

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 1886

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 2 November, 1886.

Question without Notice.—Normanton to Cloncurry Railway.—Motion for Adjournment—floating mining companies in England—Warwick to St. George Railway—advertising electoral rolls.—Trade Unions Bill—third reading.—Order of Business.—Local Government Act Amendment Bill—consideration of Legislative Council's message of 27th instant.—Maryborough to Gayndah Railway.—Message from the Legislative Council—Employers Liability Bill.—Gladstone to Bundaberg Railway.—Adjournment.

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

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to ask the Premier a question, without notice, with reference to the Croydon riots. Has the hon. gentleman received the depositions taken in that case, and, if so, will he lay them on the table of the House?

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) said: Mr. Speaker,—I have not got them at the present time, but I will lay them on the table as soon as they are received.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Have you sent for them?

The PREMIER: I am not quite sure.

NORMANTON TO CLONCURRY RAILWAY.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to call attention to a slight mistake in the proceedings of the Legislative Council.

The PREMIER: We have nothing to do with that.

Mr. PALMER: It refers, sir, to the plans of the Normanton to Cloncurry railway, and is connected with *Hansard*. The "Votes and Proceedings" of the Legislative Council of the 27th October state that the motion for referring to a select committee the plans and book of reference of the railway from Normanton to Cloncurry was "put and negatived," while in *Hansard* it is reported that the question was "put and passed." So that if one is right the other is wrong.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

FLOATING MINING COMPANIES IN ENGLAND.—WARWICK AND ST. GEORGE RAILWAY.—ADVERTISING ELECTORAL ROLLS.

Mr. LISSNER said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move the adjournment of the House in order to ventilate a very important matter which transpired here last week. I regret to say that I was not in my place when the debate on the subject to which I refer took place, but the matter is rather too important to allow it to go altogether

unnoticed. Last Thursday the hon. member for Warrego, who is not in his place just now, drew the attention of the House to the fact that certain gold-mining companies were being floated in England with large capital, and said he thought that some of those mines were not known to the public; and he was further of opinion that it was the business of the Government to warn people in England to be careful as to what mines they invested in. The hon. member also said he knew two very good mines which had been floated into companies, and mentioned the Day Dawn Gold-mining Company at Charters Towers as being one, and the Cumberland Prospecting Claim as another good one. I think it is pretty well known that they are good mines; but it is not generally known here, and I do not think the hon. member himself knows which are bad ones. The Premier followed the hon. member, and stated that he was glad the attention of the House had been drawn to the matter, that it had previously been under the notice of the Government, and that he had sent a wire to the Agent-General to warn the public against the floating of certain mines. I consider it a very serious matter for the Government to interfere with matters of business when there is not sufficient reason for that interference. The mining industry, I may say, is one of the most important industries of the colony, and I hope nothing will be done to interfere with its success, but that it will be encouraged by the Government. Everybody looks for that with great hopes. The Government have been accused of destroying the sugar industry, and also of destroying the squatters by a vicious Land Act. The only other industry of great importance left is the mining industry, and I think the Government ought to give the matter very serious consideration before they take any steps which may interfere with its prosperity. At present it is a very promising industry. I do not myself wish to see anybody "had" by putting money into mines which are of little or no value. But, on the other hand, we should be very careful what official cablegrams we send home warning the public about things of which we know very little. I have been connected with the gold-mining industry for twenty years or more, and have not always made money, but I have never been warned by the Government of Victoria or New South Wales when to go into a mine or when sell out. Not long ago I sold for £900 what is now worth £40,000 in hard cash, and the gentleman who got the property is now enjoying the benefit. The member for Warrego drew attention to the Elektron Gold-mining Company, which was being floated with a capital of £70,000, and the Mount Morgan West, which was reported to have been floated with a capital of £200,000, although a cablegram was sent home warning people against the Mount Morgan West, which I may say is not, as we all know, the real Mount Morgan. The Mount Morgan mine has so far declared dividends of between £30,000 and £40,000, and it is not likely that people would expect that mine to be floated at £200,000. However, the cablegram went home too late. I do not know who is in the company; I am not aware whether the Premier knows. As far as our ignorance about the Elektron mine is concerned, I will call attention to what has appeared in a paper in Victoria with reference to it, which shows that the mine is a *bonâ fide* property. Mount Morgan West I know nothing about, and I think the sooner the real Mount Morgan is well known the better. But with regard to the Elektron mine the Melbourne *Argus* of the 27th of October last says:—

"The *European Mail* of September 17 has the following:—A new company called the Etheridge Gold Field (Queensland) Limited, with a capital of £70,000, in shares of £1 each, has been formed to purchase and

work gold quartz reefs in North Queensland, Australia. It is intended, in the first place, to purchase the Lady Franklin, Rope Walk, Elektron Mount, Canadian, and St. Lawrence mines, situated about ten miles south of Charleston and thirty-five miles from George-town. These properties, which are twenty-five acres in extent, are secured by leases direct from the Government. It is stated that several shafts have been sunk to various depths, and the crushings, with imperfect machinery, show a result of from 2 oz. to 5 oz. of gold to the ton, while the assays of Messrs. Johnson, Matthey, and Co. show 5 oz. and 17 oz. of gold and 6 oz. and 15 oz. of silver to the ton of ore. Samples of gold ore from the Lady Franklin are on view in the gold quartz battery of the Queensland Government, and in the Queensland court, at the Colonial Exhibition at South Kensington. The purchase money is fixed by the vendor at £45,000, of which £20,000 is payable in fully-paid shares of the company, and the residue in fully-paid-up shares, or cash, at the option of the company. Fifty thousand shares are now offered for subscription. Under the title of 'A Neglected Eldorado,' the *Times* prints in *extenso* the report made to the Queensland Government by Mr. Gold-Warden Samwell, of George-town, on this property."

I believe it is a *bonâ fide* gold-bearing locality, and it might be a very serious blow to the place if investors were prevented from investing in the mines. It would also be a serious blow to other *bonâ fide* mining localities where companies have been floated, because it may prevent people from investing in other mines. I have received a wire from the mayor of Charters Towers, as follows:—

"Referring to telegrams Premier's reply to Mr. Donaldson last Thursday I am anxious to know if any of the bogus mines referred to as being offered in London are Charters Towers property. Telegram vague but calculated to harm this goldfield. General impression is that hitherto English capitalists have had good value for their money from Towers. Please inquire and reply."

There is another telegram from the chairman of the Dalrymple Divisional Board, as follows:—

"Please ask Premier if his remarks *re* 'wild cat' mines applied to Charters Towers properties. If so consider his interference unwarrantably untrue and calculated to damage prosperity goldfield."

There is no doubt it would, and I do not see how far the Government can protect anybody in speculations. The hon. member for Wide Bay also made some very harsh remarks on Thursday last about "wild cats" and bogus companies. He stated that on the same day he was attending a meeting of a company in which he was a shareholder, and that they wanted an extraordinarily big price for their mine, but that he would not be a party to a fraud. I have been told since that the hon. member apologised outside for the remarks he made under privilege inside the House. I suppose other gentlemen will follow me, and I trust the Chief Secretary will see his way clear to wipe out the impression that has been made already in England that we are all bad marks and possessors of "wild cats" and bogus companies, which I think is quite untrue and calculated to bring odium on an industry which we cannot very well afford to lose. I trust that a cablegram will be sent to the Agent-General instructing him to point out the "wild cats" and not put them together with the Mount Morgans, the Day Dawns, and many more I could name.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I am rather surprised to hear the speech of the hon. member. The cablegram sent home by the Government will not have the slightest effect on *bonâ fide* speculations; but I am sure that *bonâ fide* mine-holders do not want the good reputation of Queensland as a mining field to be injured by bogus companies.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: What were the terms of the telegram?

The PREMIER: I can only repeat the contents from memory. It pointed out the necessity for caution. There is not the slightest

doubt that one of the mines floated recently with a large capital is an entirely bogus adventure, and I think it is for the interest of this country that bogus adventures of that kind should be exposed. I do not know whether the Agent-General published the names of the companies I mentioned or not, but I certainly do not think the Government should be called upon to stand sponsors for all the mining companies floated in Queensland. We know that on previous occasions when a mining mania has prevailed a great many people have taken advantage of the enthusiasm of investors to put dishonest speculations on the market, and there is great danger of the evil being repeated at the present time. With regard to the telegrams read by the hon. gentleman, I am sure that no *bonâ fide* mine has anything to fear from the warning sent home. The hon. member said—and I am surprised that it has not been said before in this House—that the Government are interfering with another industry. I thought someone would say that; I thought the hon. member for Mackay would be the first to say it. I have mentioned several times within the last two or three days that I expected to hear that the Government are interfering with another industry. But the only people whose industry the Government have interfered with on this occasion are those whom the French call "*chevaliers d'industrie*," and I shall be glad to interfere with them on every possible occasion.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I was glad to hear the hon. gentleman say the Government should not stand sponsor for all the mines floated in Queensland; but that is a different thing to sending home vague cablegrams cautioning people against investing in mines. If he knows of any "wild cats"—to use the Yankee expression in regard to such mines—or bogus companies, he should have specified them; but he has not told us whether he specified the mines or not.

The PREMIER: I said last week that I specified the names of two mines, one of which was Mount Morgan West.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Very well. That is right so far—cautioning speculators or the investing public against investing in mines, which, so far as the Government know, are "wild cats." But it turns out that the Elektron mine is not a "wild cat." I myself was not aware of the existence of the Elektron mine on Thursday last, and I think I know as many mines as the Minister for Mines or the Chief Secretary; but it seems from what the hon. member for Kennedy has stated that the Elektron is well known elsewhere, and has been reported on by a Government officer. It seems very strange, then, that such a telegram was sent last week, and I think that before a telegram of the kind is sent again caution should be exercised and the truth discovered. I do not say a word against the telegram as far as Mount Morgan West is concerned, because the owners of the real Mount Morgan have an idea that Mount Morgan West is not a *bonâ fide* venture. I am not surprised, however, at the people of Charters Towers sending telegrams to the hon. member for Kennedy, because there are a great many *bonâ fide* mines on Charters Towers at present on the London market for sale—mines that are not quite so good as the Day Dawn, but equally *bonâ fide* investments—and a vague cablegram such as that sent home would have a very damaging effect on them. It is the first time a Government in any of the colonies have taken in hand to do anything of the kind. I heard the Minister for Works the other evening talking about squatting properties, which he knew of his own knowledge to have been bought by

speculators from Victoria at four times their value. But he did not think it his duty to warn them against investing in those properties; instead of that, he took advantage of their willingness to buy, and sold out—a very wise thing. On the other hand, we have had investors in sugar properties in Queensland who gave very large sums for properties which they would now be very glad to get rid of at one-fourth or one-fifth the price; yet no one warned them against investing. I believe that those properties will yet turn out well, and that the squatting properties which the Minister for Works thought companies were giving four times the value of will probably turn out well also; and no one, either in this House or out of it, can say, no matter how expert he may be in mining, what mining properties will pay and what will not. All that a man can say in regard to Mount Morgan West is that the claim has been tried and nothing has been found. They can say that much about it; but they cannot say at what depth gold will be found, or whether it will be found to be payable at all. No one can say more than that. We have just heard the hon. member for Kennedy say that he gave away for £300 a property worth £40,000. I know that to be a fact, and yet he has had twenty-three years' experience. Therefore, the greatest caution should be exercised in dealing with such subjects. The caution that has been sent home to the Agent-General I have no doubt was far too vague, and he is not likely to improve it, because he has no knowledge of mining. Everybody knows that investing in mines at all times, whether out here or at home, is a very risky thing—even investing in mines that are known to be good. I have invested in mines that were known to be excellent at the time, and very shortly afterwards they turned out no good. I have known others who invested in mines that were known to be bad, and who made fortunes out of them. Therefore, I think the Government should be extremely chary in sending any telegrams unless they specify exactly the mines which are referred to as being worthless; otherwise people will find fault. The people of Charters Towers have found fault, and I think they were perfectly right in doing so.

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson) said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. gentleman has not put the case fairly before the House. He has accused the Premier of having sent a telegram warning people from investing in mines in Queensland, but that is not what the Government have done. The action of the Government was a perfectly proper one. It instructed the Agent-General to see that the British public were cautioned as to the character of the investments in which they invested their capital—that they should make inquiries, and satisfy themselves. I do not think there will be a single dissident from the opinion that it would be extremely undesirable to see a general mania set in in the British money market for the investment of money in the mines of Queensland. When such manias do set in a large number of bogus investments are sure to be offered, and the result to the colony would be extremely disastrous if an indiscriminate rush for investments in mines in Queensland or any other colony were to set in, because a large amount of capital would be locked up, and confidence in the prosperity and greatness of the mining industry would be lost. I think that the action taken by the Premier is one that will tend to maintain the confidence of the British investing public, not only in Queensland mines, but in all other Queensland investments which may be offered from time to time; and I am strongly of opinion that where investments of this class are

likely to grow into abuse, and where the ignorant and unwary are likely to be led astray, it is the duty of the Government to sound such a warning note as would cause investors to institute such inquiries as are necessary and expedient to guard against the acts of unscrupulous persons. It would be perfectly impossible for the Premier or Government to point out which are the good investments and which are not, because, as the hon. member for Townsville has said, it requires a large amount of exploration and a large amount of expenditure to test different mines, and what might be considered bogus mines to-day might turn out in the future to be valuable properties. At the same time I think it would be highly undesirable that an indiscriminate rush for mining properties in Queensland should take place, and I am sure the confidence of the British public in Queensland mines will not be in any way limited or restricted by the mere fact of the Government having conveyed a timely note of warning, which I am confident the Agent-General in London will make judicious use of, and which will have the effect of causing investors to exercise a certain amount of caution before embarking in these enterprises.

Mr. W. BROOKES said: Mr. Speaker,—I confess to feeling a surprise that the action of the Government should be found fault with at all. The facts of the case are briefly these: That a telegram appears from which we all know that a disposition has set in in London to speculate in Queensland gold-mines. It is said that a certain mine called Mount Morgan West has been floated with a capital of £200,000. Then we hear that the Government have sent word to the Agent-General that people had better be cautious in what they are doing. Now, I really do think, Mr. Speaker, that the Opposition ought rather to favour the action of the Government than blame them for what they have done. I quite agree that the Government did perfectly right, and a great deal of what has been said about the uncertainty of mining really does not bear upon the matter. Indeed, so far as the remarks of the hon. member for Kennedy, Mr. Lissner, went, they would go to greatly justify the Government in sending this telegram. If he, having lived on his property for many years, does not know his right hand from his left, how much less do the people in London know, and how much more easily can they be imposed upon? Don't we know that in London there are always plenty of people who have not got a farthing of their own, and who trade in these companies—these unreal and fictitious companies? They can get dukes to head the list of directors, and of other worn-out members of the aristocracy and guinea-pigs, no end, while from their inception to their end these companies are frauds. Now, the same thing occurred in connection with Indian mines that promises to happen here, and a great many people lost a great deal of money. Precisely the same kind of reports came from India—that the mines were accustomed to show 1 oz. or 2 oz. to the ton on the certificate of a Government officer. The hon. member for Townsville seems to think a great deal of the certificate of a Government officer. Well, I do not, Mr. Speaker. These Government officers can be "had." There is no doubt about that. I am not here aspersing Government officers or assayers, but we know very well that these men know what they are expected to say and they say it, and so it is in the present cases. Why, the history of mining all over the world—in North America, South America, in India, in Spain, in Cornwall—is exactly the same. The history of mining is a very lamentable history of people being defrauded by rogues and vagabonds. There is no mistake about that. That is the literal truth which anyone can gather from reading on the subject, and I do not mean

to say that in Queensland we are without that sort of people. I do not really think so, because when there is the temptation of floating in the English money market a mine for £30,000 or £40,000 a great many people cannot resist the temptation. Although they know, perhaps, that it is an unreal mine, and that the shares are not now worth more than 1s., or 6d., or even 3d., yet they will lay themselves out to float that mine in London for £30,000 or £40,000. If it succeeds, then they consider that they have done a very smart thing. I consider that the Government have acted very wisely; but it does not follow that they would act wisely if they were to name a number of mines. That does not fall within the functions of Government, and it is unreasonable to ask the Government to do it. The Government have done their duty when they warn the people of England through the Agent-General. There are a number of people in England who have a little money on which they can barely live—a few thousands from which perhaps they derive an income of £100 or £150 a year—clergymen's widows, unprotected single ladies, and officers' widows. All these people jump at any prospect of getting 5 or 6 per cent. for their money instead of 2 or 3 per cent., as the case may be. There is always a standing crop of these people—if I may use the expression—willing to double their income by what seems to give a fair promise of doing so; and to meet this supply of credulous persons there is a corresponding number of rogues and vagabonds, real scoundrels, who will stick at nothing, pocket their money, and then leave them ruined without redress. If the Government can do anything to prevent Queensland being associated with such roguish speculators, then I think it is their bounden duty to do so. I am certain that no one can blame the Queensland Government for what they have done, and we may be quite sure that they will not go further and name any particular mines. Their action will have this good effect—that any prospectus which appears in the London newspapers will be looked at very carefully; it will be suspected, to begin with, and will not be ventured in unless it is thoroughly endorsed. Why, Mr. Speaker, do not we know—at least I know—perhaps hon. members do not know much about it—that an attempt was made to float what is known as the Ida mine on the Hodgkinson. To my mind it was simply a plot to put the mine on the English market. When it was inspected it was shown to be a mere band-box—only it differed from a band-box in this respect, that it was full of water. There was as much gold in it as in an empty band-box, and yet very careful and well-defined steps were being taken to float that mine: that was done under our own eyes. Now, when we consider how absolutely unprotected the people in England are against the representations that come from here, I can only say that I quite endorse the action of the Government, and consider that it redounds to their credit and also to the credit of the colony. It shows, to a certain extent, that the people in Queensland as a rule do not wish that anyone should plunder credulous and gullible people in England.

