

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 1886**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Wednesday, 3 November, 1886.*

Question.—Electric Light Accident in the Parliamentary Buildings.—Question without Notice—cost of duplicating the Ipswich and Brisbane line.—Cleveland Branch Railway.—Warwick and St. George Railway—messages from the Legislative Council.—Bowen towards Ayr Railway.—Cooktown to Maytown Railway.—British Companies Bill—second reading.—Gold Fields Homestead Leases Bill—committee.—Adjournment.

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

### QUESTION.

Mr. BLACK asked the Chief Secretary—

1. Has the North Queensland Separation Petition been referred to the Government for their consideration, in accordance with the telegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Administrator of the Government, dated 19th September, 1886?

2. If the Government have taken the matter into consideration, will they lay a copy of their report on the table of the House?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) replied—

1. Yes.
2. The Government have not yet had time to furnish a report on the subject.

### ELECTRIC LIGHT ACCIDENT IN THE PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. B. B. Moreton) said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that the papers laid on the table by me on the 26th October, relating to the electric light accident in this Chamber, be printed.

Question put and passed.

## QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE.

COST OF DUPLICATING THE IPSWICH AND  
BRISBANE LINE.

Mr. ALAND said : Mr. Speaker,—If I am in order, I would like to ask the Minister for Works if he is in a position to furnish me with the information I asked for on the 1st October as to the cost of duplication of the Ipswich and Brisbane line? It is now more than four weeks since I asked for the return, which certainly ought not to take five minutes to prepare.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles) said : Mr. Speaker,—I am under the impression that there are no papers in connection with the matter referred to by the hon. member, but I will inquire to-morrow, and if there are any they will be produced at once.

## CLEVELAND BRANCH 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 Cleveland Branch Railway, commencing at 4 miles 76 chains 92½ links, on proposed extension of South Brisbane Branch to Melbourne street, and ending at Cleveland, in length 21 miles 48 chains 2 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 Cleveland Branch Railway, commencing at 4 miles 76 chains 92½ links, on proposed extension of South Brisbane Branch to Melbourne street, and ending at Cleveland, in length 21 miles 48 chains 2 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 he would point out to hon. members that there had been three surveys made of the proposed line to Cleveland, to endeavour to discover which was the most economical and most suitable for connecting the city of Brisbane with Cleveland. Hon. members were aware that the owners of land on the different routes had had a life-and-death struggle to endeavour to secure that which they thought most favourable to themselves. However, after a successful survey of all the routes and an examination of the land, both Mr. Phillips and Mr. Stanley, the Chief Engineer, recommended what was known as the coastal route. The proposed line was purely a passenger line, and he had no hesitation in stating that the coastal route was far the best, because it would pass through a greater amount of settlement; because the land was the most suitable for suburban residences, and in every way far better adapted for the railway than either the central or direct route. The line had this further advantage, that it passed within 2 miles of the fortifications at Lytton. At no very distant date it would be necessary to connect the city with that fort, and the course the proposed line would take would be a convenient one for that purpose. Mr. Phillips gave the distance of the different surveyed routes from Brisbane to Cleveland as follows : Inland route, 17 miles 17 chains; central route, 17 miles 52 chains 40 links; and the route recommended, 20 miles 15 chains. Both the central and direct lines would require branches to bring them into communication with the fortifications; those branches would extend the central line to 23 miles 12 chains 40 links,

and the direct line to 24 miles 17 chains 49 links. The line proposed in the plans now submitted for the approval of Parliament would, as he had just stated, pass within 2 miles of the fortifications, thereby saving something like 5 miles of line as compared with branches from the other routes. He was satisfied that in the event of the line being approved by the Committee there would in a very short period be a large settlement along the route. It passed through very populous localities, traversing Bulimba, going through the township of Wynnum, and passing directly opposite what was known as Wellington Point. There could be no doubt whatever that in the course of two or three years there would be a very large settlement along the line, which would never take place on either of the other routes which had been suggested. Although it was 3 miles longer by that route to reach Cleveland than it would be by a direct line, still, taking into consideration the advantage of the connection with the fort, the Government had no hesitation in coming to the conclusion that it was the preferable route. The construction of a railway to the fort was only a question of time. Whether it was built now or not there would eventually be railway communication between the city of Brisbane and the fortifications at Lytton. There was some agricultural land along the route, but he did not expect there would be any large quantity of agricultural produce carried on the railway; it would, as he had said, be purely a passenger line. Neither the present nor any other Government would, he thought, be likely to make that railway unless the owners of property along the route consented to give a portion of their land for the line, because it would pass entirely through private property with the exception of the terminus at Cleveland, which was Government land. It was the intention of the Government, if the Committee adopted the plan, to invite the owners of property to come forward and give the land necessary for the construction of the line, and he might say that several land proprietors had already done that. Of course that was not intended to apply to lands near Brisbane or small holdings. There had been considerable speculation towards Cleveland in that direction, but he believed people would come forward and assist the Government as far as they could by giving land for the purpose of building that railway. The Government would, of course, get the title-deeds of the land so given, to prevent any difficulties as to the ownership arising after the line was completed. He believed there was a proposition made by several owners of land on the Sandgate line, to provide the land for that railway when it was proposed to be constructed; but after the line was built they forgot their promises. Only in one instance, he believed, was the promise kept. The Government, knowing the difficulties that might arise in such a case, were determined in the present instance to have the title-deeds before proceeding with the construction of the railway. The Chief Engineer, in his report on the line, said :—

"This line commences at a point near the new gaol, South Brisbane, on the proposed extension of the South Brisbane branch to a central point in South Brisbane. Provision is made, as shown by dotted line or plan, for a connection with the existing South Brisbane branch at Albert siding.

"The proposed Cleveland branch first crosses by a bridge over the existing South Brisbane Branch Railway and over the Ipswich road, then running easterly for a short distance it passes by a bridge over the Logan road, and runs north-easterly to a crossing of Norman's Creek, about midway between the Logan Road Bridge and Stanley Bridge, and soon after it passes within half-a-mile of Coorparoo School.

