George hon. members seem to possess a good deal of information, and their opinions upon it appear to be pretty equally divided. That is the great difference between the two lines.

Mr. LISSNER said: Mr. Speaker,—I am rather surprised at the speech of the hon. member for Maryborough. He seems to think that the Government ought to take these railway votes at the point of the bayonet. There was no dissension about the Cloncurry railway, while the House is pretty evenly divided upon this. I wish we had a thousand people here from Charters Towers to see how millions of money are voted away for railways. We have seen half-a-million voted on the casting vote of the Chairman, and by another single vote thousands are being thrown away on this line to St. George, which is merely the crooked beginning of the *via recta*. We have a right to ask for and to obtain more information on a great question like this; but the Government seem inclined to afford us no satisfaction whatever.

Mr. MIDGLEY said: Mr. Speaker,—I speak on this subject with considerable reluctance, and shall say very little. I considered it my duty to my constituents, to the country, and to the Government, to be here to-night and to record the vote which I have given. If I felt that my

one vote had to bear all the responsibility for this public work, I do not think I should feel the slightest misgiving or regret. Much that has been said on this question is calculated to entirely mislead the House and the country. The country, by the vote just recorded, has not been committed to an expenditure of millions; it is not committed to the construction of this *via recta*; it is simply committed to the construction of a branch agricultural line for a distance of twenty-five miles from Warwick, through country which, I am perfectly certain from my own knowledge, is as good agricultural country as any there is in Queensland. Supposing the line costs £4,000 a mile—and that seems to be the outside estimate—the total amount is only £100,000. The hon. member for Stanley has alluded to the fact that the trunk lines are being pushed out west where there is nothing like the close settlement that there is in this locality; and I believe that it will be a boon to the people and a good to the country for this line to be constructed. But there is another point to which I wish to draw the attention of hon. members, especially of hon. members who profess to befriend the unemployed. Is this the time for us to knock in pieces the public works policy of the Government? It seems to be understood that after the vote of last night the Valley line will not be finally sanctioned; and it appears to me that if this line suffers the same fate there will be very little left; and it may become necessary to provide even unremunerative work for the unemployed. Hon. members on the other side are continually demanding concessions to the squatters, and they appear to think that the only way to relieve the distress of the country is to grant new and greater concessions to the squatting industry of the colony. In my opinion a far better way will be to maintain a spirited public works policy; but if we knock this railway out of the Government scheme of public works there will be comparatively little left. I cannot help wondering that hon. members on this side, who have repeatedly voted for extending the main trunk lines into the interior for the benefit of the squatting industry, should be so very sensitive or so very careful with regard to voting money for the construction of a line of this kind. The line we are asked to sanction to-night is as really and truly an agricultural line as the branch line from Toowoomba to Highfields, and it is nothing more.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I must correct the hon. member. Had he been in his place in the House during the earlier part of the discussion he would not have made the assertion that this is purely an agricultural line. The Minister for Works, when he introduced this proposal, connected this line with the *via recta*, and are we to take his statement as meaning anything at all, or are we to treat the matter as the member for Fassifern does? We must accept the statement of the Minister for Works that this line is intended as a portion of that line which is to go from here direct to Warwick and from Warwick direct to St. George. And I would point out one other thing to the hon. gentleman who pleaded so pathetically on behalf of the unemployed. Has he considered the taxpayers? What about the taxpayers who will have to pay the interest upon all this money; are not they to be considered? Surely the taxpayers are to be considered before the unemployed, who pay no taxes at all. This "unemployed" cry is being made too much of when it is brought into a matter like this. I am willing to give my sympathy to the unemployed so far as I can. I believe there are among them a large number of men who are willing to take whatever work they can get. But

I do not admit for one moment that this is an argument that ought to be brought forward into a debate of this kind. I am not opposed to the construction of a line to intercept the trade which goes now from this colony to New South Wales and South Australia. The only doubt I have in my mind is whether this is the right point from which this line ought to be commenced. I do not think it is the right point, and I never have thought so, and until some evidence has been brought forward to show that it is the right line, I am bound to vote against it. I say that the action I am taking to-night is not because I wish to oppose the Government. It is their own supporters who are opposing them. I hope the Premier this time, at any rate, will acquit this side of the House from any blame—that is to say, the blame he put upon us for having attempted to make this a party question.