Mr. KATIES said: Mr. Speaker,—In reference to this matter I entirely endorse what the hon. the Premier has done; it will give confidence to the people at home, and show that the people of Queensland do not wish that anybody should lose money in bogus speculations and bogus mines. But that is not my object in rising to speak on this motion for adjournment. I wish to bring before the House something extraordinary that happened in Toowoomba last week. Many strange things are done in Toowoomba, Mr. Speaker, but this affair is so extraordinary that I cannot allow it to pass without calling your attention and the attention of this House to it.

Mr. STEVENSON: Let one subject be finished before you commence another.

Mr. KATES: I am perfectly justified on a motion for adjournment in saying what I like.

Mr. STEVENSON: We know that; but it would be better to finish the other question first.

Mr. KATES: Let the other come afterwards.

The PREMIER: No; let us have business afterwards.

Mr. KATES: What I have to say will not take up much time; and I think that on a motion for adjournment any member has a right to bring any question before the House in connection with the welfare of the country. I find in one of the Toowoomba papers, Mr. Speaker, that a deputation composed of members of the Chamber of Commerce waited upon certain members connected with the other Chamber of Parliament with this object:—

“A deputation from the Chamber of Commerce waited upon the Hons. F. H. Holberton, F. T. Gregory, J. Taylor, G. King, J. F. McDougall, the members of the Upper House residing in the district, yesterday, asking them to use their influence against the Warwick to St. George line when it came before the Council. We understand that one and all the councillors pledged themselves to vote against the measure.”

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KATES: Hon. members may say “Hear, hear,” but I say it is a most improper thing. I call it indecent, Mr. Speaker, for members of the other Chamber, before a select committee was appointed—before hearing any arguments or any of the evidence which may be brought forward—to prejudice the case, and pledge themselves, one and all, to vote against this St. George line. We in Warwick like fair play; we are not accustomed to underhand work; and I think it would have been better if these gentlemen had waited till they had heard the evidence and the arguments, and then they could have formed their own opinion and voted for or against the line. I consider it my duty to bring this matter before the House, in order to let the country know that if this St. George line is thrown out it will have been by means of these gentlemen who have prejudged the case. I hope the good sense and patriotism of the other gentlemen connected with that Chamber will defeat the intention of those who have pledged themselves to vote against the construction of that line. While speaking on this subject, I should like to correct a few misstatements that were made here when the St. George line was before the Committee. One of the speakers—I think it was yourself, Mr. Speaker—said there were only 1,100 souls between Warwick and St. George. I find, looking at the “Australian Handbook,” that there are 3,500.

Mr. STEVENSON: What are they—black-fellows?

Mr. KATES: The following are the correct figures:—Sandy Creek, 600—

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Why don't you give us the official figures from the census returns?

Mr. KATES: I know the hon. member does not like to hear these figures, but I will give them as they appear in the “Australian Handbook.”

Mr. MURPHY: I rise to a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The other night you stopped a member because he was referring to a previous debate during the same session. According to your ruling on that occasion, I think the hon. member for Darling Downs is entirely out of order.

The SPEAKER: According to the ruling I gave on that occasion, which was based on a well-known Standing Order—that no member

shall allude to any debate of the same session—the hon. member is entirely out of order in referring to a debate which took place the other day. The hon. member for Kennedy, in his speech, scarcely referred to the previous debate; he took a much wider field, and thus kept within the rules of the House. But the hon. member for Darling Downs is quite out of order in referring to a debate which took place on a previous occasion, and which was then closed.

Mr. KATES: I hope your ruling in this case, Mr. Speaker, is not on a par with your hostility to this St. George line.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Order, order! Chair, chair!

The SPEAKER: I must appeal to the House for protection from such a gross insult. As far as my personal wishes are concerned, I should be very happy to hear what the hon. member has to say; but the Standing Order on the subject is very clear, and it is scarcely just to charge the Chair with partiality when the Standing Order and the practice of Parliament are so clear on the point.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles) said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to a point of order. This is the first occasion on which any objection has been taken to a member speaking on any question whatever on a motion for the adjournment of the House. It may be, sir, that you wish to lay down a fresh rule—and to that I have no objection—but I know that ever since I have been a member of the House, a period of twenty-two years, it has been the practice, on a motion for the adjournment of the House, that any member can refer to any question he likes. I am not prepared to say that that is the correct thing to do, but it has been the practice.

Mr. SCOTT said: Mr. Speaker,—It has not always been the rule. It is a practice that has crept in very much of late—during the last two or three years. There is a distinct Standing Order which says that a member who is not in order cannot put himself in order by moving the adjournment of the House.

The SPEAKER: The Standing Order which bears on this particular question is Standing Order No. 85, which is as follows:—

“No member shall allude to any debate of the same session upon a question or Bill not being then under discussion; except by the indulgence of the House for personal explanation.”

If it were possible for me to do so at the moment, I could quote to the House the ruling of the first Speaker, Mr. Gilbert Elliott, on this question. He invariably called members to order when they attempted to refer to a debate of the same session. When the hon. member for Barcoo addressed the House, a few evenings ago, I quoted an instance from the House of Commons in 1880 where the same rule was distinctly laid down by Mr. Speaker Brand. So that I have not made any new rule. When a member attempts to violate the Standing Order I am bound to inform the House of it, and to call attention to what is the practice of Parliament on such occasions.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KATES: All I want is to correct the misstatements made during that debate, and it will not take very long to do so. It was a mistake to say that the population between Warwick and St. George was only 1,100, when it was actually 3,500. It was also said that the country was not of very much good. Even your own almanac, Mr. Speaker—“Groom's Darling Downs Book Almanac”—speaks of Goondiwindi as being the business centre of a thriving district.

Mr. STEVENSON: As you have given your ruling, Mr. Speaker, it is only respectful to you that it should be deferred to. But the hon. member is going on debating the very thing which you have just ruled out of order.

The SPEAKER: I am entirely in the hands of the House. I have already ruled the hon. member out of order.

Mr. McMASTER said: Mr. Speaker,—I should like to say a word on the question of the mines, and I shall not detain the House many minutes. I am not going into the action of the Chief Secretary with reference to the mines that have been floated in the English market, which the hon. member for Warrego has called bogus companies. It was a very damaging speech the hon. member made in the House the other night, and calculated to impress upon the English public that the colony at large—

Mr. SALKELD: Is the hon. member in order, Mr. Speaker, in referring to the debate that took place the other evening?

The SPEAKER: If the hon. member is referring to a previous debate, of course he is out of order. If he is speaking to the question of the adjournment of the House, as moved by the hon. member for Kennedy, he is in order; but he must confine himself to the observations that have fallen from that hon. member, and not refer to what took place on a previous occasion.

Mr. McMASTER: My object in speaking is to refer to some of the speeches made on the previous occasion, as reported in *Hansard*. If I cannot do that I will sit down.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is not allowed by the rules of the House to do so.

Mr. McMASTER: Then I will shut up.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I shall endeavour, as far as possible, to confine myself to the remarks made by the hon. member for Kennedy and to the speeches made in relation thereto by other hon. members. I do not think there is any member of the House who would blame any Government for attempting, by every fair and reasonable means, to prevent the British public from being gulled and made victims by unscrupulous speculators either in this colony or out of it. But the danger that I perceive is, that a Government may go so far as to name particular mines, and to state, as I understand has been stated, that those mines are not known in Queensland. I interjected, "By the Government." The hon. gentleman corrected me by saying, "No; not known in Queensland." Now, sir, it has been shown by the paper the hon. member for Kennedy quoted from just now that one of these particular mines we understood the Chief Secretary to refer to in the telegram sent to the Agent-General must have been known in Queensland, because it is quoted as known by a leading paper in Victoria, and was reported upon, if that paper is correct, by a gold warden of this colony. That being so, I was not quite in error when I interjected that instead of that mine not being known in Queensland it was not known by the Government. There is one difficulty in regard to sending home telegrams with respect to particular mines. Of course it is impossible for the Government, as the hon. the Treasurer has pointed out, to be responsible for all the mining companies that may be floated or attempted to be floated in England. Neither could they be held answerable for companies which they had every reason to believe were not bogus companies, but in connection with which very little information has been obtained by the Government or anyone else, and

which are just as unsafe to invest in as those which are known to be bad. The Government, of course, cannot take any action in regard to them so as to protect the British public. But the great danger I see is that mines which are known to be perfectly sound and good properties, and which would probably be placed on the market here for £20,000, are placed on the market in England for £250,000 or something like that. I say that is just as much a swindle as a bogus company. Of course the British public cannot be protected in every respect; they must be guided by their own judgment and depend upon that to a great extent, if they do not wish to lose their money. Everybody knows that there is a great amount of risk in gold-mining—in mining of every kind—and it is impossible in all cases to protect those who have very little knowledge of the subject, and are ready to risk their money in speculations of that kind, because they will not use ordinary precautions to protect themselves. For my own part, I think that when the Government telegraphed to caution the English public in investing in any particular mine they placed themselves in a very difficult position, because if they do that with regard to one, unless they are prepared to say absolutely they are bogus mines, the Agent-General may be asked, as he would have a perfect right to be asked by those interested in such matters, whether any other gold-mines on the market might be taken as good or not, and also if the price asked was a fair one. Of course it is impossible to prevent even people in the colony from going into bogus concerns. When a mania arises, whether in gold-mining or anything else, people go to it like miners to a gold rush, determined to risk a good deal in the hope of large gain. I do not say that one word of blame should attach to the Government for giving the British public fair warning upon this subject.

Mr. DONALDSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I crave the indulgence of the House while I make a personal explanation in regard to this matter. My object in bringing it before the House the other evening was not with the intention of injuring any particular gold-mining company. I carefully avoided that, and while referring to one company that had been floated, I said there were two others in regard to which I should like to get some information, and I thought it would be the duty of the Government to send home a warning note to the British public on the subject. We all know the great risk there is in all mining concerns at any time. Even in the colonies, when gold-mines are only a few hundred miles off, people will rush after them, and unfortunately make bad speculations, although they have opportunities of obtaining information; and how much more great will the danger be in the old country where it is impossible to get reliable information? The only persons from whom information can be got are interested parties who will paint the mine in glowing terms in order to deceive the public. I therefore think the Government did quite right in sending home the telegram on that occasion, and I only hope that on any future occasion, when a mine that is not sufficiently well known here is attempted to be floated in England, they will not shirk the responsibility of sending home telegrams warning British investors. If any good mining venture is put upon the colonial market it will be readily taken up; anything good and legitimate is bound to be taken up here. I admit that there is more money in the old country, and that it is very desirable that a good deal of it should be brought out for the purpose of developing our mines; but do not let us get the discredit of having bogus companies which are bound to do the colony injury. I think I only did my duty in bringing the matter forward, because

it is not possible for people at home to get information that can be got in the colonies. Here we can always get reliable information, or, at all events, information sufficient to guide us as to whether it is desirable to invest in a mine or not. Of course, new mines are always a matter of speculation, but there are others that are well known, and of which great hopes are entertained as to the future. Even then, however, investors frequently lose money, and the effect of floating bogus companies cannot but be injurious to the colony. One of the companies that has been floated I venture to say they would not get £5 for in the colony, and yet it had been floated for £250,000, so that somebody will benefit largely by it. I believe it is the name that has caused it to realise so much. I think that when the Government know a bogus company, or one which they do not think legitimate, is about to be floated in the English market they should sound a note of warning to the Agent-General, who, I have every reason to believe, will use the information properly. For my own part I should like to see British money introduced to develop our mines, but we are only doing our duty, and can do no harm, by trying to prevent bogus companies from being floated.

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—If the discussion with respect to these mining telegrams has closed, I wish to take advantage of the motion for adjournment to refer to the excessive amount of Government advertising that has been going on in the Press, and in accordance with your ruling, sir, I shall not in any way refer to a previous debate. But I wish to elicit some information from the Colonial Secretary on the subject. Hon. members are aware that it was understood that the electoral rolls were to be published once in all papers circulating in the electoral district, but for some reason or other that rule has been departed from to a very great extent; to such an extent as will involve the Treasurer in very large, and I think unnecessary, expenditure of public money. I have taken the trouble to analyse some of the advertisements and I will state what I have found. I find that the Stanley electoral roll, instead of being advertised merely in one paper circulating in that locality, has been advertised in three that I know of; it may have been advertised in the Ipswich papers, but of that I have at present no cognisance. It has been advertised in the *Zeitung*, the *Evangelical Standard*, and the *Leader*. I do not know if these papers have any particular circulation in that electorate. With regard to the electorate of the Darling Downs, in addition, probably, to papers published in that particular electorate, the roll has been advertised in two papers—namely, the *Zeitung* and the *Evangelical Standard*. The Bundamba electoral roll has been advertised in the *Zeitung*, the *Evangelical Standard*, and the *Leader*. But the particular advertising plum, if I may call it so, that all the papers seemed to aim at getting, has been the Enoggera electoral roll, which involves an expenditure of something like £120 in its publication. Each paper advertising the Enoggera electoral roll receives an amount of from £110 to £120, so far as I can ascertain by measuring the space occupied by the advertisement. Naturally, such a very rich plum as that has received a considerable amount of attention from different newspapers in the metropolis and the vicinity. That electoral roll appears in no less than nine papers—the *Evangelical Standard*, *Zeitung*, *Southern World*, *Courier*, *Telegraph*, *Observer*, *Moreton Mail*, *Sandgate Directory*, and *The Planter and Farmer*.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Hear, hear!

Mr. BLACK: Now, Mr. Speaker, that is £1,000 at the very lowest estimate which advertising the Enoggera electoral roll will cost the country, whereas the Act provides that it shall be advertised in one paper. It does not say in one paper only, but there is no necessity for any further expenditure than say £110 or £120, and £1,000 has been unnecessarily expended by the Government in publishing that one electoral roll of Enoggera. Then the Moreton electoral roll has been published in the *Evangelical Standard*, *Southern World*, *Courier*, *Telegraph*, *Observer*, *Moreton Mail*, *Sandgate Directory*, and *The Planter and Farmer*. The Fassifern electoral roll has been published in the *Leader*, the *Southern World*, and *The Planter and Farmer*, besides possibly in the Ipswich papers, which I have had no opportunity of consulting. The Bulimba electoral roll has been published in the *Evangelical Standard*, *Zeitung*, *Leader*, *Southern World*, *Courier*, *Telegraph*, *Observer*, *Sandgate Directory*, and *The Planter and Farmer*. The Planter and Farmer appears to be a specially favourite paper, for what reason I am unable to say. I will not refer, Mr. Speaker, to a previous debate, but I am credibly informed that the gentleman who was supposed to own that paper has ceased his connection with it for several months, and therefore any suspicion that there was any attempt to buy that paper because of the antagonism of the editor to the policy of the Government rather falls to the ground. The gentleman who was supposed to have such a determined antagonism to the Government—I refer to Mr. Thorne—has for some months ceased to have any connection with that paper. Then we come to the Mulgrave electorate—that is the Bundaberg electorate. Well, I think we should naturally suppose that there was no necessity for any paper down here to publish the Mulgrave electoral roll up in Bundaberg. But we find that the *Zeitung* publishes that roll for some unknown reason which very likely the Colonial Secretary will be able to explain to this House. Then the Logan electoral roll is published in no less than five papers—the *Zeitung*, *Evangelical Standard*, *Leader*, *Southern World*, and *The Planter and Farmer*. The Oxley roll is published in no less than nine papers, the *Zeitung*—another very favourite paper with the Government—the *Evangelical Standard*, *Leader*, *Southern World*, *Courier*, *Telegraph*, *Observer*, *Sandgate Directory*, and *The Planter and Farmer*. But the electoral roll that one would naturally expect to have seen given a considerable circulation to—namely, the Rosewood electoral roll—an electorate containing a large number of Germans—has not, I am sorry to say, received it, and I would like some explanation from the hon. member for Rosewood about it. Only one paper has published it, and that is the *Leader*—a paper that in all probability never gets into the district; while the German paper, which we would naturally expect to have had it rather than all the other electoral rolls, has actually not got the roll of that electorate where Germans certainly predominate. I think it must have been an oversight, and it is very likely, when the attention of the Government has been drawn to it, that we shall see some means taken to have that roll circulated in this particular district. The electoral roll for Aubigny, for some unintelligible reason, is printed in one paper only, and that is the *Evangelical Standard*. I would like the member for Aubigny to give some explanation why this district is to a certain extent left out in the cold, for I do not think that paper has a very large circulation in Aubigny. The Ipswich roll, in addition probably to the local papers, is circulated in the *Leader*. The South Brisbane electoral roll is circulated in five papers—the *Southern World*, *Courier*,

Telegraph, Observer, The Planter and Farmer. The North Brisbane roll is circulated in five papers—the *Southern World, Courier, Telegraph, Observer, The Planter and Farmer.* The *Planter and Farmer* certainly has the pickings—no doubt about that, for some reason. The Valley electoral roll is circulated in six papers—the *Southern World, Courier, Telegraph, Observer, Valley Vindicator, and The Planter and Farmer.* Now, with regard to the *Valley Vindicator*, that is the only paper I have come across in which that insertion can be justified. It is a paper circulated in the Valley, and it has only one electoral roll—namely, its own. I have no objection to its being printed in that paper, although the cost is something like £50. Now, I believe that the Colonial Secretary will be able to give some information to the House as to whether the figures I have referred to are correct. I think that, so far as I can judge, the expense of advertising in the papers I have referred to will be about £2,500, and I have no hesitation in saying that £500 would have been quite sufficient for the purpose, and that, certainly, £2,000 is a reckless waste—an unnecessary waste of public money bestowed for a purpose that I am unable to arrive at at present. But I must say that at the present time such an unnecessary and wilful waste of the public money is most reprehensible on the part of the Government, the finances of which are at present in a very depressed state.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. B. B. Moreton) said : Mr. Speaker,—Since I addressed the House on this subject last week I have received a report from the Government Printer as to the probable cost of advertising the quarterly rolls for this year, but I have not yet been able to ascertain the authorities upon which the advertisements were inserted in the different papers. That can only be obtained when the vouchers are sent in, and that will be very shortly, I believe. The total cost of advertising in the whole colony, the Government Printer has told me, will be something under £3,000.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : The North will not get much of that.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : That is all I know about the matter at the present time. There are some accounts, such as that of *The Planter and Farmer*, which will be very minutely scrutinised, and I hear that they can be cut down considerably on account of some method in which the advertisements have been inserted in the paper.