"The line then rises rapidly to a watershed at the Bulimba Cemetery, and passing behind the Bulimba Divisional Board's office, crosses the new Cleveland road just beyond the point where the road to Lytton turns off.

"Its course is then north-easterly to a crossing of Bulimba Creek near Hemmant school, and after running parallel to the Lytton road for about a mile, it turns in an easterly direction towards Wynnum, passing within about 2 miles of Lytton. It is proposed eventually to construct a short branch line to the vicinity of the Battery, the cost of which would be very moderate, as it passes over extremely easy country.

"Near Wynnum the line is within about half-a-mile of the shores of Moreton Bay and it keeps about the same distance from the sea as far as West Cleveland, where it passes behind the school, and, turning soon after to the eastward, runs along the shore of Raby Bay to the terminus, which is within 10 chains of the Cleveland Post Office.

"Works.—The earthworks are generally light. The bridgework is of an inexpensive character with the exception of the bridges over the tidal creeks—namely, Norman's Creek, Bulimba Creek, and Tingalpa Creek, where eight 60-foot spans of steel girders will, in all, be required.

"Material.—There is no timber for sleepers and bridges in the neighbourhood of the line, but there is stone suitable for ballast at convenient intervals.

"Country.—The line passes for the first 5 miles through land of inferior quality but very suitable for suburban residences. From Bulimba Creek to Cleveland the land is suitable for agriculture, and there are a great number of favourable sites for marine residences near the line. There is already a considerable amount of settlement, which is likely to be largely increased.

"At about 18 miles the line passes close to Burnett's saw-mill, which will, no doubt, be a source of traffic to the line.

"Stations.—Provision has been made for stations as follows:—

- 1 mile 50 chains.—Coorparoo station.
- 2 miles 40 chains.—Site for future platform.
- 3 miles 20 chains.—Bulimba station, near the divisional board's office.
- 5 miles 20 chains.—Station near new Cleveland road to accommodate settlement about Tingalpa.
- 7 miles 60 chains.—Hemmant station.
- 10 miles 40 chains.—Wynnum station.
- 12 miles.—A station will have to be provided near this point for the settlement at Manly, but the position of it is not shown on the plan, as it is believed that the line can, with advantage, be slightly altered hereabouts.
- 16 miles 10 chains.—A station at the point where the line crosses the road to Wellington Point. This will be available for local settlement, and will be the nearest point to Capalaba.
- 17 miles 50 chains.—Wellington Point station.—For settlement at Wellington Point and about Burnett's saw-mill.
- 19 miles 50 chains.—West Cleveland station, near the school of that name.
- 21 miles 40 chains.—Cleveland station.

"The length of the line is 21 miles 48 chains 2 links, and the estimated cost is £105,083, or £4,865 per mile: clearing, £1,080; fencing, £5,268; earthwork, £15,214 4s. 11d.; road diversions and level crossings, £3,816; bridges, culverts, and drains, £25,149 10s.; permanent war, £30,922 15s.; station works, £10,840; supervision, £3,240; total, £95,530 9s. 11d.; contingencies (10 per cent.), £9,553 1s.; grand total, £105,083 10s. 11d., or £4,864 19s. 5d. per mile,—exclusive of rolling-stock and land."

It appeared to him that the engineer's estimate was extremely high; he did not think it would take anything like that amount to construct the line.

Mr. NORTON said there was one matter which the Minister for Works seemed to have overlooked. The line started from a point on another line which had not yet received the approval of the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No; it connects with the South Brisbane line.

Mr. NORTON said the plan showed that it connected with the proposed extension to Melbourne street—an extension which had not yet been before the House, and which might be disapproved of.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he thought the hon. member would see by the plans that it connected with the existing South Brisbane branch.

Mr. NORTON said either the plans were wrong, or the motion was wrong, or both were wrong. As the motion was worded, the line certainly started from a point on the proposed extension to Melbourne street. On the plan there was marked a dotted line to the present South Brisbane line, and he thought the motion ought to be altered so as not to leave any doubt as to that being the intention of the Ministry.

The PREMIER said the plan really showed that the proposed line commenced at Woollongabba, near the crossing of the Ipswich road, and ended at Cleveland. It was, in fact, a railway from Woollongabba—everyone knew the place—and the difficulty pointed out by the hon. member could be got over by altering the 1st paragraph of the motion to that effect. That would remove all possible ground of objection.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that the 1st paragraph of the resolution be amended, to read as follows:—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed Cleveland Branch Railway, commencing at Woollongabba, on the South Brisbane Branch Railway, and ending at Cleveland, in length 21 miles 48 chains 2 links, as laid upon the table of the House on Tuesday, the 26th ultimo.

Amendment put and agreed to.

Mr. NORTON said that, now that difficulty had been removed, the Committee would be able to go on with the discussion of the plans on the amended motion. When the question of that particular railway was before the House in 1884, he was one of those who very strongly objected to it. He objected to it on the ground that nothing was known as to the cost that would be incurred in making the line, and that there was very little known about it, either by the Government or by the House. And if the Government did know, they gave very little information to the House as to the nature of the country and the probable settlement that would take place on the line. At that time it was proposed to carry the line direct, or as nearly direct as possible, from Brisbane to Cleveland; and, as far as they had any information in regard to the subject, there was every reason to believe that although the line would be very much more thought of than any other where population existed, there would not be a very large settlement on the land. He was one who held very strongly that opinion, and he was very glad to see that, as the Government intended to go on with that line, they had altered their views so as to take it to that portion of the country where there was some settlement, and where in future there was likely to be a great deal more. He thought in carrying out a line like that the chief object of the Government should be to take it to or near to the fortifications at Lytton. They had to remember that in constructing a line near to a place like that the object was to be able to carry troops or guns or whatever was required to the fortifications as quickly as possible. He only regretted that the line as now proposed did not go direct to the military works, and then bend round again towards Cleveland. Of course, to do so would make a considerable detour, and increase considerably the length of the line. He believed that one of the chief reasons for constructing a line in that direction was to enable the Government, if necessity arose, to despatch troops down as quickly as possible to that quarter. He did not profess to know a great deal about the country down there. He had not been beyond Lytton for a number of years, and beyond that point he did not know anything about the land through which the line would pass. He would therefore rather hear what other members of the Committee who were familiar with the country had to say in regard to the subject.