The PREMIER: You voted solid, at all events.

Mr. NORTON: A more gross case has never been brought before the House, and attempted to be pushed down our throats. What is the statement that hon. members have made over and over again? What was the statement made by the hon. gentleman who sits opposite me? I have heard him spoken of as the Premier's shadow—simply because he is his colleague, I presume. I respect the hon. member; I know him personally very well, and have a great regard for him. I am glad to see him take independent action again to-night; but this action is forced upon him. I do not wish to make this a party question. In any case I do not expect the Premier to believe that. He as much as told me I was telling a falsehood this afternoon.

The PREMIER: No, I did not.

Mr. NORTON: Then I accepted it as that, and I shall do so until the hon. member retracts altogether.

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to correct an impression the hon. member seems to be under. I accept fully the hon. gentleman's statement that he personally did not make it a party question in the sense of calling together his party, and asking them to vote in any particular way. There are many ways in which it may be managed that a party shall vote together. I accept fully all the hon. member has said upon the present occasion; but I do not retract anything of my opinion as to what took place last evening.

Mr. NORTON: In explanation, I must repeat what I said, that I had in no way tried to make it a party question. I say it now, and I do not care whether the hon. member believes it or not. I do not make statements I cannot stand by; but I am prepared to place my statement against that of any member of this House. I do not care who contradicts me, and I do not care whether the hon. gentleman accepts my statements in their entirety or not. What I said was, that if he does not intend to accept them in their entirety, I accept his remark in the manner I stated just now.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—I did not intend to say anything upon this question.

Mr. HAMILTON: Now you have missed your train you might as well stay.

Mr. MACFARLANE: Hon. members frequently take advantage of the absence of myself and others; but I will say this—that we will stay here if required. It would not be a bad thing to speak for an hour. We have heard a great deal from the other side about demanding information and demanding statistics,

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : Which we do not get !

Mr. MACFARLANE : Demanding statistics to show that the line would be a paying one. When we demanded information from the last Government, some three, four, or five years ago, all the information we could get was that a line was going 100 miles towards the setting sun. That was all the information we got. Now, when we bring a line before the country and before the House we state that the first twenty-five miles goes through rich country, and we can with all confidence pronounce it an agricultural branch line in the meantime, and I hope it will become a trunk line ; but at present it is simply a branch agricultural line, and will be a paying line for those twenty-five miles. I will ask hon. members who have had seats in this House for many years if they ever heard of a line being introduced in any portion of the country where the members for that district were not perfectly willing to say that it was going through rich agricultural land, and that there was a great deal of timber on it and that it was bound to be a paying line ? We have heard that with regard to every line introduced. I hear the hon. member for Townsville laughing ; he knows how true it is they are all payable lines. It would be easy to-night for the hon. members for Darling Downs and Warwick to say it is rich agricultural land, and there is beautiful timber upon it, and that there is sure to be settlement taking place. I shall go in for this line, because it will be a connecting line with the great trunk line of the colony, and it will be the shortest line ; and if we remember that South Australia is now connected—or very shortly will be—with Victoria, that Victoria is connected with New South Wales, should we not be in the same position, and be connected by the very shortest route we can and have a trunk line through the whole colony ? Should we be behind the other colonies ? Are we to be behind South Australia, for instance ? I should say not. We have something to look forward to, and I hope hon. members will not be led away by the sophistry and plausible speeches of hon. members who, when advocating lines for their own districts, have everything to say in favour of them, and who say they are perfectly disinterested to-night. Is not this the very time to make railways, when the country is suffering from a great want of employment ? I say it is. I do not know how these hon. members will meet the working men, who will be awaiting them, and whom they pretend to think and talk so much about. What will hon. members on the other side of the House, and a few hon. members on this side, say, when they are really preventing working men in the colony from earning their bread, and making a railway that would be at one time a payable railway—if not at the present time ?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : You are obstructing !