Mr. BLACK : The account for that journal is £1,050 at present.

Mr. NORTON : Who authorised all the insertions?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : I cannot say now, but when the vouchers come in the authorities for the expenditure will accompany them, and until then I cannot give that information. The bulk of the advertisements were certainly authorised by the clerks of petty sessions under the Act.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : The Act says the advertisements must be inserted in one paper.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : As far as I can ascertain, the bulk of them have been authorised by clerks of petty sessions, and I believe there is one place at the least where the clerk of petty sessions has put them in two papers. But, as I have already intimated, until the vouchers come in it cannot be ascertained who authorised the insertion of the advertisements. The Government Printer informs me that he thinks the cost for the whole colony will be under £3,000, and that probably it will be less by cutting down some items which

he thinks can be justly cut down. Of course the Government Printer has arrived at his estimate in the same manner as the hon. member for Mackay has arrived at his—namely, by measuring the advertisements in the different newspapers sent to his office according to law. When the vouchers come in the whole thing will be more fully considered, and it will be explained who gave the authorities. I know for certain that nearly two-thirds of the whole have been authorised by clerks of petty sessions. It is very well known to hon. members that there has been great activity indeed in collecting names for the rolls this year, and in consequence of that the advertisements have assumed a larger size than the Government anticipated they would assume.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said : Mr. Speaker,—It seems to me that the hon. member for Mackay is rather ignorant of the powers of the Press and the sort of way in which they are capable of extorting blackmail from the Government of the day whoever they may be. I really hope myself that during the recess the Government will find some way of making a general reduction in the cost of advertising to the country. Here we have £12,500 spent on advertisements during the last twelve months, and we have now additional advertising for electoral rolls under a particular Act of Parliament. We have a Government Printing Office which is carried on at great expense, and there is no reason that I can see why the electoral rolls should not be printed in that office, and distributed throughout the electoral districts of the colony. I think every elector should have a roll, and I am perfectly certain that the rolls could be circulated in that way for less money than it would cost for advertising them in half-a-dozen different papers, as has been done this time.

Mr. KATES said : Mr. Speaker,—I rise to a point of order. The hon. member is referring to a previous debate in this House.

The SPEAKER : I think the hon. member for Cook is quite in order.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL : I object to this interruption. I made no reference whatever to any previous debate, and am not in the least likely to do so. I am just taking advantage of this opportunity to impress upon the House and upon the Ministry the necessity of curtailing in some degree this license of the Press. I do not in the least object to the liberty of the Press, but I do object to its license, and having it all its own road and aspiring to become the first estate instead of being contented with the estate that is generally assigned to it—namely, the fourth estate. The Press are generally pretty well masters of the situation, and they are past masters in the art of extortion, as I well know. They have a considerable amount of power, and are not at all lax in the way they use it. Their wares are carted about the colony at the expense of the taxpayer. There is a considerable deficiency in the Post Office accounts, mainly caused, I believe, through carrying immense bales of newspapers throughout the country at the expense of the general taxpayer. Why should not grocers or dealers in any other commodity besides newspapers—wool-growers, for instance—have their goods carted about for nothing as well as the goods of newspaper proprietors? I take considerable exception to the way in which they enjoy facilities which are granted to nobody else, when they are at the same time allowed to denounce members of this House, more especially anyone who advocates any sort of protection to any other industry in the colony. They enjoy a most extravagant amount of protection; they levy blackmail on every occasion when they have the opportunity, and try to rule every individual member of this House with a rod of iron. I myself object to

being ruled by any newspaper men. I have nine in my constituency, but I decline to bow down to them and worship them. I would rather resign my seat and allow the newspaper men to "boss" the colony, as far as I am concerned, than I would give up my own ideas or accommodate them to what course they choose to advise, more especially the individual who engineers the triple newspaper which calls itself the leading journal of the colony, and which comes in here, in this return which I hold in my hand, under three different heads, for a subsidy of £1,500 a year, besides having its goods and produce carted all over the colony for nothing. I do hope the Government will see their way to alter the present system of advertising during the recess.

Mr. STEVENSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I think it is rather inconvenient to bring up two or three different subjects under the same motion for adjournment as has been done this afternoon, because a member who has already spoken on one question cannot speak again, when another matter is introduced. I think it would have been much better if the hon. member for Darling Downs had left the matter he has brought forward for another occasion. However, I would like to say a word or two regarding the telegrams about floating mining companies. I agree with some hon. members that it would be a very bad thing for the colony if anything in the way of a bogus mine were floated at home for a large sum; but I must say that the position taken up by the Government is a very invidious one, and one that will be a very bad thing indeed for this colony; and unless they name the mines which they referred to in the telegram, it will be very unfair to those people who hold good mines and wish to float them at home. I do not want to see anything done to prevent money coming into the country in a legitimate way; at the same time I do not want to see it introduced by illegitimate or improper means. But I must say that it is wrong for the Chief Secretary to take up the position of guardian of the purse of the British public. He has quite enough to do to look after the purse of the colony; and instead of sending telegrams home, if he would look after the sums spent in reckless advertising it would be more to the purpose. It is disgraceful the money that has been spent, not only in this instance, but in advertising generally throughout the colony. Money has been thrown away in the most reckless manner, and it is done in such a way that even Ministers of the Crown do not understand how it is done, for since this matter was brought up before the Colonial Secretary he has not been able to find out who authorised those advertisements. I never heard of such a thing, Mr. Speaker. I will guarantee that if I were a Minister of the Crown, in the Colonial Secretary's Office, I would find it out in ten minutes. It does not show that he has taken much interest in the matter. Such an expenditure ought to have been looked into most carefully before this; and I think there ought to be some new style of advertising. Instead of subsidising newspapers as we are doing at the present time, if these advertisements were published in the *Government Gazette*, and presented to every elector in the colony, it would be much cheaper. The electoral roll of one district is published in nine or ten different newspapers, and the *Evangelical Standard* seems to have got the whole of them, though I do not believe a dozen copies of it circulate outside Brisbane. The same may be said of *The Planter and Farmer*. I hope something will be done before long to remedy the present reckless expenditure of money in the matter of advertising.

Mr. ANNEAR said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to say a few words in reference to advertising.

Surely hon. members do not forget that last session we passed a new Elections Act, and that one of the clauses states that fresh applications must be sent in by every elector. Men who have been on the rolls for twenty years had to send in fresh applications, and that has caused a large amount of work—much larger than will take place again—until we pass another Elections Act; and I do not think that in a colony like this we can give too great publicity in the matter of elections. We profess to see that every man who has the proper status shall have an opportunity of placing his name on the roll, and I think the money spent in advertising the names of people who claim to have the right to appear on the roll, if properly spent, is money well spent. As regards the publication of the Mulgrave roll in the *Zeitung* newspaper in Brisbane, I think that was very proper. I am not sure whether the Maryborough roll or the Gympie roll was published in that paper or not, but I know that in the three electorates I have mentioned there are many Germans who cannot speak English, and I think the least that can be done is to advertise their names in a paper which will be sent to them and which they can read. I feel sure that no exception will be taken on that score. Our German colonists at the present time are some of our best colonists. What have we seen in Brisbane of late? We do not see many Germans among the unemployed, and they are not heard asking charity from any other class; and being all such good colonists, I think the Government are quite right, whoever the officers may be, in publishing the electoral rolls in a paper they can understand.

Mr. BLACK: They are published in English.

Mr. ANNEAR: Not in the *Zeitung*.

Mr. BLACK: Yes.

Mr. MURPHY said: Mr. Speaker,—The rolls are published in English in the *Zeitung*. I looked through it to-day with the hon. member for Mackay, and I can inform hon. members that even the headings are published in English, and that not a single name, word, or line is published in German. Now, what is the use of publishing the rolls in English in a German newspaper? Not the least in the world. It looks very much as if there was some underhand work in the Colonial Secretary's Office with regard to advertising. Otherwise it was given to those newspapers with some special object. What that object can be I do not care to say; but it certainly looks to me, and I know it looks to the general public, as if there was something hidden; and the sooner the Colonial Secretary gets to the bottom of the matter the better it will be for himself and for the Government.

Mr. LISSNER, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker,—I notice that a good many hon. members have taken advantage of my motion for adjournment to the fullest extent, and I hardly know where I started. With regard to printing the names of electors in English, as he called it, in a German newspaper, I may just as well inform the hon. member for Barcoo that most Germans can read the Roman letters as well as the Gothic, and I think there is no damage done so far as names being printed in Roman letters in the German *Zeitung* is concerned. In regard to the matter I brought before the House, I thought it my duty, as a member of a very large mining community that has struggled for many years, and is now considered of some importance as a mining community in Queensland, to take their part and warn hon. members of this House, as well as the Government, not to be too officious in interfering with their industry. I do not want to see any man in the colony or outside of it taken advantage of or

gulled in buying shares in gold-mines; but there is always a way of getting all the information required for investors, and I trust the Government will give all the information they are asked for by people in the colony or outside; but when they are not asked they have no right to say anything about it. Let people take their chance all round. I have heard during the discussion remarks about there being rogues and vagabonds among the miners, and that some of them are very shady; but I may say that there are people among other classes who are quite as shady; and I trust that those who speculate in mining and those who do not speculate in mining will give it fair play and not use harsh terms towards the industry, such as "wild cats," "bogus companies," and other such terms. I beg to withdraw the motion.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion be withdrawn?

The PREMIER: No.

Question put and negatived.

TRADE UNIONS BILL.

THIRD READING.

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

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I said on Friday last that the Government proposed to take into consideration on Tuesday the message of the Legislative Council with reference to the Local Government Act Amendment Bill before taking the Orders of the Day. I will therefore move that the House now pass to the Orders of the Day.

Question put and passed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S MESSAGE OF 27TH INSTANT.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House went into committee to consider the Legislative Council's message.

The PREMIER said the amendment made by the Legislative Council in the Bill, as already pointed out, was the addition of the words "and not otherwise" to the 8th clause. He did not know why the amendment was made. It had no meaning, but if it had, it would be an infringement of the functions of that House in respect to matters relating to money. On the 27th October—last Wednesday—the Legislative Assembly had the matter under consideration, and the Bill was then returned to the Council with a message intimating that the amendment had been disagreed to for the following reasons:—

"Because the addition of the words proposed to be added is unnecessary, inasmuch as the 1st paragraph of the clause already provides that the purposes mentioned in the clause are the only purposes to which revenue derived from waterworks may be applied. The repetition of the words 'and not otherwise' as proposed appears, therefore, not to add any distinctness to the exclusive definition of those purposes, but rather to obscure the meaning of the clause.

"The Legislative Assembly have offered these reasons without waiving their right to insist upon the reason that the proposed amendment, if it had any effect upon the meaning of the clause, would be a manifest infringement of the privileges of the Legislative Assembly, as they have been always claimed by this House, and have lately been declared by the Privy Council in a case submitted at the joint request of both Houses."

Well, he had hoped that upon receipt of the message the Council would either not have insisted on the amendment or would have pointed out that they did not desire to infringe the privileges of that House, because he had been very reluctant to believe that after the solemn decision of the Privy Council arrived at after the joint request of both Houses the Legislative Council would so ostentatiously endeavour to infringe the privileges of the Assembly as they apparently intended to do. However, that hope of his was disappointed, for the Council returned the Bill to the House with a message stating that they insisted on the amendment, because—

"The amendment is necessary to make the clause complete, and prevent the undue diversion of funds derived from water rates to purposes unconnected with water supply."

That was a matter with which the Legislative Council had no concern whatever; so that from their message it could only be inferred that they had deliberately attempted to pick a quarrel, as they did last year over the same Bill; but the curious part of it was that, although they had endeavoured to interfere with that which was exclusively the business of the Legislative Assembly, they had not succeeded in doing so, because the words which had been added were absolutely meaningless and had no operation whatever. He had never known an instance where such a curious combination of circumstances had occurred—where the Legislative Council, having deliberately attempted to interfere with the privileges of the House, had totally failed to do so. Under those circumstances he thought the proper thing to do—the Council not having succeeded in doing any harm—was not to insist upon the disagreement, but to point out to the Council the reasons why the amendment was accepted, without waiving any of the privileges of the Assembly. In order to assist hon. members he had had circulated a draft of the message which he proposed to send to the other Chamber. If approved of, the message would read thus:—

The Legislative Assembly have received with much concern and regret the message of the Legislative Council insisting upon their amendment in clause 8 of the Local Government Act Amendment Bill, on the ground that the amendment is necessary to make the clause complete and prevent the undue diversion of funds derived from water rates for purposes unconnected with water supply. From this message the Legislative Assembly can only understand that the Legislative Council insist upon the amendment as being a material alteration of the clause.

The Legislative Assembly have already by their message of 27th October pointed out that the proposed amendment, if it had any effect upon the meaning of the clause, would be a manifest infringement of their privileges, as they have been always claimed by this House, and have lately been declared by the Privy Council in a case submitted at the request of both Houses.

If, therefore, the effect of the amendment were to alter the meaning of the clause, as intended by the Legislative Council, it would be manifestly impossible for the Legislative Assembly to agree to it. But, considering that, as pointed out in the Legislative Assembly's previous message, the provisions of the clause, as passed by the Legislative Assembly, distinctly and completely define the only purposes to which the revenue derived by municipalities from waterworks can be applied, and that the additional words do not in any way affect that definition or alter the meaning of the clause, but are merely surplusage, it appears that the infringement of the privileges of the Legislative Assembly which the Legislative Council's message indicates to have been contemplated has not been actually effected.

The Legislative Assembly, while deeply regretting the action of the Legislative Council, and especially the reasons assigned for that action, are not disposed to lay aside, merely on the ground of an unfulfilled intention to invade their privileges, a Bill of so much importance to the public at large. They do not, therefore, insist on

their disagreement to the amendment of the Legislative Council; but desire it to be understood that by this action they in no way waive their undoubted privileges.

After full consideration, the Government thought that that was the best way to deal with the matter, and he therefore moved that the Assembly do not insist upon their disagreement.

Mr. NORTON said the leader of the Government seemed to attribute to members of the Legislative Council a distinct desire to infringe the rights of the Assembly. He did not agree with the hon. member in that; he thought the message returned by the Legislative Council might be rather attributed to the hon. member's own remarks when the subject was before them previously, in which he spoke exceedingly strongly of the action of the Legislative Council.

The PREMIER: That could not have been so, because they had not heard them or seen them.

Mr. NORTON said it was easy for hon. members in the other House to ascertain what had passed in the Assembly without seeing *Hansard*. There were generally one or two members sitting on the benches outside the bar, so that it was by no means impossible for them to know what had taken place. He thought it probable that the members of the other Chamber were somewhat irritated by the remarks which had fallen from the hon. gentleman, and therefore did not give that consideration to the Assembly's message which it would otherwise have received. The hon. member, while attributing those motives to the other Chamber, had shown good reason for believing that they did not exist, when he pointed out that the addition of the words did not alter the meaning of the clause. He (Mr. Norton) thought that if the other Chamber desired to infringe the rights of the Assembly they would take very good care to do it in such a form that there would be no mistake whatever about their intention. The probability seemed to be that the words were added because of what looked something like a discrepancy between the last clause of the Bill and the 2nd paragraph of the 5th clause. There it provided that the surplus net annual revenue from the waterworks, after paying the annual instalments and all the working expenses, should be deemed to be the revenue of the municipality. It was quite possible that the other Chamber, with a desire to carry out the wish of the Assembly, and provide that the balance should be devoted to the purposes intended by the Assembly, as expressed in the last clause, added the words "and not otherwise" to the clause. That, he thought, was the motive of the other Chamber; but at the same time he thought that if they looked at the matter calmly they would see that the words did not in any sense alter the meaning of the clause. He might say that he had not spoken to any member of the other Chamber on the subject. It was suggested to him outside the House, by a gentleman who had nothing whatever to do with Parliament, that that was a possible explanation, and he (Mr. Norton) thought it was a very probable one.