Mr. HAMILTON said it was very interesting to compare the plans of the proposed railway with the utterances of the Minister for Works on the subject to various deputations which had waited upon him. When they looked at the plans before them they found the line touched on the river, and hugged the coast; whereas hon. members would recollect that the Minister for Works, in reply to various deputations which waited upon him, said that of all the lines to Cleveland to which he should object it would be the line which went along the river or hugged the coast. For instance, he (Mr. Hamilton) recollected that one deputation waited, in April, 1884, on the Minister for Works, and urged the claims of the coastal route, and the bringing of the line nearer Bulimba, and that the hon. gentleman then replied "that he had before his department as many as twenty-five applications for different railways, and of all the wild schemes ever submitted to him the one proposed by the deputation was the wildest." That was the scheme which the hon. gentleman had eventually decided upon. Then on January 6th, 1885, a deputation called upon him and advocated the coastal route, and Mr. Keating, who was present, stated that they wanted the line by Wynnum. The reply of the Minister for Works was, "It is perfectly absurd to ask to have a railway taken round by every nook and corner." He (Mr. Hamilton) saw by the plans that it missed Wynnum. Again on 31st January, when Mr. Buckland called on Mr. Miles *re* the Cleveland survey, that gentleman again stated that "if the hon. member liked to accept a direct survey, and not go jerrymandering all over the country, he was prepared to make provision out of the next money that was provided for surveys." But the Minister for Works had gone jerrymandering round the country himself, and actually had passed over the direct route. The Minister for Works that day had stated that after seeing all the routes the one proposed was decidedly the best, but he (Mr. Hamilton) was credibly informed that the direct route had not been surveyed. The Minister then informed them that the Chief Engineer recommended the present route. Now, when it was a question of engineering—when there were great difficulties in the way of construction at a particular locality—it was for the Chief Engineer, to a great extent, to decide. But although several surveys had been made, it was quite evident there were no engineering difficulties to prevent the railway being made along any of the routes. When that was the case it became a question of policy, and it was not for the engineer to interfere at all. There was no use, therefore, in trying to put the onus on the Chief Engineer in the present instance. In fact, the Minister for Works directly stated that there would be a larger settlement along the proposed route. He (Mr. Hamilton) could not say there was very much settlement about Lytton. Mosquitoes were very numerous there, and that was the only character of settlement within two miles of Lytton to which the proposed railway went. From there the line ran on to Wynnum, which was a mudhole where three people resided. That was the amount of settlement at two of the places at which that railway called. Then it was stated that by the direct route the country was very bad; but they all knew, as a rule, that coast country was the worst, and the proposed railway hugged the coast. He was certain that the direct route was far better than the coast route. There would have been an excuse for taking the line towards Lytton if it went as far as Lytton, but it only went within two miles of Lytton and then called in at Wynnum. The Minister for Works had stated that it was desirable to connect with Lytton, and that the pro-

posed route would be a shorter way to Cleveland. But in the first place it did not go to within two miles of Lytton, and after going so far, instead of going straight to Cleveland, it took all kinds of curves, increasing the distance by three or four miles, for the purpose of calling at a place there was no necessity to call at. If any hon. members looked at the plans they would see that by taking a point three miles on the Brisbane side of the termination of the railway in the direction of Lytton, and making a branch to Lytton and working in a direct line to Cleveland, there would be a great saving in the length of the proposed line.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member had been talking about what he knew nothing about. He (Mr. Miles) had taken the trouble of going over all the surveyed lines in company with the Chief Engineer and the surveyor, and he had no hesitation in saying that the proposed line was by far the most suitable route for the railway. The hon. member had referred to what he had told a deputation about the direct line and the proposition made to him. What he had said was that if they wanted a line built along the bends of the river, in and out all the pockets, then it was absurd and could not be entertained.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that was what he referred to.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not only that, but the hon. member ought to be aware that where there was a suburban line it was desirable, even if it were carried over a longer distance, to make the line where population was likely to settle. Nobody but a lunatic would think of building a railway direct from South Brisbane to Cleveland. He knew there had been a great struggle among owners of property in regard to the route the line should take, and if he had received one deputation on the matter he would swear the hon. member for Bulimba had brought him fifty.

Mr. BUCKLAND: Forty-five.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was a very large number at all events, and in every case the deputation had advocated a line going in the direction of their own properties. The Government had come to the conclusion that the route proposed would be the most advantageous to the country. There would no doubt be a large settlement along the line before long, and if the Government had not been satisfied of that, they would not have proposed that the plans laid on the table should be adopted.

Mr. BUCKLAND said that if the Minister for Works had received fifty deputations with regard to the Cleveland railway, he (Mr. Buckland) must have received 150—in fact, he had lost tally of the number long since. What with direct routes, middle routes, and coastal routes, he must have received double the number that had waited on the Minister for Works; and he could only say that he was very glad the line had reached the present stage. He was glad the leader of the Opposition had drawn attention to the wording of the motion, as he confessed that on looking at the plan he could not see where the starting point would be. One place marked was near the old "Buffalo"; and he had been asked where "Buffalo" was. He reminded his questioners that years ago there used to be an hotel of that name near the South Brisbane Railway crossing on the Ipswich road, and he believed it was near that place that the Cleveland railway would branch off. He thought the amendment which had been carried simplified the matter very

much. In reference to the various deputations that had waited on him and the numerous meetings he had attended, he could safely say that he had endeavoured to steer clear of favouring any particular route. He was only anxious to have a railway to Cleveland, and he could say that if the proposed line passed the Assembly and eventually the Council no better line would be constructed as a financial speculation.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Everybody has said that.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he admitted that everyone had said the same in advocating the construction of the railways proposed to be made in their different districts; but he recollected the time when it was said that the Sandgate line and others would not pay, and when their construction was condemned as a waste of money. That had not proved to be the case, however, for the Sandgate line was now one of the best paying lines in the colony.