Mr. MACFARLANE : I am not obstructing. It will be a lesson to hon. members not to obstruct in future after 10 o'clock at night. This is not a matter between Toowoomba and Warwick ; I will not say a single word about that. I want to say that this is the best line that can be made to connect us with New South Wales ; I am speaking now of the *via recta*. I can speak as a disinterested person, because it will not do Ipswich any good. The line passes through there now, so that so far as we are concerned we shall be no better off ; but I believe that it will add very greatly to the general prosperity of the colony. One hon. member of this House is very fond of using the word "bosh." I am sorry he is not in his place.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL : Who is he

Mr. MACFARLANE : It is not you. I can just reply, "It is bosh," to the arguments they bring forward. "Disinterested motives, the poverty of the country," and all those sorts of arguments, mean nothing at all. They mean simply that they want to obstruct. They want to snatch a triumph from the Government. They want to see the Government "licked," as it were, on their own railway policy. I hope they will not succeed in doing that. If this was a railway that there was nothing in—if it was a political railway, as it has been termed on the other side of the House—I should oppose it.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER : So it is.

Mr. MACFARLANE : It is not a political railway. It is a portion of the grand trunk railway between the colonies. On that ground I support it, and I hope that all sensible members of the House will do likewise.

Mr. GOVETT said : Mr. Speaker,—I am perfectly certain that private enterprise will discover where good country is in this colony. I think everything goes to show that where this line is proposed to be carried through is not a good district, otherwise there would have been more production there during the many years that it has been occupied in a sort of way. The hon. member for Darling Downs stated, on the experience of a man who had lived in that district for forty years, that one portion of it would carry 360,000 sheep ; and another hon. member, Mr. Kellett, spoke of railways going towards "the setting sun." Well, Mr. Speaker, as to the country out towards "the setting sun," a few years after that country was opened up, there were 3,000,000 sheep in the Mitchell district alone. That shows the difference. There have been hundreds of thousands of fat sheep sent from that part ; and if the hon. member for Stanley had seen what I have seen there for many years—hundreds of teams stringing in, loaded with from six to eight tons of wool—he would say that there was necessity for railways to be sent out to that valuable district. But along where this line is proposed to be made there has been every evidence given to-night to show that it is not good country. The hon. member for Aubigny, who spoke from personal knowledge, said he believed that from one station there had not been more than 500 fat cattle sent away for the last thirty years. I think, Mr. Speaker, that this line is not proposed to be carried in the proper direction, and I hope that the House will consent to the amendment of the hon. member for Normanby.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put, and he House divided :—

AYES, 27.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Rutledge, Miles, Dickson, Dutton, Moreton, Sheridan, Foxton, Fraser, Bulcock, Smyth, Isambert, Jordan, Kellett, Buckland, White, Wakefield, McMaster, S. W. Brooks, Kates, Annear, Salkeld, Macfarlane, Wallace, Midgley, Bailey, and Horwitz.

NOES, 23.

Messrs. Norton, Macrossan, Chubb, McWhannell, Hamilton, Jessop, Aland, Black, Hill, Nelson, Adams, Stevenson, Pattison, Govett, Lissner, Donaldson, Philp, Palmer, Stevens, Brown, W. Brookes, Campbell, and Murphy.

Pairs :—Mr. Higson and Mr. Ferguson, for the amendment ; Mr. Mellor and Mr. Foote against.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the resolutions be now adopted by the House—put and passed.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said : I move that this House do now adjourn. It is proposed, when Government business comes on to-morrow, to resume the railway proposals of the Government.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at nine minutes to 11 o'clock.