The PREMIER said he did not think that from what they knew officially of the action of the other Chamber they could attribute it to any such cause as that suggested by the hon. member. When he (the Premier) was speaking on Wednesday last the Upper House was sitting, and the matter was dealt with immediately the message went up from the Assembly. The message they sent back, which was all the Assembly could know officially of their action, seemed to be a direct defiance. It showed plainly that they intended to alter materially

the meaning of the clause. However, they had not succeeded in doing so, and it was not worth while making a quarrel out of it. He did not wish to be understood to mean that he believed all the members of the other House desired to infringe the privileges of the Assembly. He had reason to believe that a great many of them did not, and would be very reluctant to do anything of the kind; but at the same time he had no hesitation in saying that he believed there were a great many of them who did desire to do it, and who would take every opportunity of trying to do it.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he was not very well up in constitutional law, but it seemed to him that the other Chamber had some ground in the present case. He thought that if the words "and not otherwise" in the 28th line had not been inserted there, but had been inserted by the Chief Secretary himself in the position where the Council had placed them, the clause would have been complete and perfect. It would, in his opinion, have been much better than as it went to the other Chamber. He did not think the action of the Legislative Council was at all interfering with the consolidated revenue or the appropriation of it. He would be as jealous as anyone in guarding the privileges of the Assembly, but he did not wish to see the other Chamber emasculated altogether, and made of no possible use. He had always looked upon them as a very useful check to hasty legislation. He did not see that an amendment like that, which was a purely verbal one, and strictly in accordance with the intention of the clause, should be objected to by the Assembly. For his part he did not take the slightest umbrage at it.

Mr. NORTON said he did not think the amendment was one they should take any offence at. He did not believe it was necessary, because he considered that the words in the 1st paragraph governed all the rest of the clause. He thought the Chief Secretary was unwise in making those charges against members in another place. It had occurred to him, from the way the hon. gentleman had spoken on more than one occasion, that he was not unwilling to pick a quarrel with the other Chamber. He (Mr. Norton) had never referred to the matter before; but he could not help thinking on more than one occasion—in fact on more than two or three occasions—that the strength of the language used by the leader of the Government was not justified by circumstances. Why should they attribute to hon. gentlemen in the other House a desire to infringe the privileges of the Assembly?

The PREMIER: They tell us so formally in the message.

Mr. NORTON said the other House had consented to submit a case to the Privy Council, and that had been decided distinctly against them—so distinctly that no question could be raised on the subject again; and after that he thought they should not be so eager to attribute to hon. gentlemen in the other House a desire to infringe the rights of the Assembly. Instead of attributing improper motives to them, the hon. member ought to seek some other grounds for the action they had taken. He (Mr. Norton) was certainly disposed to do so. As he pointed out, that section did not seem to agree with the 5th section; and although he did not think the words were necessary at the end of the clause, they had no doubt been added to prevent any surplus being diverted to ordinary revenue.

Mr. W. BROOKES said the matter was one of considerable importance, and he should be glad if it could be settled by the Premier and the leader of the Opposition. But some of the remarks that fell from the leader of the Oppo-

sition did not seem to him to be quite in accordance with facts. It was said that the decision of the Privy Council had been accepted as final by the other House, but his reading of the debates that had taken place in that Chamber had not led him to that conclusion. There were gentlemen in the other place, he thought, who did not regard that decision as by any means final—gentlemen who showed a considerable amount of determination on that very matter, as to whether the question referred to the Privy Council was by that decision finally and for ever settled. They thought they saw some way to escape from that decision—so he read what they said. They did not seem to him to attach any reverence to the decision of the Privy Council. But so far as regarded the conduct of the Premier in the matter, he thought they would all agree with the opinion expressed by the highest authorities in England that the Premier's conduct all through that quarrel, if quarrel it could be called—he preferred to call it a misunderstanding—had been in the highest degree dignified and temperate. Looking at all the various surroundings of the case, how easy it was to feel annoyance at what had taken place!

Mr. NORTON: It is easy for both sides to do that.

Mr. W. BROOKES said it was; but the Premier had never shown the slightest sign of retaliation. In the other place he saw that there were certain uneasy elements, and that they would "break out in a fresh place," as was said in the vernacular, as soon as ever they got a chance. He really thought that hon. members, as a House, ought, in standing by their order, not to stand ridiculously on their dignity. There were certain rights and privileges which ought to be inviolable, but they would gain nothing by attaching too much importance to possibly unintentional slights. It would be far better to err in the other direction. The conduct throughout of the Premier and the Speaker had been everything it ought to have been. He could not say as much for the other place. They seemed inclined to pick a quarrel—that he inferred distinctly from what took place last week—and he trusted, now they had shelved a very important measure for six months, that during the interval they would come to a state of sweet reasonableness.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the resolution of the Committee.

The PREMIER moved that the Bill be returned to the Legislative Council with the following message:—

MR. PRESIDING CHAIRMAN,

The Legislative Assembly have received with much concern and regret the message of the Legislative Council insisting upon their amendment in clause 8 of the Local Government Act Amendment Bill, on the ground that the amendment is necessary to make the clause complete and prevent the undue diversion of funds derived from water rates for purposes unconnected with water supply. From this message the Legislative Assembly can only understand that the Legislative Council insist upon the amendment as being a material alteration of the clause.

The Legislative Assembly have already, by their message of 27th October, pointed out that the proposed amendment, if it had any effect upon the meaning of the clause, would be a manifest infringement of their privileges, as they have been always claimed by this House, and have lately been declared by the Privy Council in a case submitted at the request of both Houses.

If, therefore, the effect of the amendment were to alter the meaning of the clause, as intended by the Legislative Council, it would be manifestly impossible for the Legislative Assembly to agree to it. But considering that, as pointed out in the Legislative Assembly's previous message, the provisions of the clause, as passed by the Legislative Assembly, distinctly and completely define the only purposes to which the revenue derived by municipalities from waterworks can

be applied, and that the additional words do not in any way affect that definition or alter the meaning of the clause, but are merely surplusage, it appears that the infringement of the privileges of the Legislative Assembly which the Legislative Council's message indicates to have been contemplated has not been actually effected.

The Legislative Assembly, while deeply regretting the action of the Legislative Council, and especially the reasons assigned for that action, are not disposed to lay aside, merely on the ground of an unfulfilled intention to invade their privileges, a Bill of so much importance to the public at large. They do not, therefore, insist on their disagreement to the amendment of the Legislative Council, but desire it to be understood that by this action they in no way waive their undoubted privileges.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I think it would be well if we were to omit from the 4th paragraph the words "merely on the ground of an unfulfilled intention to invade their privileges."

The PREMIER: They are very good words.

Mr. NORTON: I do not think there is anything to justify them. I have already indicated my reason for believing they are not justified; therefore I submit to the Chief Secretary that, rather than run the risk of provoking a quarrel or any ill-feeling with the other House, it would be advisable to omit those words. I formally move that they be omitted.

The PREMIER said: I think the words ought to form part of the message, sir, the Legislative Council having so ostentatiously set forth their intention. It was pointed out to them by message that their amendment would be a manifest infringement of the privileges of this House, and their message in reply is that they insist upon the amendment because it will have that effect. They say as plainly as possible, "We insist upon the amendment because it is necessary, and because it is an infringement of your privileges." I think, sir, we are bound to notice a matter like that.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the message—put and passed.

Message, as read, put and passed.

MARYBOROUGH TO GAYNDAH RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved—

That the Speaker 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 Maryborough to Gayndah, section No. 1, from 12 miles 21 chains 86 links, on the Maryborough Railway, at Mungarr, to 25 miles 27 chains 50 links, near Clifton, in length 25 miles 75 chains 50 links, as laid upon the table of the House on Tuesday, the 26th ultimo.

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, and the House went into committee accordingly.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed railway from Maryborough to Gayndah, section No. 1, from 12 miles 21 chains 86 links, on the Maryborough Railway, at Mungarr, to 25 miles 27 chains 50 links, near Clifton, in length 25 miles 75 chains 50 links, as laid upon the table of the House on Tuesday, the 26th ultimo.

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, in introducing this motion, he wished to intimate that at the time the Government had their railway policy under consideration they came to the conclusion that it was desirable that railway construction should be introduced into the Wide Bay and Burnett districts. Those were the only two settled districts of the colony that

had made but comparatively little progress, yet they were of vast extent and large resources, and the Government came to the conclusion that in order to bring about a better state of things there they should open up the country by railway communication, more particularly because of its great natural wealth in the shape of agricultural land, timber, and minerals. On those grounds the Government determined to place a sum upon the Loan Estimates for the purpose of opening up that vast extent of valuable country. He might say, at the outset, that he had not been able personally to visit the locality, which he very much regretted, especially as he had promised to do so, but business matters pressed so heavily upon him that he found it impossible to spare the time. However, he had done the next best thing he could do—that was, to endeavour to obtain the very best information possible as to the character of the country the line would pass through. And he was assured that the country was admirably adapted for agricultural purposes and for grazing purposes, and that a large amount of settlement would take place there when the facilities of railway communication were provided. The reason why so much good land there was lying idle was because it was at present inaccessible to market. They all knew very well that agricultural produce could not afford to pay long land haulage, and he was positive that if the line were constructed it would lead to a large amount of close settlement. He had before him a report by Mr. Surveyor Charlton, who was well acquainted with the country, and he described it in the following terms:—

"At the Clifton homestead farm I saw excellent samples of potatoes, maize, lucerne, oats, and other farm produce, a splendid earnest of what may be expected from the rich apple-tree flats on the Munna waters and the Gigoongan and Teebar black soil lands when this line links them to a market.

"Large areas of mineral lands, which appear to be a perfect storehouse of mineral wealth, have been selected in this neighbourhood; and leaving the Clifton pre-emptive at 26½ miles, a large mineral selection is passed through. Boompa Creek is reached at about 27½ miles, and its waters are followed upwards through very good country (apple-tree flats and well-grassed ridges) to the range at 32½ miles dividing the Mary and Burnett waters."

Mr. ADAMS: Whose report is that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was Mr. Charlton's report; he was a licensed surveyor. It was a well-known fact that the Wide Bay and Burnett districts were full of minerals of all descriptions—gold, silver, copper; in fact, there was scarcely any mineral which had not been discovered in them. That district was bound to rise. It was one of the finest timbered districts in the whole of Queensland. Mr. Charlton reported—

"Gigoongan, Glenbarr, Teebar, Clifton, and Boompa are the most suitable for agriculture. These are all situated on the watershed of the Munna Creek, which, heading in the Burnett Range, joins the River Mary at Miva after a south-easterly course about 60 miles."

It was perfectly well known that "flats" were land always very suitable for agricultural purposes. The report went on:—

"The black-soil and apple-tree flats on the Munna, and its large tributaries, Eel, Sandy, and Teebar Creeks, are quite equal in depth and richness of soil to the best of the Burnett country, and being situated on the eastern fall of the Burnett Range receive a larger and more reliable rainfall. Permanent water is never failing in the lagoons and many watercourses with which the country is everywhere intersected.

"The apple-tree flats fringe the banks of Yaroombah and Boompa Creeks, and there is a large area of available scrub land on Clifton Creek, but the long carriage over bad roads necessary to reach a market has hitherto been an effectual bar to selection on these lands for the

purposes of agriculture, although the home farms and orchards at the various stations prove that maize, oats, lucerne, fruit, vegetables, etc., can be grown with the greatest success.

"On the heads of Eel and Sandy Creeks is situated a most extensive pine scrub, and which includes a splendid block of from 15 to 20 square miles of fairly level scrub suitable for agriculture. This scrub, from its great extent, the richness of its soil, the size and quantity of its pine timber, which renders it one of the most important in the district, is included in a State forest reserve."

So far as he had been able to ascertain those statements could be easily verified, and he was perfectly satisfied that when access was given to that country by railway there would be a large settlement in the shape of agricultural, dairy, and grazing farms. It was known to be about the best timbered district almost in existence. Mr. Charlton went on to say:—

"The Mungarr to Gayndah line, as now surveyed, passes through a wide radius of country, as well, and in some cases better, timbered than that described for a distance of over thirty (30) miles. The most heavily timbered of these lands are reserved as State forests and timber reserves—namely, the Myrtle Creek Reserve of about 50 square miles, Stony Creek Reserve of about 60 square miles, Woowoonga Reserve of about 54 square miles, and the Eel and Sandy Creek Reserve of about 70 square miles. A total of about 235 square miles reserved for timber, on most of which there has not yet been a tree cut."

Mr. BLACK said he rose to a point of order. He would like to know whether the information given to the Committee in the document from which the Minister for Works was reading such voluminous extracts was official or otherwise. He did not think the hon. gentleman should read it if it did not bear the impression of the official stamp.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said they were all facts to be found in the records and books of the Lands Department. All those reserves and State forests—

Mr. BLACK said he would like the ruling of the Chairman on the matter.

The CHAIRMAN said it was quite competent for the hon. gentleman to quote from any authority; and if he were doing so he was quite in order.

Mr. BLACK said he would like to ascertain whether the paper bore the stamp of official authority.

Mr. ANNEAR said that for the information of the hon. member for Mackay he might say that Mr. Charlton was a Government surveyor—a gentleman whose ability Mr. Tully, the Surveyor-General, would vouch for.

Mr. ADAMS said there was another thing that he might mention—that the surveyor in question was an employé of a syndicate in Maryborough.

Mr. ANNEAR said that Mr. Charlton was not.

Mr. ADAMS said he had not asked the hon. member for Maryborough. He (Mr. Adams) knew that Mr. Charlton had been employed by a syndicate in Maryborough to give that report. It appeared to him that the Minister for Works was actually afraid to read his own official report, and rather took that one which had been got by the people of Maryborough themselves and was paid for by them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he did not think it was of very much importance whether he read it or not; only he thought hon. members would have been glad to receive the very best information he could give them. Apparently it was too favourable for hon. members opposite, as they wished to find some ways and means of opposing the proposed

railway. But nevertheless it was a known fact that there were 250 square miles of forest land fit for timber-getting purposes. There was no getting over that. The timber-growing in that locality was a great mine of wealth. They were now hauling timber from where the proposed line would go to Tiaro, a distance of 30 miles. That alone showed the necessity, at all events, of endeavouring to do something for the opening up of that extensive country. As he had said before, there was a large quantity of minerals, including gold, silver, and copper; and Mount Shamrock was close to the line. The hon. member for Mackay objected to the line, but he (Mr. Miles) sincerely wished that the Mackay line was as good as that one would be. That hon. member had managed to put the country to the cost of that "white elephant" at Mackay, and thought that nobody else should get any railway facilities. He (the Minister for Works) maintained that the Wide Bay and Burnett districts were teeming with mineral wealth and timber; that they were well adapted for agricultural purposes and for dairy and grazing farming, and that there would be a very large settlement there. Perhaps the hon. gentleman showed his opposition to that line because he thought there was a prospect of having grazing farms in the district and settling people on the land. He was perfectly satisfied, apart from the gold-fields, that the Burnett and Wide Bay districts were rich in minerals of all descriptions. The Chief Engineer, in furnishing his estimate of the cost of that line, stated that—

"The section commences at the Maryborough station on the Maryborough and Gympie Railway at about 12½ miles from Maryborough, and running in a direction a little south of west ends near Clifton, the length being 25 miles 27 chains 50 links. The course of the line is very direct, being only 3 miles in excess of the distance in a straight line between the extreme points. The ruling gradient is 1 in 50, and the minimum radius of curve is 6 chains, with not less than 3 chains of straight between reverse curves. The earthworks are not heavy, and although there is in all a considerable length of bridge work, it is not of a costly description, and the other waterways are comparatively light. The necessary timber for bridges and sleepers can be obtained near the line, and stone suitable for ballast is abundant. Provision is made for stations as follows:—At 9½ miles, Myrtle station, to accommodate a small existing and possibly larger future settlement about there; 25¼ miles, Clifton station, at the end of the section, where timber traffic may be expected and also the traffic to and from Maryborough of the following cattle stations:—Glenbarr, Gigoomgan, Teebar, Clifton, and Boompa. The length of line to construct is 25 miles 27 chains 50 links, and the approximate estimated cost is £101,899, or £4,021 per mile."

The particulars of the cost the engineer gave as follows:—Clearing, £1,267; fencing, £4,055; earthwork, £24,560 15s.; road diversions and level crossings, £898 10s.; bridges, culverts, and drains, £19,034 6s.; permanent way, £34,878 16s. 7d.; station works, £4,140; supervision, £3,801; contingencies, £9,263 10s. 5d.; total, £101,898 18s. The amount of haulage of timber on that line would alone be quite sufficient to keep the rolling-stock in motion, and he was perfectly satisfied that those who used the line would be prepared to pay a fair remuneration for carrying their timber, considering that at the present time they had to haul it by bullocks for a distance of 30 miles. He moved the motion standing in his name.