Mr. MURPHY: No.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he and the hon. member differed in that respect. It was a well-known fact that in the old country railway companies tried to get passenger traffic rather than merchandise; and any gentleman who remembered twenty years ago in the old country, particularly in London, would know that all the companies owning railways on the south side of the river having their termini either at Nine Elms or Bricklayers' Arms built bridges across the Thames to catch the traffic in the Strand and City, showing that they were all anxious to catch the passenger traffic rather than goods. It was the passenger traffic that paid the best in all cases, he believed. Referring to the agitation for the construction of a line to Cleveland, he might remind the Committee that in October, 1882, he gave notice of motion to ask for a sum of money for the survey of a line to Cleveland *via* Lytton. The hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, then Minister for Works, promised that if he would withdraw the motion he would place a sufficient sum on the Supplementary Estimates for the survey of a line from South Brisbane to Lytton, and he accepted that promise. The promised survey was carried out by the late Administration, and the plans were still to be seen in the Railway Department. In January, 1883, he again tabled a resolution for a sum of money for a survey of a line from South Brisbane to Cleveland, Redland Bay, and Mount Cotton, *via* Lytton and Wynnum, and hon. members were aware of the result. In 1884 a sum of £80,000 was placed on the Loan Estimates, which was passed by that Assembly for the construction of a railway from South Brisbane to Cleveland; and the Committee were now asked to approve of the plans laid on the table. He could only say, as he stated at the commencement of his remarks, that if the line were constructed it would be one of the best paying lines in the colony, and would add very much to the settlement of that splendid district along the shores of Moreton Bay, where many residents of the city and of other parts of the colony would be able to seek the cool and refreshing breezes of the Pacific. The Minister for Works was, he thought, rather high in his estimate of the cost of construction. He did not see any engineering difficulties on the route, and he thought £4,000 a mile a very high estimate indeed. He would like the hon. member to bear in mind that wherever it was possible, the bridges on the line should be constructed so as to be available for wheel traffic also, especially over Tingalpa Creek, near the mouth, where a bridge was very much required.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is a matter for the divisional board.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he had no doubt the divisional board would assist in any way within their powers to facilitate the construction of a bridge such as he had described. The Minister had referred to the owners of land giving as much as was required for the railway to the Government or asking nothing but fair and reasonable prices for the same; and he could assure the hon. gentleman that a large majority of freeholders had promised him that they were quite willing to give the land required. It would be unreasonable to expect that holders of small allotments, from sixteen perches up to an acre or a little more, would give the land free of charge; but at least three-fourths of the freeholders of areas from five acres and upwards were willing to give the land at a very reasonable consideration, and he did not think there would be any difficulty in arranging the valuation of the land resumed the whole distance of the line. The hon. member for South Brisbane, when speaking a few weeks since, mentioned that he was dissatisfied because the continuation of the South Brisbane line to Melbourne street was not likely to be brought forward during the present session. However, he saw from the way the resolution was worded that the Minister intended on a future occasion—he hoped, early next session—to lay the plans of that extension on the table. He did not know that he need say any more in reference to the line now under consideration of the Committee. He could only add that as a passenger line he was sure it would be largely availed of. The neighbourhood of Mount Cotton and Redland was highly eligible both for residence sites and the growth of all tropical productions. Grapes, bananas, oranges, and other fruit-trees of that description grew luxuriantly in the district, and the people, as a rule, were prosperous and in easy circumstances. He was sure that if the resolution passed, the people of the district—one of the earliest and oldest settled districts in Queensland—would be very grateful to that Assembly. He had great pleasure in supporting the resolution.

Mr. FERGUSON said, as far as he could see, the line was intended to give railway communication to a third watering-place for the city of Brisbane. They had already a railway to Sandgate, another under construction to Southport, and the proposed line—the third—was to Cleveland. These lines were for no other purpose that he could see than to convey the people of Brisbane to three watering-places. But the most extraordinary part of it was, what little trouble the Government had in putting before the Committee plans of railways that started from Brisbane. As long as they started from Brisbane there was not the slightest trouble—there were no deviations or obstacles in the way. It was well known also that those lines would not pay. None of those short lines had paid; neither would they pay. The Sandgate Railway had been paying a small percentage, but that would be reduced by the construction of the proposed line, because if people went to Cleveland instead of to Sandgate it would take so much traffic from the Sandgate line. So that while the main trunk lines of the colony, the railways which were most paying, were being abandoned by the Government, they asked the Committee to pass small extensions to different places about the city of Brisbane. They had already passed a line to go through the middle of the city, which would cost about half-a-million of money, and which was not wanted in any shape or form. The Committee would never look at such an expenditure anywhere else except in the city of Brisbane. Here, they had another line which would cost over £100,000; and they were constructing one between Brisbane and Ipswich, which would cost £150,000 or £200,000. In fact, as long as the

money was spent in and about Brisbane, it did not matter what came before the Committee it would be passed. And yet the slightest possible excuse for not extending railways in other parts of the country and in the outside districts was brought forward and they were stopped. He believed the plans for the extension of the Central line had been ready for some months past, but they had not been laid on the table of the House, and yet paltry lines were brought forward simply because they were connected with the city of Brisbane.

Mr. MURPHY said the hon. member for Bulimba stated that the Sandgate Railway was one of the best paying lines in the colony. It was nothing of the kind. There were many railways in the colony that were paying better. That statement had been made over and over again in debate, but it was not at all true. The Sandgate Railway was only paying about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on the cost of construction. It was not paying the interest on the money borrowed to make it. The Central line was paying  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Not now.