Mr. NORTON said he thought there were many members on the other side of the Committee who wished to speak on that subject, and who were personally acquainted with the country through which the proposed line would pass. He would like to hear something from the hon. Colonial Secretary, who had lived in the district for many years, and could tell them something about the country.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that in rising to support the motion of his hon. colleague

the Minister for Works, for the construction of a railway from Maryborough to Gayndah, he might state that he believed that was the only instance in which one of the oldest populated districts had remained without any railway communication whatever up to the present day. If he was not mistaken it was settled upon at as early a date as Darling Downs. He believed some of the original settlers came along through Darling Downs to settle on the Burnett very shortly after the first settlers came on to Darling Downs proper. Yet the district had not yet been opened up by means of railway communication. The question was mooted by himself in Parliament in 1874, and also several years before by the then representative of the district, Mr. Edwards. Yet the present was the first time a Government had put before Parliament a proposal to make a railway from Maryborough into that country. He had no doubt that members would have observed on looking at the map that there was a very large area of country through which the line would go in which there was not a single acre alienated. There was a small amount of selection in the Burnett district proper. He was not alluding to the district watered by the Barambah. Along the course of the Burnett proper and its tributaries, both east and west and north, there was a very small acreage taken up and alienated. There were some selections around Gayndah, and there was a selection of 640 acres at Ban Ban and another of 640 acres at Degilbo. But going further up there was no other alienated land except a few country allotments in a small township started some years ago, and the mineral areas about Rawbelle. And then there was no more until they got further up the Burnett, under what was called the Gladstone Range, where, he believed, there were four or five pre-emptions. Beyond that there was no alienated country in that district. They therefore had a district which he was perfectly satisfied they would not get people to settle upon until they made a railway into it. There was a larger quantity of land not alienated in that district than in any other district in the colony. He thought there were nearly 8,000 square miles of country unalienated; and one reason why a railway should be made into the district was to induce people to settle on it. Some railways that had been made in the colony had been constructed to meet the traffic requirements of the suburban districts. Those railways had always been projected with the idea that they would pay immediately, and they should do so; but, whether the proposed line would pay or not at once, he thought it was one that would be supported by the Committee on better grounds than that.

Mr. BLACK called attention to the state of the Committee.

Quorum formed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he must thank the hon. member for drawing attention to the state of the Committee, in order that hon. members might know what they were asked to vote for. As he had said before, some railways had been made for the suburban traffic, but the one now proposed was to go inland, where at present there was no railway, and where there would be no settlement unless they took a railway there. That reason, he thought, was a very strong one for making the line. The railway which the hon. member who led the Opposition would heartily advocate—the line from Bundaberg to Gladstone—the hon. gentleman would, he presumed, support on the ground that it was a defence railway.

Mr. NORTON: Hear, hear!

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that was a very good reason, he dared say, but still that line would not be a paying one immediately, although it might be a prospective one—just as the proposed line would prospectively benefit the country by settling a large population on country well adapted for settlement. The first portion of the line would tap a large timber area, which would immediately pay. When the railway had passed that country and got to the second section, it would approach country suitable for agricultural settlement. He had not the slightest doubt that when the railway advanced towards Gayndah it would be the means of settling a large number of people on land well adapted for the growth of grapes and cereal crops, which could begrown there very well indeed; and he was perfectly certain if a railway were constructed to bring down the produce it would be a paying concern. It would also tap a large mineral district, because the line would pass through country which had been proved to carry more or less mineral. It would go within three-quarters of a mile of Mount Shamrock, where a population was settling and was likely to remain for some time, because gold had been found for years and years in all the creeks in the district, but not in such quantities as to prove such a paying speculation as the new mine that had been lately discovered. He knew that some hon. members would say that the Burnett district had not turned out very well as far as pastoral occupation was concerned. When he first went there all the stations had sheep, but there had been too much wet, and the sheep became liable to foot-rot and other diseases. After the drought of 1868 the Dawson sheep came through the Burnett to escape the effects of the drought, and brought the grass-seed with them, and after that it was impossible to keep sheep in a large portion of the Burnett. In some portions of the district, however, the sheep had held their own up to the present day; and if the district were occupied in smaller areas, and the people went in for fencing and ringbarking, they would be able to raise sheep for the Brisbane market, and for the markets along the road, just as well as the selectors on the Darling Downs. Some hon. members, having read the different reports on the different routes proposed, might think that the proper route would be through the Isis Scrub, joining the present survey on the western side of the Degilbo Station; but anyone who had been over the projected route and knew the country would agree that the proposed route was far preferable to the Isis Scrub route. There were 12 miles of railway being built to the scrub; and the extension of that railway would take it beyond the scrub; but no country fit for settlement would be met with till the line was made some distance further. He could ask hon. members to vote for the railway now proposed with a very easy conscience. It was a line which, though it might not pay at first, would promote settlement, and open up the selection of a large area of country; and that would be of benefit to the country—more so, perhaps, than any railway which had been projected up to the present time. Again, it was one of those railways that went due west from the coast, and that was the principle on which the main lines of railway had been built. On that principle the proposed route was the correct one, and not the route round by Isis, or that by Mount Perry. Those who inhabited the Burnett district had no wish to go further north than they possibly could, and as some hon. gentlemen advocated the separation of the northern and southern portions of the colony it was to the interest of those in the Burnett district to be brought towards the south as much as possible in their railway communication. As far as the agricultural

prospects were concerned, he did not think anyone who had been over the country would deny that just as good results were likely to accrue from settlement there as from settlement on the Darling Downs, which was proverbially stated to have been incapable of growing anything of very great consequence. The stock in the Burnett district had always been of a healthy character.

Mr. BLACK : What about fluke ?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : That exists all over the colony.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL : No !

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he would not say it existed in the salt-bush country, but he was certain that there was fluke everywhere on the eastern watershed of the country. As for the agricultural prospects, he knew positively that wheat had been grown in the district successfully.

Mr. NORTON : When ?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : Within the last two or three years.

Mr. NORTON : What sort of crops ?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the wheat was sown on a small scale so as to show that it could be grown; but he had seen heavy crops grown for hay. The country was also said to be admirably adapted to vine culture, and he believed there would be a large wine manufacturing industry in the district. He thought he said enough to show the Committee that the line would be of benefit to the country, inasmuch as it would be the means of settling a large population, and he believed that was one of the principles upon which railways should be built. He did not think they were bound only to construct those lines which would give an immediate return of 3, 4, or 5 per cent. upon the outlay. He looked upon railways as having a higher utility—the settlement of wild and unoccupied country—and without which they would never induce people to go upon the land.

Mr. SHERIDAN said, as an old resident of the district to which the railway was intended to go, he wished to say a few words on the subject, and he could not do better than refer to what he called the voice of the people, which he hoped on that occasion would prove to be what was commonly called the voice of God. Two years ago he had the honour of presenting a petition in favour of that railway, and the petition to a great extent set forth the grounds upon which it was expected that the line would be granted. He would read the petition to hon. members, and he hoped it would carry conviction with it :—

“To the honourable the Members of the Legislative Assembly in Parliament assembled.

“The humble petition of the undersigned, inhabitants of Maryborough and the district of Wide Bay and Burnett, sheweth :

“That Maryborough, as the commercial centre of one of the most populous districts in the colony, and being the natural port of the agricultural and mineral lands on the road to and around Gayndah, may fairly lay claim to railway communication with the Western territory, so as to foster and preserve that trade and commercial intercourse which have subsisted between them, and requiring only improved facilities for their full growth and expansion.

“2. That Gayndah is due west of Maryborough, which is the nearest port for that town and extensive district, and can be connected by rail, without any engineering difficulties to encounter, by the construction of less than eighty (80) miles of railway.

“3. That a line from Maryborough to Gayndah along any of the projected surveys would be highly remunerative, as in the neighbourhood of Gayndah and the Upper Dawson there is a larger area of good agricultural land

now remaining unselected than in any other part of the colony; and throughout the whole district there exists a vast supply of valuable timber, minerals, and other resources.

"4. That for many years past large quantities of wool and other products were brought from this extensive district to Maryborough, but now the trade of the Western country, at an unnecessary expense to that district for carriage and to the detriment of Maryborough, is being gradually diverted from its natural outlet.

"Your petitioners, therefore, humbly and earnestly pray that your honourable House will provide such relief to meet the requirements of the district, and make the necessary arrangements for the construction of a railway from Maryborough to the Western country *via* Gayndah, by the most direct practicable route, as in its wisdom may deem advisable.

"And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, etc.

"Here follow the signatures of 2,366 petitioners."

Now, he had not gone over the country himself, but he had fortified himself with the opinions of persons who had lived there for many years, and those opinions were indisputable. There could be no question that they were not official opinions, because he was going to read a letter which he received from the Deputy Surveyor-General, who lived in the district for twenty years, and was thoroughly acquainted with the whole of the country through which the railway was destined to pass. That gentleman stated:—

"As a matter of fact, over the whole of the Upper Burnett and its tributaries above Gayndah, as well as on Barambah Creek and confluents below, there are extensive areas of both grazing and agricultural land, which, I believe, in the near future will be closely settled upon. As you know, the climate is remarkably healthy and of easy access, and well watered in ordinary seasons. Between Mungarr and Boompa the character of the country points to grazing operations, there being only a small area of that patchy for cultivation purposes. At the head of Boompa Run, and adjoining the 'Lake' country of Degilbo, there will be found considerable areas suitable for agriculture and grazing; on Degilbo Creek from Biggenden, under Mount Walsh to the Burnett, and around the head station Degilbo, considerable areas for both purposes. Just beyond Degilbo the country changes to granite, and carries, as we know, rich mineral veins, and is well suited for grazing, with here and there small patches of agricultural land distributed over the run. On Wetheron, and on the runs around Gayndah, *via* Ideraway, Mount Debatable, and on Reid and Barambah Creeks, there are considerable tracts of land well adapted for cultivation as well as for grazing, and generally all over the Burnett and its heads extensive areas of land, admirably suited for settlement, can be found. The Burnett district may be said to be untouched up to the present. It is well watered, and carries fine timber. Many of the leading ranges are clothed with pine forests, and as you approach the range dividing it from the Darling Downs it carries with it the same climate with the advantages of being better watered and timbered. Judging from the geological character of the country, it is not unreasonable to expect the recurrence of great mineral wealth. In every sense it is a magnificent part of the colony, and, with close settlement and the expenditure of capital, it will, I am convinced, yield splendid results. It is deserving of an exhaustive inspection."

Now, with regard to the first claims of the country on the Government, he might mention that in the districts of Wide Bay, Burnett, Maryborough, and including Gympie, one-eighth of the population of the colony resided, and although those districts were entitled to one-eighth of the loan money voted for railways—namely, £1,250,000—yet only £250,000 had been voted. That sum would go a long way towards completing the line, because there were no engineering difficulties. He was informed that there was no cutting more than 6 feet deep all the way, and a great deal of the line went over a level surface. So far, they were entitled to a fair share of the loan expenditure, and the sum which was now asked for he would remind hon. members was unanimously voted by the House without a dissentient voice when other votes were keenly debated. With regard to

railways in general, he thought they ought to go upon the American plan. In America they did not wait for settlement at the end of a line, but they pushed the railways out into the prairies and out to the Rocky Mountains, trusting to settlement to follow. It was now proposed to do something of the same thing here. They had the district through which the line would pass, and the country west of that out to Taroom, where there was abundance of magnificent grazing land. In fact, in all Queensland there was no country so admirably adapted for what was called the grazing farmer—the man who would have some cultivation, some sheep, some cattle, and who would build up a happy home for himself and family. That country admitted of all that and of close settlement, and the line would afford the means of starting and supporting a population of which Queensland would be proud hereafter. Exclusive of that, there was no part in Queensland perhaps so well timbered as the line between Maryborough and Gayndah. There were about 250 square miles of timber country, but in the absence of a railway the number of men employed was totally insufficient to keep the mills going. He would read a short extract from a letter he had received from the Chamber of Commerce, which he was sure would add very much to the interest of what he was saying. A motion was proposed by Mr. Robert Jones and seconded by Mr. R. Hart, who he might mention were both well known in the district as highly respectable and influential men, and who also had the reputation of being wealthy men:—

"That this association view with satisfaction the action of the Government in placing the plans of the first section of our western line on the table of the House, and that we express to our members"—

He would pass over that portion and come to the letter—

"Whilst thanking you for your valuable support of this movement it was pointed out that the approaching completion of the Kilkivan line would throw out of employment a great many men used to this kind of work, and they would be anxious to go on with the western line in order to obtain employment. It was also stated that over 200 square miles of splendid pine country would be tapped by the line, and that for the first 25 miles there is magnificent hardwood country. A million feet of timber could be got from each mile of country, one mill alone having drawn from near the Clifton Scrub about 500,000 feet of pine during the past six months. There is also any amount of timber country in the vicinity of the line, independently of what has been reserved by the Government; and the royalty alone from the timber would yield a revenue of £50,000. It will thus be seen that if Maryborough is going to hold her position in the timber trade this line is quite essential, as it would bring the timber country within a reasonable distance for carriage to the mills. The profitable and varied resources along the line are shown in the fact that the Mount Shamrock Gold Company has attained such a position as to go in for a 20-head stamper machine costing £5,000, whilst a quartz claim has been discovered about twenty miles this side of Mount Shamrock. The recent reports of the Commissioner for dividing runs, and the evidence before the Land Board, have afforded additional proof that the land along the line, especially about Degilbo, which will be thrown open, will at once provide settlement for a large population, particularly in the matter of sheep-farming and agriculture generally, the scrub lands, especially those in the valleys, being admirably suited for agricultural purposes. However, the association feel that this important matter may now be safely left in the hands of the hon. the Premier and the Minister for Works, who have shown themselves highly favourable to the construction of the line, and have treated the association with the greatest courtesy."

Speaking of Degilbo, that was the furthest west he had been on that line, and he saw there splendid evidence of the fertility of the country. There was very good wine being made there; admirable grapes were grown, and all kinds of vegetables flourished. Everything necessary for forage would grow, and the whole district

was splendid agricultural country that would maintain a very large population. With reference to Mr. Charlton's report, it had been stated that he was merely paid by a syndicate to write it. He knew nothing of what he was paid, but he knew that for the last ten or twelve years Mr. Charlton had been in the employment of the Government as a trusted and worthy licensed surveyor; and he believed his ability and competence were second to none. Even in Mr. Phillips's report, made during the height of the drought, there was a great deal to recommend the line to the Committee; according to that report, no better line could be found. Referring again to the mineral discoveries at Mount Shamrock, he might mention that since that letter was written other valuable finds had been made, and many minerals of great value had been discovered in the neighbourhood. He would not detain the Committee longer; but he sincerely hoped that they would be unanimous in doing a graceful, kind, honest, and proper action by voting for the line without division.

Mr. ADAMS said he did not expect the line would be carried without division. He did not rise to oppose the construction of a railway into the Burnett district; each member who had risen had shown the advisability of that. But it would be noticed that most of the hon. members who spoke said very little about the line until it passed Degilbo, and they could speak of that magnificently. He did not much care about opposing the line, for the simple reason that he had lived a considerable time in Maryborough, and had a large number of friends and acquaintances there. But there was one duty that called him far above even friendship, and that was his duty towards his constituents and his duty towards his country. He should certainly have much preferred that the Minister for Works had relied upon his own official reports—the report from the gentleman sent for the express purpose of reporting. In place of that the hon. the Minister for Works discarded his own official reports, and actually took up the report that hon. members on the other side had acknowledged was drawn up by a gentleman employed by a syndicate.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. ADAMS said the junior member for Maryborough distinctly declared that Mr. Charlton was employed by a syndicate.

Mr. SHERIDAN: No!

Mr. ADAMS said that although he was somewhat deaf in one ear he could hear a little with the other, and he was convinced that he heard the hon. member distinctly say that Mr. Charlton was employed by a syndicate.

Mr. SHERIDAN: I rise to a point of order. What I said was that I did not know whether he was or was not employed by a syndicate.

Mr. ADAMS: What is the point of order, Mr. Chairman, raised by the hon. member?

The CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order.

Mr. ADAMS said he thought the hon. member was mistaken in raising a point of order. He was certain that Mr. Charlton had been paid for making that report by the people of Maryborough. Would hon. members, therefore, take as much notice of a report that had been paid for by the people of Maryborough as they would of a report prepared by an officer of the Government? Certainly not. The Colonial Secretary talked about the enormous area of land—some 8,000 square miles—still unalienated. But that was at the other end of the line; and he (Mr. Adams) hoped to be able to show before sitting down that it would be most unwise to spend

£150,000 of the taxpayers' money in making that line when a line could be made for much less. Not only had Mr. Charlton, the licensed surveyor, been paid for getting up reports, but he was prepared to say that other people had been paid for writing reports on that particular line. When people had to resort to tactics of that kind, they must have a very bad standing indeed. He held in his hand a newspaper—the *Daily Observer* of 1st November—which contained an article of more than a column about that line, and which he was perfectly convinced must have been written by a Maryborough man; no one else would have dared to write anything of the kind. In the course of that article the writer said he hoped they would get trains to run at as high a speed as twenty miles an hour, and said it was considered possible "to grow locomotives and rolling-stock on the fertile soil of Maryborough." He was sorry the Minister for Works had had to resort to an unofficial report in his opening speech.

Mr. ANNEAR: It is a true one.

Mr. ADAMS said he had never said it was not true, and if it was not true it was not likely the hon. gentleman would say so. If he (Mr. Adams) were the representative of Maryborough, and had had to pay a portion of the cost of the report, even if he knew it was not true, it could hardly be expected that he would say so. Assuming it to be all true, the report stated that for the first six or eight miles the line ran through private property. If so, it would be necessary to resume that land, and the taxpayers would have to pay for it. It was also stated that to go by the Isis route would be to increase the length of the line by 10 miles 34 chains. He would now refer to the report of Mr. Phillips, to which he had not the slightest doubt some hon. members would take exception. But it was generally admitted that Mr. Phillips was a gentleman of undeniable repute, a gentleman who, if sent to make a report, would report truthfully. He believed Mr. Phillips had the entire confidence of the Government—so much so that, if he was correctly informed, they had actually sent him down to Sydney or somewhere to try to get them some better rolling-stock than they had hitherto had. But he would like to know whether even that report was not somewhat misleading. They were told in one portion of the report that to travel between Gayndah and Maryborough by the Mungarr route was some 10 miles 34 chains less than to travel by the Isis route. But the 7th paragraph of Mr. Phillips's report stated:—

"As Degilbo may be considered a point through which any railway from Maryborough to Gayndah must pass, it is interesting to observe that whilst the straight line projected between Gayndah and Mungarr passes 11 miles to the south of Degilbo"—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It does not.