Mr. MURPHY said it paid that in 1885, and would again. It had fallen off lately, no doubt, but it was a railway that would soon recover itself, and the further they pushed out the lines in the Central district to the western portion of the colony the more they would improve. That was the history of all those railways. He did not like a statement like that made by the member for Bulimba to go abroad without contradiction. The Townsville and Torrens Creek line paid  $5\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. in 1885, and he did not believe that the Sandgate line, or any branch line running from Brisbane, could compare with those trunk lines. He rose merely for the purpose of objecting to the statement to which he had referred.

Mr. BUCKLAND said the hon. gentleman said the Sandgate line did not pay as well as some of the Northern lines. Possibly not, but he did not think the hon. gentleman's statement was quite as correct as it might be. The Sandgate line had been paying 4 per cent., and he believed it would have paid 6 per cent. all through 1885, had it not been charged with the extra expenditure for the duplication of the line. That had reduced the percentage considerably, and although it would appear from the hon. gentleman's statement that it did not pay more than  $3\frac{1}{2}$  to 4 per cent. in 1885, he believed that it paid nearly 6 per cent. He admitted that the Charters Towers line, and the others mentioned by the hon. gentleman, were paying lines, but the expense of working the Sandgate line was much greater than on those lines.

Mr. McMASTER said it should not be forgotten that the Sandgate line had been very heavily handicapped from the commencement. There was a branch line running to the racecourse, made, he believed, simply for the purpose of carrying those gentlemen who attended races there once or twice a year. That line was a dead loss, and the working of it was charged against the Sandgate line. The trains running there for many months had only two or three passengers. Why was that line run to the racecourse? He was certain it was not asked for by the inhabitants of the district. It was run there by some of the very gentlemen who were now opposing it and crying out that the Sandgate line did not pay. The branch line stopped at the racecourse; it did not go to deep water or anywhere else. They heard a good deal to the effect that lines about Brisbane did not pay, but so far as he knew that was the only line that ended nowhere and could not be expected to be

profitable. The fares charged to the races were at a very reduced rate, and the working of that branch was charged to the Sandgate line. No wonder it did not pay. He believed, as the hon. member for Bulimba had said, that if the Sandgate line had fair play, and if it had not been for the duplication of that line at the present time, it would be paying very handsomely. Now, about the Cleveland line, personally he felt very pleased that the Government had chosen to take it by the coast, and he should think that if the Government had chosen the direct line the sooner they vacated office the better, for there was no agricultural land along the direct route. There might be a few building sites, but he did not know that the district was a very nice place in which to live. He believed also that there were some very large paddocks along the direct line, but the soil was very poor. Now, on the contrary, although the coastal route was  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles longer, it went through a district that had been proved to be an agricultural district, and it also went near some very beautiful building sites. It went also to Lytton; it did not stop at one particular place, but accommodated all the watering-places on the way to Cleveland. He was certain that hon. members who knew Lytton would not say that it was desirable to run a direct line there and stop. Apart altogether from the fact that the line passed close to the fortifications, he thought the Government had chosen the very best route that could be found. Of course, every hon. member said the line in which he was interested would pay; but he was quite satisfied in his own mind that if the Cleveland line did not pay immediately it would pay in a very few years. The hon. member for Rockhampton had said that there never was any difficulty in getting the sanction of hon. members to a line that went out of Brisbane; but he thought the hon. member must be mistaken. The great difficulty was in getting sanction for lines that were needed around Brisbane; but those hon. members who protested against suburban lines never objected to any amount of railways in the North. Immediately, however, that a line near Brisbane was proposed hon. members cried out, "Oh! Brisbane again. Everything for Brisbane." Now, he considered hon. members were not acting fairly, and that the charge made by the hon. member for Rockhampton was not a fair charge. It was the Northern lines that were carried through the House without any difficulty. Why, the first line that had been passed during the session was for the North, and it passed without division. Not a word was said about it. They never heard a word about those Northern lines, but if Brisbane was mentioned hon. members on the other side objected and were up in arms at once. He was quite content with the coastal route to Cleveland, and he was sure it would not injure the Sandgate line one iota. The hon. member for Rockhampton must remember that the population of Sandgate was increasing, and that a new outlet must be found for the people. The Government, he considered, had done well in running the line past Lytton. They had spent a lot of money in fortifications there, and it was desirable that the place should be connected by railway. He knew the country between Brisbane and Cleveland on both routes, and was satisfied that the best route had been chosen.

Mr. DONALDSON said the hon. member had made one of his usual speeches, ending up with a lot of words meaning nothing. He never used any argument except abuse, and if anyone disagreed with him he at once used abuse without any argument whatever. However, he was able and willing to take his share of any abuse the hon. member used. The Committee had passed a number of railways which it had been agreed

would not pay, and he did not see why they should not pass that little line also. It would only cost £100,000, and add that sum to the debt of the colony, because there was no doubt that it would not pay for a very long time to come. As far as the route was concerned, he was sure the Government had chosen the best route, and that the line would really go where there was the largest population at present and where there would be the largest number of people settled in the future; but as for the line paying, he was perfectly satisfied there was not the slightest possibility of its giving any return. He regretted very much, with the hon. member for Rockhampton, to find that some of the best paying lines in the colony were not going to be extended any further.

The PREMIER: Which are they?

Mr. DONALDSON said, the Central line, for instance.

The PREMIER: Who said so?

Mr. DONALDSON said the Minister for Works publicly stated to a deputation that that line would not be extended, and he believed the Government had no intention of bringing forward the plans during the present session for the extension of that line. The argument in favour of main trunk lines was this: If they did not pay immediately they were an indirect benefit, because they were enhancing the value of Crown land; but any line that was constructed through centres of population where the land was alienated simply enhanced the value of private property. The lines in the interior, on the other hand, did a great deal towards developing the resources of the country. He had already pointed out, as far as the Western line was concerned, that if it was continued further to the west it would secure a trade that at present did not come to the colony at all. The extension of that line would enable the land to be used for the purposes of wool-growing instead of cattle-grazing, and it was well known that in districts where wool was grown there was always a much larger population than in districts where cattle stations alone existed. These were arguments in favour of extending the main lines to the interior, because they developed the country, increased its resources, and enabled the holders of runs to use them for a better purpose than they were now used for; but he believed there was not the slightest intention of extending those lines, while there was every prospect of their paying far better than any of the lines passed this session. As far as the Cleveland line was concerned, he had not the slightest hesitation in saying that he believed it was proposed to take it along the best route; but he was perfectly certain that for many years to come it would not pay.

Mr. WAKEFIELD said the hon. member for Barcoo had made a statement which he could not allow to go uncontradicted. He stated that suburban lines did not pay, and quoted the Sandgate line as an instance. He thought if the hon. member would refer to the statistics he would find that that line had paid over 5 per cent. on its cost of construction and working expenses. During the last twelve months it had been very much handicapped, and consequently had only returned something like  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. It had been handicapped in this way: A large portion of the line had had to be reconstructed, and it had the racecourse branch attached to it, which was not a paying section. The Sandgate line had also been charged with a share of the Brisbane station expenses, but when the line was completed he had no doubt that it would begin to pay 5 or 6 per cent., and

all charges as well. He thought that the line to Cleveland would be a branch suburban line which would pay equally as well as the Sandgate line.

Mr. DONALDSON said the hon. member, while challenging the statement of the hon. member for Barcoo, did not state that the House had already passed a motion that would add £500,000 to the cost of the Sandgate Railway.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. DONALDSON said the line through the Valley would cost that amount, and that it would not pay he was convinced; and yet one of the great arguments used in favour of it was that it would shorten the distance to Sandgate. Hon. members used that argument frequently. It would make part of the same line and would add considerably to the cost of its construction. But now that the line was passed, hon. members who supported it objected to its being called part of the Sandgate Railway. If they tacked £500,000 on the cost of that line he did not think the returns would be very much greater than would pay the interest on the cost of construction—if they did that.

Mr. SALKELD said he would point out to the hon. member for Warrego that part of the expense of the Fortitude Valley line would be incurred in making a station for the convenience of the whole of the passenger traffic on the Southern and Western Railway, and the other part was in connection with the North Coast line, to prevent trains having to go all the way round by Normanby. The hon. member had surely forgotten the circumstances of the case. As to the estimate that the line would cost £500,000, that was probably only a guess.

Mr. DONALDSON said he believed that the information furnished to the Committee from time to time was nothing else but guesswork. They had had very little information supplied to them. If he had fallen into an error it was unfortunate, but it certainly had not been corrected by any information supplied by the Minister for Works or any of the hon. members who strongly supported the line. With regard to the argument that the Fortitude Valley railway would shorten the route round by Normanby, it might lessen the distance by a mile and a-half, or perhaps even a couple of miles, but what was that compared with the expenditure that the construction of that line would involve? He did not mind being met by fair argument, but he did not think any argument or information had been supplied to the Committee by the hon. member for Ipswich.

Mr. McMASTER said the hon. member was drawing a red herring across the line before the Committee by discussing the Fortitude Valley and Sandgate railways. Hon. members on that side did not argue the other evening, when the Fortitude Valley line was going through, that it was to shorten the Sandgate Railway.

Mr. DONALDSON: Yes, they did.

Mr. McMASTER: No, they did not. His argument was that the Government saw the necessity of bringing the station into the city, where it ought to have been brought originally; that the proposed extension would be a continuation of the main trunk line, and that it would prevent the necessity of trains on the North Coast line shunting, and going a roundabout way to get into Brisbane.

Mr. MURPHY: Mr. Fraser,—I rise to a point of order. The hon. member is discussing the Fortitude Valley line, and that is not the question before the Committee.

Mr. McMASTER: Who brought up that line?



Mr. HAMILTON said the hon. member for Fortitude Valley had spoken about drawing a red herring across the trail.

Mr. McMASTER: I sat down because a point of order was raised.

The CHAIRMAN: With reference to the point of order raised by the hon. member for Barcoo, I must say that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley is departing somewhat from the subject before the Committee.

Mr. HAMILTON: The hon. member for Fortitude Valley has stated—

Mr. McMASTER: I want to know whether I am in order or not.

The CHAIRMAN: I have already stated that the hon. member is not strictly in order. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley is in possession of the floor.

Mr. McMASTER said it was no use discussing the Fortitude Valley line on that question, but it was drawn in by a member on the other side of the Committee. He believed the hon. member for Barcoo was the first to mention the Fortitude Valley railway. But what had that to do with the Cleveland line? The hon. member for Barcoo said members on the Government side had advocated the Valley line because it would shorten the Sandgate Railway. They did nothing of the kind; they simply argued the matter on its merits, and he thought they would be perfectly justified in approving of the plans of the proposed line from Brisbane to Cleveland.

Mr. HAMILTON said when he rose before he was about to say that the hon. member for Fortitude Valley was the first to draw a red herring across the trail, when he held up his own side as a bright and shining example which should be followed by the rest of the members of the Committee as to the manner in which they passed the railways proposed by the Government. The hon. member stated that no railways connected with Brisbane were introduced that were not objected to by members on the Opposition side, but that no objection was taken to railways brought forward for the North. Unfortunately, there had not been any Northern railways brought forward yet to speak of. They could see the digestion of which the members on the other side were capable when they could digest the *via recta* and the Fortitude Valley railway; and it would be absurd indeed if they could, after that, strain at the small gnats of railways proposed for the North. The Minister for Works had stated that somewhere about fifty deputations had waited on him in connection with the Cleveland railway. He (Mr. Hamilton) could only say that if the gentlemen forming those deputations were received in the same way as a deputation of which he was a member was received they were courageous men. As soon as the hon. gentleman eyed him (Mr. Hamilton) he asked what interest he had in the line, and because he refused to answer the question—although he had some land on the line—the hon. gentleman refused to reply to his inquiry. With regard to the other members of the deputation who had an interest in the line, the hon. gentleman told them that their opinions were not worth much because they had an interest in the matter. However, he (Mr. Hamilton) made some allowance for the Minister's irritation. No doubt, being interviewed by deputation after deputation would have the effect of putting one out, even a good-natured gentleman like the Minister for Works. There was one statement made by the hon. gentleman which he was not in a position to contradict. In fact, he agreed with him when he said that nobody but a lunatic would advocate the straight route. The hon. gentleman was, he thought, the first to advocate that route.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not think it was advisable to introduce extraneous matter into a discussion of that kind, as it interfered, to some extent, with the consideration of the subject before the Committee. They had had members on both sides introducing other railways which was not strictly in order. With regard to the line under consideration, he thought it would ultimately be a paying line.