Mr. ADAMS said the paragraph went on to say—

"that between Gayndah and Isis Junction passes through Degilbo; this accounts for the comparatively small difference to travel (10½ miles) between Gayndah and Maryborough by the respective routes."

"The total length to construct, *via* Isis (inclusive of the Isis branch, 11 miles 45 chains 50 links in length), is 73 miles 67 chains 38 links, and the through distance from Maryborough 102 miles 58 chains 51 links."

If it did not pass 11 miles south of Degilbo, it must make a detour of something considerably more than 10 miles; and it would be a further distance from Maryborough to Gayndah by the Mungarr route than it would be by the Isis route. As to the engineering difficulties, the engineer distinctly stated that there would be no difference

in that respect, so far as the comparative cost of the two routes was concerned. He said also :—

"Ballast will be on the whole freely obtainable on either route, and I do not think there will be any appreciable difference in this respect; but, as regards timber suitable for general railway purposes, the Mungarr line has a decided advantage over the other, and this advantage will apply to the whole length to Gayndah, inasmuch as the section from Mungarr to Degilbo would be available as a source of supply for the extension to Gayndah.

"Good ironbark sleepers are easily obtainable on either line.

"In a general way there will be more bridging and less earthworks on the Mungarr than on the Isis line."

Possibly there might be a little timber on the Mungarr route, and it was just possible that it would be much better to get the timber on that line than on the other. But the surveyor himself told them that there would be a great deal more bridging on the proposed line than on the other, and the consequence would be that on the other they would not require so much timber for bridging purposes. For instance, at one place there would be a bridge 500 feet long; at another one 400 feet, and another which the report said it would cost £20,000 to erect. Therefore, he was of opinion that that line would be more costly than the other. Now, what traffic were they going to get on the Mungarr line? No doubt other hon. members knew the country as well as he did. He had lived there for some years, and had before settling down at Bundaberg travelled both routes for the purpose of trying, if possible, to secure a homestead and failed. The land there—he had known it for it the last thirty years, and was sure it had not improved much since—was not well fitted for agricultural purposes, unless in some very small patches indeed. They had been told that there was a large quantity of timber there, and he had been informed outside the House that the reason that timber was not utilised was simply because they could not get it to market. In regard to that, he would point out that the gentleman who described the country in Mr. Phillips's report recognised that by saying :—

"Mungarr—the site of Ramsay's saw-mills—was a busy village until the last two years. The mill, plant, and workmen's cottages, also wooden tramway, 6 miles long, are still on the ground."

He would like to know how it was that that plant, with a tramway 6 miles long, had been lying idle for the last two years? There must be considerable capital lying there. He was perfectly satisfied that capital meant money, and the owner could be getting no percentage out of it while the machinery was lying idle. If that machinery could be worked at a profit it would not be lying idle at the present day. That showed what very poor encouragement there was to build a railway towards that spot. He had been told that it was because the nature of the ground was so bad that they could not get timber to the mill, but the report said :—

"The mill site appears to have been chosen with judgment, and planted in the centre of a district exceedingly well timbered with both hardwood and pine."

It was centrally situated in good timber country, and they had 6 miles of tramway, so that, surely to goodness, they must have command of a large radius of country for timber purposes. The report further said :—

"Of course a good deal has been thinned out for some miles round, but much remains, and it is to be regretted that the works remain so long idle."

Of course it was to be regretted, and it was still more to be regretted that the timber industry was not paying at the present day, and consequently the owners could not get people to bring in capital, and were not able to work it

themselves. He maintained that if that plant, fixed as it was in the centre of a timber district, would not pay to work, it was a very poor speculation to take a railway there.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS : It would pay if the railway came from Bundaberg.

Mr. ADAMS : Very possibly. He had been in the House long enough to put up with the interruptions of the Minister for Works. He was perfectly satisfied that that hon. member would interrupt him whenever he liked, but still he should endeavour to do the best he could for his constituents and for his country—no matter to him what the interruptions might be. One more remarkable thing in the report—really he could not help smiling at it when he read it—was this : When referring to what was likely to be the traffic on the line to pay expenses, it said :—

"For some distance on either side of the creek the line traverses Messrs. Spiden's paddock, forming good dairy farms of considerable extent, well grassed and watered. I saw some useful dairy cattle here, including a very handsome bull fit to compete in any show-yard."

When he read that he thought it very good. If they had to wait for the progeny of that bull to pay for the construction of the railway they would have to wait a very long time indeed. Still he thought it was a very grand idea—that that gentleman had seen a bull there of that quality; and if they waited long enough its progeny would be sufficient to pay for the construction of the railway. The report went a little further, and described the kinds of timber they would get. It said :—

"Hardwood timber, good and plentiful, including ironbark, spotted gum, blue gum, bloodwood, messmate, etc."

What the "etc." meant he did not know, unless it was grass-trees, wattle, or something of that kind. He was sure that any hon. member who knew anything at all about timbers was aware that "messmate" was valueless for anything except fencing purposes. The same might be said with regard to bloodwood, and the consequence was that the report brought the timber down to a very small item indeed. After travelling over the country for many years, he felt perfectly safe in stating that more than two-thirds of the timber there was bloodwood and messmate, which was almost utterly valueless as a marketable commodity. The writer of the report went on a little further and told them what he saw, and he (Mr. Adams) presumed that, when he told them what he saw, it was with the idea that he saw something which would go towards paying for railway construction. He said :—

"Whilst in the neighbourhood of Clifton I visited the Teebar Copper Mines, situated about 1½ mile west. Work was carried on here some years ago, and about £10,000 expended in erecting two smelting furnaces, with sheds, cottages, etc.; in addition some eight or ten shafts, varying in depth from 20 to 70 feet, were put down and copper ore obtained from each."

Now, they knew what copper ore was. It had been thrown in his teeth the other night that the Bundaberg line was a bogus one. There were gentlemen in the House who voted for that bogus line, but although he could name those gentlemen, it was not considered either by them or by the people living in the district that it was a bogus line. It was a line that no doubt would pay handsomely some day, and it was looked upon all over the country as likely to be a better paying line at that time than any other line constructed. And more than that, they had to throw the Maryborough and Gympie line in with the bogus line, or else the bogus line would not have been carried. It was simply because copper had gone

below remunerative prices that that line had stopped paying. But the time was not far distant when the Bundaberg line would not be a bogus line after all.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ADAMS said it never was a bogus line, and the time was not far distant when even that line would pay handsomely. At the time it was made Mount Perry was in full swing, and had the copper industry kept up at the position it was in, it would have been one of the best paying lines in the colony. Now, Mr. Phillips said:—

"I was informed that the mines stopped work in consequence of the reduced value of copper of late years. Nearly all the buildings were destroyed by a bush fire a year or two since, but the brick chimneys and furnaces are still good."

Well, he had not the slightest doubt that the gentleman who drew up that report must have thought that the people of Maryborough were such a people for rambling about, trying to pry into everything—that they would like to take excursions, and that it was just possible they would take some excursions to see empty shafts, empty furnaces, and tall chimney stacks, standing out as monuments of what people had been foolish enough to do in former years. He (Mr. Adams) had not that confidence in the people of Maryborough that they would put themselves out of the way to go on excursions unless they had something to go for. When they came as far as Degilbo, the engineer distinctly stated that from Degilbo to Gayndah the line was common to both routes—to the Isis route as well as to the Mungarr route. He was perfectly satisfied he was speaking the truth when he said that the timber carriage would never pay, and for this reason, that the industry was crippled not only by foreign competition, but by the heavy tax put on the people under the Land Act of 1884. The way the money was collected from the people was quite enough to damage any industry; but there was more than the royalty to look at. He had been informed by a gentleman the other day that he could land in any port in Queensland excellent timber from America of a quality equal, if not superior, to any grown in Queensland at something like 18d. per 100 feet cheaper than native-grown timber could be bought for in the colony. When it came to that, it was impossible for the millers to be able to compete against the foreign timber, and the consequence would be that the carriage of timber would not be so extensive as in years past. There was another thing to be looked at—they were getting older in Queensland. Formerly there were nothing but wooden houses. Now they were getting brick and stone houses, and consequently there would not be the same amount of timber required for home consumption. He therefore could not see why, if the line would do equally as much good—in fact, more good—by taking it by way of Isis, they should subject the taxpayers of the colony to an additional £50,000. He did not see why, if one of the two routes was to be taken, the Isis route should not. Mr. Phillips distinctly laid down in his report that the Isis Scrub was superior to anything he had seen in any of the colonies. He said they could settle a population on the land equal to, if not more numerous, than even in the far-famed Rosewood Scrub; that it was equal to the flats at Bundaberg, equal to anything he had seen in any part of the world; and that he had never seen such a large area of land as the Isis Scrub fit for agricultural purposes. In his report he recommended the Government not to alienate the land except in 30 or 40 acre farms. That was going on for 11 or 12 miles on that route towards Degilbo. But when the engineer spoke

in the latter part of his report that "there is no immediate prospect of a railway to Gayndah by either route securing sufficient traffic to cover all necessary expenses in connection therewith," then if £50,000 could be saved to the taxpayers of the colony by the Isis route it should be adopted. Referring again to what was said the other night about the Mount Perry line being a bogus railway, he thought if it was not to be a bogus line they should do something to make it pay well. It was not paying very badly just now; but on account of copper coming down it was not, he believed, paying working expenses. But there was one thing that should be kept in view, and that was, that the place had a bright future before it. He found that the prospects a little distance from Mount Perry were extremely bright. In a paragraph in the *Bundaberg and Mount Perry Mail* of the 29th of October last, it was stated—

"We learn from an outside source that the Reid's Creek Gold-mining Company intend entering into extensive operations with respect to the valuable property they are now working by ordinary means. The results of the past twelve months are considered by the proprietary as highly satisfactory. During that time 300 tons of ore, of an assay value of 2,000 oz. of gold, have been sent away to dealers in refractory ores. The difficulty, however, is that it is not possible to obtain assay value from the purchasers, and consequently the actual returns are always sent to the raisers. This company, being firmly convinced of the undoubted value of the mine, intend to arrange for the introduction and erection of suitable works for the treatment of the stone, and we understand Captain Bennett leaves for Europe shortly to investigate the various methods of treatment there, and choose an effective plant for Reid's Creek."

That was one mine only, and there were four or five on the field at the present time equally as good. From the paragraph he had just read it appeared that 300 tons of ore had been raised from that one mine in twelve months, yielding 2,000 oz., or 6 oz. of gold to the ton. Nearly the whole of that ore had to be sent out of the colony to be treated, and had therefore to be carried from the field in some way or other; if it was not carried on drays it would have to be carried by the railway. Even on those six mines the prospects were good, and there was not the slightest doubt that there would be a vast number of people settle there when the mines were working. But what did they find with reference to the length of the proposed line? They found that the line from Mungarr was 80 miles 3 chains long, while the distance *via* Isis was only 73 miles 67 chains. According to that report the Mount Perry Railway was only 30 miles from Gayndah. So that starting the railway from the railway station on the Mount Perry line and going on to Gayndah, they, at the same estimate per mile as the proposed line was to cost, would give Gayndah railway communication at a saving to the taxpayers of £206,500. Was it just that the people of the colony, or even the people of Brisbane, should share in that loss? A great portion of the land between Gayndah and Mount Perry was excellent land; and he said it would be utter madness—it would be reckless, unwise, almost a wilful waste of public money—to spend £206,500 more than was absolutely necessary to make a railway to Gayndah. Even if he allowed for the 10 miles of a detour, that would only be £41,350 more; so that there would still be a saving of £165,150, and he thought that might be taken into consideration. Mr. Phillips, in his report, said:—

"As Gayndah is the principal town in the Burnett district, and the objective point of the proposed railway, a short description of the town and its surroundings may not be out of place."

"The town is situated on the south bank of the Burnett River, 70 miles west of Maryborough, 30 miles south of Mount Perry, and 120 miles north of Jondaryan—distances direct."

"In the early days of the colony, before the almost entire substitution of cattle for sheep in the Burnett district, Gayndah was a thriving place; but the change referred to, admitting of the employment of fewer hands on the stations and fewer teams on the roads, has naturally had a depressing effect upon its trade. A town so centrally placed in so fine a district has much in its favour, however, and as most of the land within 15 miles is of the finest description, with plenty of water available for irrigation, it would appear that capital and energy alone are required to secure upon a firmer footing than formerly the prosperity of the town and district."

He was certain from his own knowledge that there was excellent land around Gayndah. He had been there himself, and had cultivated a little in Gayndah. He cultivated an acquaintance there, for he was married at Gayndah. The land about there was excellent, and with irrigation he believed it would be equal to any portion of the land in what was called the "Garden of Queensland." He therefore thought the railway ought to be taken to that place, and not only there but further up, and carried towards the Dawson, because above Gayndah there were large mineral resources which would never be developed until the iron horse was taken there. He thought it was better to take a railway in that direction, where they might settle population on the line, than to make some lines which had been proposed to the Committee. Mr. Phillips further said:—

"I will now briefly summarise the various points upon which I have previously dwelt at large.

"1. Existing settlement is too inconsiderable on either route to be a factor in the question.

"2. There is no immediate prospect of a railway to Gayndah by either route securing sufficient traffic to cover all necessary expenses in connection therewith."

If that was the case—and he thought that he had shown pretty plainly that it was—there would not be sufficient traffic on the line to make it pay for some considerable time to come, and the Government ought to pause before they asked the Committee to vote away £330,000 for a line to a place to which they could take the line by another route for one-half the money. One hon. member on the other side said the district had no railway to the centre. That was the reason why he (Mr. Adams) was advocating a railway there instead of to Maryborough. The Maryborough people had a railway to Gympie; but they were not satisfied with that. They must have a railway to Brisbane, and when they found that the Gympie trade went to Brisbane instead of to Maryborough they would not then be satisfied. They also had a railway to Kilkivan, but they were not satisfied with that. Then the Burrum line must be commenced at the Maryborough end, taking a tremendous sweep so that all the traffic of the district should come to Maryborough. They were not satisfied yet, but wanted the proposed line to go to the top of the Burnett, and take away the legitimate trade of the district to Maryborough. But they would not stop there, and he would not be surprised to hear that the Maryborough people wanted a line to the Gulf of Carpentaria. The Colonial Secretary said that even the Burnett people would like to go as far south as they could. Why did they not go? They could not be nearer the capital if they went to Maryborough than if they went to Bundaberg. If the line went to Bundaberg all they would have to do would be to go 7 miles in order to get to the open sea; but if they went to Maryborough they would have to travel eight or nine hours before getting to sea, so that the journey to Brisbane by way of Bundaberg could be done in far less time than by way of Maryborough. He thought he had shown that it would be unwise to construct a line when a preferable line could be constructed for so much less; and he must candidly confess that if he were Colonial Treasurer—which

he was never likely to be—he would refuse to throw away the large sum of money represented by the proposed line when a better line could be constructed much cheaper. He thought he had only done his duty to his constituents and to the country in speaking at length on the question, and he hoped hon. members would take notice of what he had said.

Mr. ANNEAR said the hon. gentleman was very much troubled about his country; he looked on everything from a national point of view; but he always finished up with Mount Perry and Bundaberg in particular. He hoped he should not weary the Committee as the hon. gentleman had done for the last half-hour, as he thought he should be able to say more in five minutes than the hon. gentleman had said all the time he was speaking. He was pleased with the treatment the line had received up to the present time, because when the hon. member for Mulgrave assumed—as he had done on the present question—the leadership of the Opposition, the line would not be much opposed. The hon. gentleman stated that a Maryborough syndicate paid for a report to advocate the claims of the proposed line; but the report was not prepared for a Maryborough syndicate or for the Maryborough people. The people of Wide Bay, the people of Maryborough, and the people of the Burnett district contributed towards the cost of the information, so that hon. members might have information of a reliable character. The information had been obtained without putting the country to more than a very little cost, and if that information was not true, why did he not point out where it was untrue? He challenged the hon. member to point out anything put before the country in that report which was not true. The hon. gentleman stated, in quoting from a newspaper—and in quoting from that paper he admitted that the hon. gentleman quoted from a truthful report—that the article was not written by a Maryborough man. The fact was that it was written by a gentleman, a resident in Brisbane, who was, and might be now, in the employ of what was called the leading journal of the colony. The hon. gentleman said the line went within 11 miles of Degilbo Station, but he was mistaken there—it went through the stockyard near the residence on that station.

Mr. ADAMS said he stated that it went past Degilbo Station, but that the report said it went 11 miles to the south; and that being the case, the report was misleading.

Mr. ANNEAR said the hon. gentleman stated several times that the line went within 11 miles of Degilbo Station.

Mr. ADAMS: No!