The PREMIER: No doubt about it.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he believed the most payable part of the Sandgate line was the first 5 miles. The next 5 miles certainly did not pay much, until they got to Sandgate itself. He believed the Cleveland line would pay in spots all along the route from Brisbane to Cleveland. There would be little centres of population at places along the line the same as there were on the Sandgate Railway. He did not think it likely that it would be a paying line for the first year or two, but it would eventually be a paying line, and a very good one. As to the argument with reference to the line going to a third watering-place, he would say that if a third watering-place was required a line should be made there. Cleveland was only the end of the proposed railway, which would go along the coast and pass several small centres of population. He was of opinion that there was far more to be said in favour of that line in that respect than most of the other lines tabled during the present year. For that reason he would give the passing of that line his hearty approval. He did not expect there would be a division on the subject, but if there were he would certainly vote for the line.

Mr. JORDAN said he considered there was a connection between the Sandgate line and the line now before the Committee, inasmuch as they were both suburban lines. When they were discussing suburban lines, they should take into account the fact that they must have an outlet for the great city of Brisbane—a rapidly growing city, whose population had increased, since the census five years ago, from 34,000 to about 50,000. It was not a healthy place, because the system of drainage was defective, and the sanitary arrangements were anything but what they should be; in fact some years ago he had pointed out that the rate of mortality in the district of Brisbane was at that time nearly double that of the whole colony. It was absolutely necessary that the inhabitants of the colony should have facilities for getting away into the suburbs; and if the Sandgate line was not a very paying line at present, in the course of ten years it would possibly pay double its present rate. That was a very good argument, he thought, for the construction of the line to Cleveland. He was not quite sure that the Minister for Works was carrying out to the full a promise he had made two and a-half years ago to the people of Cleveland. At a banquet which was given to the Ministers there the Government made a distinct promise to construct a line to Cleveland. The honest, unsophisticated people of Cleveland were greatly complimented by one of the Ministers for their modesty in never having asked for it before, and the promise was given that the line would be made. The good, unsophisticated people thought it was a direct line, and they were confirmed in that opinion, because when the hon. member for Bulimba asked some question of the Minister for Works shortly afterwards as to whether the line would be made to Cleveland by way of Lytton and Wynnum and so on, the Minister for Works said he could not approve of a line that would go jerry-mandering all around the country; he approved of a direct line, and that would be carried out. Well no doubt the Government

had great difficulties to contend with. They had first to see whether the line would pay, and then to consider what number of people would be likely to be accommodated by it; and they had come to the conclusion that a much larger number of people would be accommodated by carrying the line near Lytton and by way of Wynnum and Wellington Point than by the other way. He (Mr. Jordan) was not going to find fault with them on that account, but he took that opportunity of expressing his hope—he was a very hopeful person, people said he was very sanguine—he found it very difficult to give up anything he had set his mind upon—he was still hoping, because they had had a protracted session, and it would not be over, he supposed, for a month or six weeks, that the Minister would see his way to lay on the table of the House the plan and book of reference of the extension to Melbourne street. Of all the lines projected by the Government that was the most important. Of course, hon. members would not be surprised to hear him say that, because he represented South Brisbane, but it must be remembered that the branch from the Southern and Western line into South Brisbane was made some years ago, with the intention of bringing the produce from the country—chiefly the western portions of the country—direct to the nearest port: that was the South Brisbane wharfage. The line was imperfectly constructed, from a very false economy, and with the idea of making it very cheaply indeed, and there was no accommodation at the South Brisbane wharf for anything but the coal trade. He had urged upon the Government more than once the importance of endeavouring to enlarge that wharf and perfect the arrangements so as to fit them for the original purpose of making a great commercial wharf; but there were difficulties in the way which he believed were almost insuperable. The wharf was too short and narrow, and the configuration of the ground around it was of such a nature as to make an extension in width almost impossible. But there was no doubt in the world that nearly all the produce of this colony that went to England direct went in the great British-India steamers from the south side, and as soon as the extension to Melbourne street was completed there would be accommodation for all that vast trade; they would simply have to run a tramway across Stanley street to the municipal wharf, and to Parbury and Lamb's wharf, where those great steamers now lie. He urged upon the Government the advisability of laying the book of reference and plans of that extension at once on the table of the House; he knew there would be no real difficulty in the way. He believed the reason the Government had not done it was that many of their supporters and representatives of the people on both sides of the House had been very urgent that their own lines should be brought forward without delay, and the Government thought perhaps it would be almost too much to have that line added. However, considering all the promises that had been made—considering that at the beginning of last session a distinct promise was made by the Minister for Works, in reply to his (Mr. Jordan's) question that the plans and book of reference of that extension would be laid on the table that session, and considering that at the beginning of the present session a promise was made in reply to another question that they would probably be laid on the table in this session, and considering that every thing was ready—he believed the Minister for Works, if he were so disposed, could lay them on the table of the House within a week—he thought those promises should be fulfilled. He was satisfied that both sides of the Committee were convinced of the importance of that extension. It would