Mr. ANNEAR said the line went through the stockyard close to the house. If the hon. gentleman would read Mr. Phillips's report he would find it stated that if it took a straight line from Maryborough to Gayndah it would go within 11 miles of Degilbo, but the straight line was not taken. The hon. member referred to the mill at Mungarr lying idle, but he knew very well that the owner of the mill had been unfortunate enough to become insolvent, and that it had passed into the hands of a company who wanted a large sum of money for it. If the mill could be got out of the hands of that company for a reasonable sum it would have been working long ago. The hon. gentleman also stated that timber traffic never paid. He could not have read the Commissioner for Railways' report. It not only paid in railway receipts, but the industry employed a large number of people in drawing and felling the timber cut in sawmills, and in vessels that carried the timber. There was no industry in his opinion that paid better than the timber

industry. He did not know whether the Colonial Treasurer would have to put on extra taxation or not; but he hoped, if it became necessary, that he would put such a duty on timber coming into the colony as would be the means of sustaining the men employed in the industry. The hon. member for Mulgrave got out of his depth somewhat when he said there was not much wood wanted, as so many stone and brick buildings were being erected now. Did not the hon. gentleman know that more wood was used in the construction of stone and brick buildings than was used in buildings constructed entirely of wood?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

Mr. ANNEAR said the distance of railway to be constructed from the Gympie line was 80 miles, and the Chief Engineer estimated the first 25 miles at £4,000 per mile. The line from Mungarr to Gayndah, including the erection of all stations, gatekeepers' cottages, and payment for the permanent way, would cost £300,000. Very little of the land through which the line would pass had gone out of the hands of the Crown so that there would be very little to purchase. He thought the Committee should be informed as to whether the traffic was likely to be payable, and whether a population was likely to be settled alongside the line. Well, he maintained it would. He maintained that there was no line that had been introduced into the House for many years past that was in a better position than the line under discussion. Hon. members had seen the maps which had been distributed which showed that there was in the first 47 miles of the line an area of 241½ square miles, containing 154,560 acres; and the figures which were given by his hon. colleague were supplied by a gentleman in Maryborough, a most reliable person, Mr. Robert Hart, of the firm of Wilson, Hart, and Co., who stated that under the present royalty the timber alone along the line of railway would supply a revenue of £50,000. When the timber was taken off the land it was good scrub land, suitable for agricultural purposes. There was no doubt that a farming population would settle upon that land, and that, he took it, was one of the great objects they always had in view. Exclusive of the pine, the reserves contained a large amount of good hardwood, ironbark, spotted gum, and red gum; not, as the hon. member for Mulgrave stated, only a small quantity of messmate and bloodwood. He did not think the hon. gentleman had travelled over the country more than he had, and he had seen in the district some of the finest ironbark he had ever seen in the colony. The report upon which the hon. gentleman relied so much was something like the report on the second section of the Gympie line, written by Mr. Phillips, in which it was stated that not a fat bullock could be raised in the district, whilst the hon. member for Wide Bay, Mr. Mellor, stated that he had sent hundreds of fat bullocks from his property, which was a complete refutation of Mr. Phillips's report. Most of the land up to Gayndah was good agricultural land, where all kinds of produce could be grown; the whole of the trade of the Upper Burnett would come into Gayndah and be the means of bringing renewed prosperity to that town. It was well known that the land around Gayndah was capable of producing wheat in large quantities, whilst additional value was given to the district of the Mount Shamrock Gold Field; that company had entered into a contract with the Vulcan Foundry, of Maryborough, to construct 20 head of stampers, and, with the erection of the necessary buildings, a sum of £5,000 would be spent. There were several other quartz

reefs close by, notably one 20 miles on the Maryborough side of Mount Shamrock; and there were also silver lodes now being worked. From the reports which they had seen of the crushings that had taken place in Gympie, it had been proved beyond doubt that the Mount Shamrock Gold Field was a very rich field indeed. Something like 6 oz. to 8 oz. to the ton were obtained from the quartz. If hon. members would look at the reports of the commissioner for dividing runs, it would be seen that the proposed line would open up a large quantity of land, and would afford settlement for a large population of farmers and graziers. At the present time the refineries at Bundaberg and Yengarie consumed large quantities of limestone, and on Degilbo Station there was an unlimited supply of that product. That would afford employment for a large number of men, and would bring a large amount of traffic to the railway when constructed. Now, statements like the one made by the hon. member for Mulgrave were made when the Maryborough and Gympie line was going through the House, and also when it was under construction. He recollected a statement made by a very good colonist—the late Mr. George Davenport—at a public meeting held in Too-womba, when the railway policy of the Government was then under review. That gentleman said that the Maryborough and Gympie line would be a dead loss, and that it would pay the Government to blow it up with gunpowder. Now, how had that statement been verified? He would give the earnings per mile for thirty-one weeks up to the 8th of August last, of two lines. The Southern and Western line earned £326 7s. 6d. per mile; the Maryborough and Gympie line earned £329 7s. 10d. It topped the whole of the lines throughout the colony; and those figures were taken from the Commissioner for Railways' report. When the members for the district came to the House to ask for the construction of a railway in the Maryborough and Wide Bay district, they came to ask hon. members to construct a line where, at any rate, there was a probability of its paying. He did not want to canvass any hon. member for his vote, but he wished the railway to be taken on its merits. He had quoted the report of the Commissioner for Railways, and he would quote figures to show the increase of traffic which had taken place on 16 miles of railway from Croydon to Howard. In 1883 that 16 miles earned £1,774 9s.; in 1884, £2,910; and in 1885 it earned £4,459. It would seem, therefore, that in twelve months there was an increase of nearly 100 per cent. Well, when they could show such results as that, he was sure that they could come to the House with confidence and ask hon. members to vote a railway that was so much required in the district. Some hon. members complained the other day of want of information on some lines they had passed during the present session, but, as he had stated before, the people of the Maryborough district had tried to prevent such a complaint as much as possible. They had gone to the expense and trouble of getting information, which had been placed before hon. members; and he thought for that they should receive a fair amount of credit. As regarded the reports which had been spoken of, hon. members had, no doubt, read the reports of Mr. Charlton and Mr. Phillips, and also the report of Mr. Stanley, the Chief Engineer. In the main those three reports agreed; and he was sure hon. members would have no difficulty in coming to a conclusion that the line would be a paying one when constructed. He would not detain the Committee any longer, but would ask hon. members, who he was sure had given full consideration

to the proposal, to give their unbiased opinion, and he was almost confident that they would pass the line without going to a division.

Mr. PALMER said he had listened to all that had been said on the line, its merits and demerits, from the Minister for Works downwards, and there was one argument which hon. gentlemen had not used with regard to it that was favourable, and about the only argument that he admitted—that was that the line was not so bad as the Fortitude Valley line, passed a few days ago. It was not quite so bad as that line, and they knew that only passed by the “skin of its teeth.” As he did not belong to the Mutual Admiration Society that sat on the other side, and the members of which laid themselves out to extol the virtues of different lines of railway, and knowing something about the country—perhaps a great deal more than some hon. members—

Mr. ANNEAR: How long ago is it since you were there?

Mr. PALMER said the country was just the same as it was when he was there, and he would give the Committee the benefit of his experience. The Committee might just as well be put in a fair position and understand the question from both sides, and decide on the merits of the case. It was argued that the township of Maryborough was entitled to the line, as being situated in the same manner as Townsville, Rockhampton, and Brisbane were situated in regard to their country—that the main lines coming into those towns had made them prosperous, and that Maryborough should have an equal outlet to the back country. Now, he had done more than any of the hon. members who had spoken: he had travelled in a due west line from Maryborough for 500 miles, and the first good country he came to was on the Nive, 500 miles away from Maryborough. At that distance they were within the influence of both the Northern line and Southern line; and on the whole of that route there was very little of what might be called good country. There was nothing that could be called first-class pastoral country; the best of it was only second-class, and that was extremely patchy. The report brought before the Committee had been referred to. He did not know whether it had been quoted from, but when he saw the name of Mr. Adams, the member for Bundaberg, to it, he could well understand how it came to be called for, because it was certainly a damaging report. They had only to read it through to see the most absurd statements given as reasons why the railway should be carried into that country. He was only stating facts; he was not ill inclined towards the members for Maryborough, and he hoped they would not form themselves into a square and charge him for speaking what he believed to be true. Let anyone look at the report on the country from Mungarr to Degilbo, through which the line was to pass. When he first saw it on the map, he thought it was going through Gigoongan and Teebar; he knew there were some very nice pieces of country there; but he saw by the report that it was to leave that patch of country $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the south, and go through what he knew to be a very inferior class of sandy country. The line was not a straight one, but it did not seem to have been made tortuous on purpose to get it through good country. On turning to Gayndah, which was the point to be attained by that railway, let them see if it was a thriving place worthy the expenditure of such an amount of money as that railway would cost. They would find from the report that the terminus of that expensive line had nothing very great to recommend it. He saw by “Pugh’s Almanac” that the amount of rates collected by the municipality of Gayndah was

£142; what prospect was there for a railway to a township of those dimensions? He would read a paragraph from Mr. Phillips’s report:—

“As the town is traversed it is evident that many of the older houses and stores have fallen into irretrievable decay, but the public buildings—including the hospital, school, English and Roman churches—are substantial; private gardens, neatly kept, are not infrequent, whilst the partiality shown for bottle-trees as sources of shade is unique in my experience.”

Now, the fact of a town being noted for growing bottle-trees was hardly sufficient reason for expending he did not know how many thousand pounds on that railway. They could find bottle-trees in any scrub. However, if Gayndah was the point to be attained, they saw by the sketch map that there were other means of getting to Gayndah. There was the Mount Perry route. It had often been said that the Mount Perry line was a political line and never would be a paying line; then why should they go to so much expense to carry a railway to such a point that it would take away the traffic which might make the line from Mount Perry to Bundaberg a paying line? He had a list of the returns from the lines in Queensland. The proposed line, of course, was a branch line, and he believed it would share the same fate as seemed to be the lot of all branch lines. The hon. member for Maryborough had quoted the Burrum line, Croydon to Howard, as a paying line. Now, the percentage of net receipts on capital for 1885 on that line was 1·805—about $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.—and that was the line the hon. member for Maryborough quoted in such exultant terms as paying so well. The hon. member had quoted that as a triumphant example of the benefit of making such lines as that from Mungarr to Gayndah. He would point out what the branch lines of Queensland were doing, to see if there was any encouragement for building more such lines. The Brisbane, Dulbydilla, Stanthorpe, and Gowrie Junction line—he took that as a main line—returned 3·175 per cent.; Rockhampton to Alice, 4·683 per cent.; Townsville to Torrens Creek, 5·816 per cent.—that was the best in the colony; Brisbane to Sandgate, 3·524 per cent.; Maryborough to Gympie, 3·396 per cent. Those were all the main lines. Now he came to the branch lines. The South Brisbane branch line was carried on at a yearly loss of £1,114. The South Coast, Beenleigh, and Logan line returned only ‘487—about one-half per cent. net receipts to capital—that was the testing point. The Highfields branch to Cabarlah showed a loss of £1,296 for the year 1885; and the Killarney branch lost £1,596. He admitted that the Bundaberg and Mount Perry line had also a loss of £852 for 1885; and he thought that was one reason why they should give that line a chance by extending it to Gayndah—if Gayndah was a place of sufficient importance to warrant the expenditure of a large sum of money in giving it a line. The Clermont branch was also run at the huge loss of £4,539 in the year 1885; so that taking those branch lines, there was no encouragement for carrying out another, and through such country. All those lines went through country that had far superior advantages to that from Mungarr to Gayndah. Timber was about the only thing he heard of, except that he heard one gentleman had a thoroughbred bull on the line, and a few milking cows. A similar state of things was observable in New South Wales: the main lines paid extraordinarily well, while the branch lines did not. The line from Sydney to Granville paid 7·57 per cent.; from Granville to Bourke 3·96 per cent.; from Granville to Albury 3·53 per cent.; and from Newcastle to Glen Innes 3·86 per cent. Those were all main lines, and Queensland would never go wrong if it kept on pushing its

main lines—of which there were now four, including that from Normanton to Cloncurry—into the interior. Of the branch lines in New South Wales, not one paid its expenses. Such facts ought to compel hon. members to pause before they committed the country to any more of those branch lines. He hoped that when they got that separation which they were all urging, no more such damaging lines would be constructed as the branch lines had continually proved themselves to be. It was a great pity that that report was not withheld a little longer until they had got the line passed, for there was really very little in it to encourage hon. members to vote for the railway. He was in no way spiteful towards the line, but having been in that district for some years he knew the country better than any hon. member representing Maryborough. At one particular spot only he had thought there might be some good country, but this was what Mr. Phillips said about it:—

“From 20½ to 25½ miles inferior second-class pastoral country, well timbered with hardwood; stony and hard clay ridges. Occasionally grass-trees (small variety) are met with; wattle undergrowth is general; numerous creeks, gullies, and ridges to cross. Saw a small black-soil flat on Horse-shoe Creek, and a few small alluvial pockets on Clifton and other creeks, but did not observe any country on which agricultural operations on a large scale could be carried on.”

That was the general tenor of the report for the whole line. No doubt there was some splendid timber in the district, especially ironbark, and he had never seen better in any of the colonies; but timber alone would not make payable freight for a railway. Hardwood imported into Sydney was quoted there at 9s., 9s. 6d., and 10s. per 100 feet, while it could not be got in Queensland under 17s. 6d. Such a price was ruinous, and it seemed strange to him that timber could be bought 50 per cent. cheaper in Sydney than in Brisbane. They had had railways through timber districts before, and it had been proved over and over again that it was not an article that made payable freight. But when all that people had to say in favour of a proposed line was that there were a thoroughbred bull and two or three milch cows upon it, it would have been just as well to have kept the report back.

Mr. NORTON said he had listened with a good deal of interest to the debate, and especially to the speeches that had been made in support of the proposed railway, as he was anxious to know what could be said in its favour. It was desirable that the Committee should be, as far as possible, informed of all that could be said in favour of constructing a line of that sort. It was well known, as had just been pointed out by the hon. member for Burke, that branch lines did not pay anything like a reasonable return for the amount expended upon them. With respect to the particular line under discussion, he happened to have some acquaintance with a portion of the country through which it passed. Unless it varied very much from what was observable from the road, he should say that a large portion of the country between Maryborough and Gayndah was about as bad as bad could be. For about 18 miles from Maryborough it was wretchedly poor stuff. Beyond that it improved a little, but, as a matter of fact, it was all very poor until the eastern boundary of the Degilbo Run was reached—the place where there was once a public-house kept by a man named Irving. Beyond that there was a little good land. The Colonial Secretary said there was some good agricultural land, and added that he had not the slightest doubt that if the railway were carried up to Gayndah it would eventually become a great place for vineyards and the making of wine. In that he was prepared to agree with the hon. gentleman to a certain extent, provided that any dependence

could be placed on the rainfall. But, unfortunately for the hon. gentleman's argument, that particular portion of the Burnett district was rather a dry belt. The experiments that had been made there with regard to growing wheat and the cultivation of the vine were not so successful as to induce hon. members to believe that it was worth while making a railway through that particular country in the hope that by so doing they would largely encourage the production of these articles. A little wheat had been grown there, but the statistics showed that there had never been much more than 30 acres under that crop, nearly all the produce of which had had to be cut for hay. In one year, of the 30 acres under wheat, 4 or 6 acres gave no wheat whatever, and 20 acres were so damaged from rust that it had to be cut for hay, and yielded one ton of hay to the acre. In other seasons, of course, the land might be more productive. In the whole of the Gayndah district there had never, at any one time, been more than 500 acres under the plough. With regard to the cultivation of the vine, in 1873, three men growing grapes succeeded in making between 70 and 80 gallons of wine. Three years later one made 60 gallons, and in the year following another man made the same quantity. That was all the actual wine-making that had taken place in the district, so that if they looked to statistics to enlighten them, all they got was very small indeed. Then it had been suggested by the hon. the Colonial Secretary that in course of time they might be able to breed a class of sheep there which would be able to resist the grass-seeds which the hon. gentleman said had been taken there by the Dawson sheep.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I did not say that.

Mr. NORTON: He thought the hon. gentleman did; he did not wish to misquote him. At any rate, he was quite satisfied that on none of that country could sheep be reared with anything like success. At one time the whole of the Burnett, with one or two exceptions, was used for wool-growing, but owing to a succession of wet seasons and other causes, all of the sheep that were left alive were taken off and cattle substituted. Therefore, he did not think that they could look forward to the Burnett becoming a large wool-producing district. What they had chiefly to look to was this: The portion of the country nearer Maryborough through which the proposed line would pass was undoubtedly rich in minerals of various kinds. In addition to that there was an almost inexhaustible supply of valuable timber, both hardwood and pine. He believed that although it would not pay to construct a railway into any district with the view of making it pay by carting timber, yet when that timber was cut in the district through which the line passed it would contribute very largely towards the revenue; and when the land was also rich in minerals, the working of those minerals would also assist materially in making the line remunerative. But, as he had said before, and as the hon. member for Burke had pointed out, so far as they could judge from the character of the country, apart from timber and minerals, there was not much prospect of traffic before the line was taken through. So far as his sympathies went, he should like to see the line carried right up the Burnett, but if the line was constructed through, the effect would be that they could not get beyond Gayndah without competing with other lines north and south. At present the stations beyond Gayndah got their supplies from Gayndah by two or three drays, and as they went further up the river the stock from and the goods to the stations were taken backwards

and forwards to the Southern and Western Railway. Even if the railway were constructed up the river, he had been led to understand by gentlemen well acquainted with the district that it would not divert the traffic from the head of the river to itself. What they must, therefore, look at in connection with that particular line was the advantage that would be derived from it by the mining community and by those engaged in the timber industry. Those two sources, he believed, were the only ones from which they could expect any revenue. Of course, the effect of carrying a railway through the country would be to settle some population on it, and he believed that if the first portion of the line were carried out a considerable number of grazing farms would be taken up about Mount Shamrock, near Degilbo. But he could not see—unless he had been very much misinformed, and the country had changed considerably since he was there—what advantage was to be derived from taking the line beyond Mount Shamrock towards Gayndah. It was said that there were large mineral deposits there. So there were about Rawbelle, but it was chiefly copper that would not pay to work, even if there was a railway to the spot. He did not suppose anyone would seriously oppose the passing of the first section, and he was glad that the Minister for Works had brought in the plan for the first section alone. They had certainly passed worse railways before, and would perhaps pass worse ones again. For his own part he did not anticipate any great revenue from the line, but if it assisted the working of the minerals and timber in the district it would return something like a fair revenue, which would increase in course of time. At any rate, the portion of the line now before them was a good deal better than some others they had passed, which instead of being a source of revenue would be a source of loss to the country.

Question put, and the Committee divided :—

AYES, 33.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Dutton, Miles, Dickson, Moreton, Sheridan, Foxton, Foote, Salkeld, Smyth, Bailey, Kellett, McMaster, Lumley Hill, Wakefield, Bulcock, Buckland, White, Jordan, Isambert, Mellor, S. W. Brooks, W. Brooks, Rutledge, Macfarlane, Norton, Ferguson, Grimes, Murphy, Annear, Kates, Horwitz, and Groom.

NOES, 9.

Messrs. Black, Adams, Donaldson, Lissner, Stevenson, Palmer, Jessop, Hamilton, and Philip.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR WORKS, the House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the resolution to the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that the report be now adopted by the House.

Question put and passed.

MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

EMPLOYERS LIABILITY BILL.

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

"The Legislative Council having had under consideration the message of the Legislative Assembly dated 26th October, relative to the amendments made by the Legislative Council in the Employers Liability Bill, beg now to intimate that they do not insist on their amendments in clause 4, but insist on the omission of clause 6, because more suitable provision is made for the protection of seamen under the provisions of the existing

laws relating to merchant shipping, and other enactments connected therewith, and because the clause omitted would render the owner liable for accidents resulting from causes over which he has no control."

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

GLADSTONE TO BUNDABERG 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 Gladstone to Bundaberg, in length 106 miles 46 chains 50 links, as laid upon the table of the House on Tuesday, the 26th ultimo.

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 Gladstone to Bundaberg, in length 106 miles 46 chains 50 links, as laid upon the table of the House on Tuesday, the 26th ultimo.

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 that in submitting the motion to the consideration of hon. members he had to state that the proposed line was a portion of what would eventually be the North Coast line. The country was pretty much of a character similar to that of the country along the line, the plans of which had just been approved by the House. It was partly fit for agriculture and for grazing farms. He could not promise an excess of traffic on the line, but it would be of very great advantage to Gympie, Maryborough, Bundaberg, and Gladstone, in connection with their mail communication. When those lines were connected up as far as Gympie from Brisbane it would be of immense advantage to all the people on the coast for the rapid delivery of mail matter. He might state that £150,000 had been provided on the Loan Estimates for that line. £236 out of that had been expended for surveys, leaving a balance of £149,763. That amount would not, of course, be sufficient to make 106 miles of railway, and the Government would not attempt to go beyond the amount borrowed in the construction of the line until they had parliamentary authority for the additional money required. He wished to point out that the Government did not intend to appropriate any other money for the construction of that line beyond the amount authorised in the Loan Bill. The cost of the 106 miles would be about £400,000—so that a large sum of money would have to be provided for before the whole of the line could be built. He did not think it was necessary for him to dwell at great length on the line. The Government did not anticipate any large settlement on the line, but it could be compared, with the exception of the minerals, with the line already approved of. He believed there was an immense quantity of timber on the line. A considerable extent of land would be suitable for dairying and grazing farms besides a considerable amount of land for agriculture. The line commenced on the west side of the jetty at Gladstone, with which it could be connected by a 12-chain curve. It followed a general south-easterly direction, joining the Bundaberg and Mount Perry Railway at 106 miles 46½ chains, at a point 42 miles 70 chains from the commencement of that line.

Thus the distance from Bundaberg to Gladstone would be about 107 miles 10 chains. The line kept mainly near the edge of swamps, close to high-water mark for the first 10 miles, crossing the ends of some small spurs. From 10 miles to the end of the line it passed over a succession of low hills and valleys. In few places were the rises over 150 feet, and no hill was crossed over higher than 200 feet above high-water mark. Since the plans had first been laid on the table, there had been considerable alterations made in the gradients. There were no gradients now on the line steeper than 1 in 50. Members were aware that he had withdrawn the plans on a previous occasion, because there were some steep gradients—1 in 25 to 1 in 33—and it was considered very undesirable that a line of that description should be built. There was on the section about 12,500 feet of bridging or about 120 feet to the mile. Some of the more important bridges were originally intended to be low-level bridges in connection with gradients of 1 in 25 to 1 in 33, but as it was considered undesirable to run any risk of interruption to traffic on a line forming part of the main coast railway, high-level bridges had been substituted. There would be about 300 culverts. There were fourteen level crossings marked on the section, and about twenty would probably be required. The earthworks were roughly estimated by Mr. Ballard previous to the alteration of the gradients at 4,000 yards to the mile, but that quantity would now be increased. Water was plentiful. Ballast was abundant. Timber for sleepers and bridges would be found within easy distance of the line. It must be understood that Mr. Stanley had not had an opportunity of going over the line yet or of going very fully into it, but he estimated the cost at about £4,000 a mile. The total length of the line was 106 miles 46 chains and 50 links, which at £4,000 a mile would give a total of £426,325. As he had said before, £150,000 had been appropriated in the Loan Bill for the line, and £236 had been expended in surveys, leaving a balance available of £149,763.

Mr. NORTON said he had hoped, when the hon. the Minister for Works was submitting that line, he would have informed the Committee that it was the intention to make a commencement at Gladstone, but he thought the hon. gentleman had made no statement to that effect.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that would be taken into consideration at a future time.

Mr. NORTON said it was all very well to say that now, but the hon. gentleman had told him on a previous occasion that the line, if it began at the Bundaberg end, would certainly begin at the Gladstone end also, and that he himself was favourable to beginning at the Gladstone end. Moreover, when the Loan Estimates were before the House in 1884, when he complained that a sufficient sum was not provided for the line, he had been told by the Minister for Works—"No, it would be easy to manage that. How do we carry out those other lines that we have to come and ask for authority for sums for the completion of works already done by money not provided by Parliament?" He desired to acknowledge the virtue of the hon. gentleman, who now assured the Committee that that line would not be carried further than the sum appropriated would permit.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said there would be plenty of money by the time more was needed for the completion of the line.

Mr. NORTON said he hoped there would be. The Minister for Works was always sanguine, but when the sum appropriated was done with they would not perhaps have quite so easy a

task to raise more money. He (Mr. Norton) was quite sure the speech of the Minister for Works would be received with a good deal of disappointment by the people of Gladstone, because, whether the hon. gentleman intended it to be understood or not, they did believe from the remarks made by him on his visit to Gladstone that he would see that the whole line would be carried on there as quickly as possible.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: So it will.

Mr. NORTON said he hoped the hon. gentleman would bear that in mind, and bear in mind also that the wharf at Gladstone was intended as a railway wharf, when the Government would be in a position to go on with the railway. That wharf, until the line was commenced, would be comparatively idle; but when preparations were made for going on with the work, there was not the slightest doubt that the facilities for the despatch of railway material, and getting it at once on to the works, would be greater there than in any other place where lines had been made at all. He did not intend, in referring to that matter, to represent to the Committee any very sanguine views as to the revenue which was likely to be derived from the line when it was completed. He was quite sure that a great deal of the country between Gladstone and Bundaberg might be cultivated, as it had proved itself well adapted for it. Fruit-trees had been tried, and wherever any kind of agriculture had been attempted at all it had always proved most successful. He had no hesitation in saying that when the railway line was carried along there agriculture would be encouraged to some considerable extent; but he was not going to urge that upon the Committee, because he believed that hon. gentlemen would understand perfectly well that wherever a line was carried in coastal country there was some land fit for agriculture. There would be a certain area of land fit for cultivation, both for grain crops and, he believed, the cultivation of fruit-trees. The first revenue the Government would have to look to from that line would be from the timber traffic. Near Gladstone itself, of course, the timber had been thinned down; but from near there to Bundaberg there was a very large supply of very valuable timber. The engineer stated that there was an abundant supply of timber and any quantity of material for ballast and so on. There were several sawmills in the locality, and the timber was of a kind which he thought the Government would require much more largely than any private individual. At the present time sleepers for the Southern and Western line and for the Northern lines were almost wholly obtained from somewhere about Miles on the Western line, and about Dingo on the Central line, or within a reasonable distance of them; and the timber for the last section of the Central line had to be brought from there. Of course they knew that when a large quantity of timber was taken for a particular purpose from places like those, within a few years it became rather short, and if there were only those two localities from which timber could be derived in large quantities, it followed as a matter of course that within a very few years some other districts would necessarily have to be opened up to supply material of that character. He had no hesitation in saying that when the line was completed, if the Government required to get their sleepers in the coastal districts for their works in different parts of the colony, that one district alone between Gladstone and Bundaberg would supply the whole of the sleepers required for many years. The report said that some of the revenue from the railway would be derived from timber, and he (Mr. Norton) was quite satisfied that

trains might be fully loaded with the timber that was required for railway purposes alone. He had obtained from the traffic manager particulars with regard to the timber traffic, and found that according to his calculations eight tons was a low quantity to carry on one truck. Eight tons of hardwood represented 2,400 feet, and allowing eight trucks to the load, the quantity carried by one train would be sixty-four tons, the charge on which would be 2d. per ton per mile. So that even from the timber traffic alone the earnings would be considerable. He had no hesitation in saying that by the time the line was constructed so much timber would be required for railway purposes alone that one train per day might easily be run in order to carry it. Of course, hon. members knew that the harbour at Port Curtis was a splendid one, and offered facilities which would enable the Government to get ships alongside, and take the timber away to all parts where it might be required with the greatest despatch. On that point alone there was considerable justification for carrying out the work. As the Colonial Secretary had reminded him when speaking on the Gayndah line, that line would be necessary for defence purposes, and that was a matter that they should take into consideration. One thing that was now admitted to be necessary was that in carrying out the defences of the colony it was absolutely necessary that facilities should be offered by which the Government would be able to remove troops from one port to another with the greatest despatch. Of course the town of Gladstone was not very large, and he did not think there would be any inducement to levy blackmail upon the inhabitants; but still if an enemy did land there they could take up a position from which it would be very difficult even for Her Majesty's ships to dislodge them. They could command the trade so long as they were not interfered with by Her Majesty's vessels, and could fight there as well as in the open sea. So that as a matter of convenience for defence purposes it was desirable that the line should be carried out. However, he had pointed out that in addition to the timber traffic the Government might reasonably expect a considerable traffic in coal. He had seen some specimens of coal shale which probably overlaid the coalbeds in different parts of the district, and there was no question that the coal not only existed in those particular places, but as he had been informed by an authority which he had not the slightest reason to doubt, in several parts of the country through which the line would pass there were large deposits of coal, and in order to be able to develop them a line of that kind was required. There was another matter which he had expected the hon. gentleman to refer to when he introduced the motion, and that was in regard to the facilities for conveying mails to Bundaberg and Maryborough. There had hitherto been loud complaints among the people in that part of the colony that, although the residents of the Central and Southern districts got their mails at the earliest possible opportunity and were able to despatch their correspondence promptly, they were left entirely in the cold—that before they could get their English letters the mails had to be brought to Brisbane by steamer and then sent back to Maryborough. When the proposed line was completed, that ground of complaint would be removed. The mails could be landed at Gladstone or even in Keppel Bay, shipped through the Narrows to Port Curtis, and thence carried by rail to Bundaberg and Maryborough and Gympie. All places along the route would in that way have their letters delivered in good time, and Brisbane mails could also be delivered earlier by that route than by water. He did not think it necessary to dilate any further upon that subject.

He thought he had said all that it was needful to say, but if any hon. member wished for more information he would be very happy to give him as much as he could. He would only add that the country along the route of the railway was equal to, and very much superior to, a large portion of the land along the coast. Near Bundaberg there was a bit of poor country, but after that the land was what was commonly called first-class coast country.

Mr. WHITE said they had a little railway proposed from Gladstone to Bundaberg, and the leader of the Opposition had certainly given very little information about it, except that there was good timber along the route for a portion of the distance. Generally, where there was good timber in this country the land was bad. The hon. member said the probability was that the land would grow good fruit, and some of it good wheat.

Mr. NORTON: No; not wheat.

Mr. WHITE: No?

Mr. NORTON: No; not wheat, but maize.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: And pumpkins!

Mr. WHITE said the leader of the Opposition had certainly not taken in hand a critical view of the railway. Between Gladstone and Bundaberg there was the finest water-carriage that could be met with between any two towns in the world. They could go in and out at each port in the dark, and pass from one place to the other in two or three hours. But not only that, there was a near cut. Smaller vessels could take the near cut through the Narrows, which went very nearly as the crow flew.

Mr. NORTON: Where from?

Mr. WHITE: From Gladstone to Bundaberg.

Mr. NORTON: No.

Mr. WHITE: Well, there was undeniable water-carriage between the two places, and now it was proposed to build a railway to compete with that water-carriage. Even the insignificant little Brisbane River gave the railway authorities considerable difficulty, in order to get freights low enough to run off the water-carriage, although the distance to Ipswich by the river was 50 miles, whereas by rail it was 24 miles. How would they work the water-carriage and the railway between Bundaberg and Gladstone? He could not see from the argument of the hon. member any plausible pretext for making a railway at an enormous expense to compete with the water-carriage. Probably the line might be required when they had a lot of soldiers going backwards and forwards, but at the present time it would be only a burden on the country.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member who had just sat down had made a very sensible speech, but in making a sensible speech he had spoiled his geography. The hon. member would have to go to school again to learn the geography of Northern Queensland. There was a good deal to be said in favour of that line, just as much as in favour of the line to Gayndah from Maryborough which had just been passed by the Committee. He was not going to use the arguments which had been used by the hon. member for Port Curtis. They all knew that a coastal line must be made, and the proposed line would be one link in the chain of that line. But he rose specially to ask the Minister for Works if the declaration he had made with regard to that railway, that after the £150,000 had been

expended he would not proceed any further with the line until a further appropriation was sanctioned by Parliament, would apply to all the other lines they had passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Then it would be a very bad thing for the country, because, as a rule, a number of the lines going into the country were not paying. It would be much better to complete three lines out of every four, and leave the fourth line for a further loan, than to go on in that way. He would have gone further and advocated the making of that line from both ends, but when the Minister for Works made that declaration he did not see how he could do it, because £150,000 was only sufficient for one section, and he could not ask him to commence two sections, one at Gladstone and one at Bundaberg. He was, however, quite certain that the wisest plan to pursue would be to commence the line at both ends, as they would have water carriage for landing the material, and it was desirable the line should be completed as early as possible. Although he did not expect the line would pay at once, still it would pay, and pay well, if it should ever come to pass that it was required for defence purposes; and for that reason he thought the coastal lines should be pushed on faster than the branch lines, or even than the main trunk lines. He was very sorry to hear the statement made by the Minister for Works.

Mr. PALMER said hon. members were always using the argument with regard to a coast line that it would be an admirable arm of defence; that by connecting their lines along the coast, North and South would be protected for evermore from the attacks of enemies. He thought they were going on wrong lines, and that the connection of their railways should be made in the interior. What was to prevent a force landing on the coast and cutting the line of communication, and then where would they be? Let the connection be made in the interior, where it could be made much cheaper than on the coast. In the interior it would cost only about £2,000 per mile, instead of £8,000 or £10,000, which would be the cost along the coast, when they took into consideration the increased number of rivers and creeks that had to be crossed. The Brisbane line should be connected with the Gulf of Carpentaria line, the Rockhampton line and the Townsville line in the centre, then with Adelaide and Sydney. They would then have a great national line for defence. But the principle of connecting the lines along the coast he could not recommend at all. He would ask how they were to pay the interest on the cost of the railways that would be required to connect Cooktown with Brisbane, considering the gaps, ranges, and rivers they would have to cross? The hon. member for Port Curtis, and others who spoke in favour of the line, used as their chief argument the fact that it would be required for defence purposes; but the hon. member for Stanley, Mr. White, who opposed the line, used a better argument when he said that there was no necessity for railways between places that had good water communication. According to that hon. member, a vessel could be taken overland from Bundaberg to Port Curtis, and he opposed the line for that reason. He was surprised that the hon. gentleman was not actuated by economical motives when considering other lines—lines which would not pay for the grease used on the wheels.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member who had just spoken forgot that in building railways for defence purposes the object

was to connect places where there was sufficient population to be of some service, and places where branches of the Defence Force were already established.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he could not compliment the hon. member for Burke on his military knowledge, because he had heard him speak of a square charging, whereas squares were generally formed to resist charges. He cordially supported the proposed line from a strategical point of view; and the time would come when all the towns in Australia, from Perth to Cooktown, would be connected for defence purposes. If an enemy should cut the line, it would very soon be repaired. During the Franco-Prussian war, the Germans built a railway 30 miles long, round Metz, in three days; and by the time the people in the colonies became trammelled with wars they would be able expeditiously to repair any line along the coast; and any line along the coast should have his warm support.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported the resolution to the House, and the resolution was adopted.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn. It is rather early, but it is too late to begin another railway. It is proposed to take to-morrow the Railway motions on the paper, which I hope will not occupy the whole of the day; and for the remainder of the sitting the business will stand on the paper in the same order as to-day.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at four minutes to 10 o'clock.