be the great terminus of the southern system of railways from the Tweed, and Southport, and Beaudesert, and Beenleigh, and Cleveland, all of which had passed the House. It would be near the centre of the city, and would relieve the traffic on the north side. He had ascertained that about 50,000 tons represented something like the quantity of goods that came into the port and left it every year. At present the half of that, which went away to England, was shipped on the south side in those great British-India boats. That railway would accommodate all that traffic. It now cost the Government a large sum to bring the wool from the Roma-street station to the south side. The Government had now to bring it there at their own expense. That would all be saved. The Premier dwelt very convincingly the other day, when the question of another railway was before the Committee, on the fact that with regard to railways in general it was found that suburban traffic paid the best. There was not the slightest doubt about that. They knew how well the Sandgate line had paid so far in spite of the disadvantages connected with it, and they could well believe that in the course of a few years it would be a very lucrative line indeed, paying a very large percentage on the outlay. The greater the facilities they could create for sending the inhabitants of that large and thickly populated city out to the watering-places round the Bay, the healthier would be the town, and the better that kind of railway would pay. He would again urge upon the Government the importance of at once proceeding with the extension to Melbourne street. He believed that if a little pressure were brought to bear on the officials those plans could be laid on the table during the present session. If that were done it would in the first place please him; in the second place it would please his constituents; and in the third place it would remove the grievance which his constituents naturally had against the Government. He was satisfied that it would do the Government no harm; he was satisfied that it would do them good. It would pass through the House without difficulty, and his constituents, who had always been a loyal body to the Liberal party, would consider it a graceful thing on the part of the Government if they would accede to his request.

The PREMIER said he wished to say one word in reply to the hon. member for South Brisbane—although perhaps the Chairman ought to have called his colleague to order when he began to speak on a line of railway that was not before the Committee. He (the Premier) was present at the banquet at Cleveland to which the hon. member referred, and he did not remember promising a railway to Cleveland on that occasion. Indeed, he did not remember ever promising a railway to anybody at any time. He had always been careful never to make promises unless he was quite sure that he could perform them. That the proposed line to Cleveland should be a direct line had certainly never occurred to him; there could be no justification whatever for it.

Mr. NORTON: Then you have changed your mind on the question.

The PREMIER: I have not changed my mind.

Mr. NORTON: Look at your speech in 1884 on the Loan Bill.

The PREMIER said that at one time it was proposed that the line should run down to Bulimba ferry, skirt the Brisbane River, and then follow along the shores of the Bay to Cleveland. That was a preposterous proposition, and it was the proposition which his hon. colleague, the Minister for Works, spoke of, saying that he

would not be a party to it. The proposal now before the Committee was quite different from the one originally made; it would command a good deal of traffic and be from the start a paying line. If the Chairman would allow him to depart for a moment from the rules of debate he would refer very briefly to the question of the South Brisbane Railway. There was no doubt that that railway must be extended. The present terminus was quite unsuitable for the traffic from the South Coast Railway, the Cleveland railway, and other branches, and also for the coal traffic from West Moreton. But it was very necessary that when a new terminus was made it should be made in the right place. It would cost a good deal of money, though he did not think there would be much difficulty in getting it through the House. It was important, therefore, that the scheme should be thoroughly well matured and quite ripe before it was brought before the House for its sanction. He had ascertained from inquiries made in the Works Department that it was not possible to lay the plans on the table during the present session unless the session was unduly prolonged. The House had authorised a good many lines during the present session; they could not spend all the money at once; and he did not think there would practically be any delay whatever if the plans were not approved of in a hurry in the last week of the present session, but were postponed until the second or third week of the next, when the plans would be matured, and satisfactory information could be given.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he could not help admiring the persistency with which the hon. member, Mr. Jordan, advocated, as a matter of the greatest importance, the extension of a railway from one street to another in South Brisbane. He was one of the hon. member's constituents, and had the interests of South Brisbane at heart as much as the hon. member; and he should have felt better pleased to see the hon. member look a little further ahead, and advocate the continuation of the Beaudesert line through Taylor's Gap to Casino, and so make South Brisbane really the terminus of the Sydney line. That would be taking a wider range, and contributing more substantially towards the interests of his constituents. With regard to the Cleveland line, he believed it would be a profitable undertaking. There was already a good deal of settlement along the line, and a great deal more was bound to follow. He had voted against the Sandgate line when it was before the House, in the belief that it would never pay. It had turned out a very successful line, and there was every reason to assume that the Cleveland line would be just as great a success.

Mr. SHERIDAN said he remembered the time very well when the first line that was proposed to be constructed in what was now Queensland was a line from Ipswich to Cleveland, and he fully believed that that line would have been constructed had the bar at the mouth of the Brisbane River not been deepened. In that case Cleveland, instead of Brisbane, would have been the principal town in the colony. The Fates, however, ordained otherwise; but the fact remained that it was seriously intended at that time to make a railway from Ipswich to Cleveland. He knew every yard of the country between Brisbane and Cleveland, and every yard of country about Cleveland itself; and he felt no hesitation in saying that he fully and conscientiously believed that the Cleveland line would be a paying line in the ordinary sense, as compared with the Sandgate line and other lines of that description. The place itself was attractive and charming. The plan proposed—going near Lytton,

across Wynnum Creek, by Tingalpa and Wellington Point—was undoubtedly the best that could be selected, because it passed through land where, as the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, said, little groups or centres of settlement would be formed, all of which would use the railway. He was present at the banquet at Cleveland to which allusion had been made by the hon. member, Mr. Jordan, and the Chief Secretary. He could not say that the Government promised a line to Cleveland on that occasion, but he could say that the railway was the chief subject of conversation during the evening; and so strong were the arguments in favour of a railway that he himself promised that when it was brought before the House he should heartily vote for it, and now he was exceedingly proud to be able to fulfil his promise.

Mr. SCOTT said that on many motions brought before hon. members there was much more said than was really necessary. That had been the case with regard to the motion now under consideration. The discussion might have been over, as far as any opposition to it was concerned, long ago. He did not know of any hon. member who intended to vote against it—certainly he himself did not—and there need be nothing more said about it.

Mr. NORTON said that the Minister for Works had said that the cost of the line would be £4,865 per mile. Did that include the rails?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. NORTON said that as the vote in the Loan Estimates was only £80,000, and according to the estimate the Cleveland line would require £104,000 odd, he would like to know in the event of the cost coming to more than the appropriation, whether the hon. gentleman would wait before the completion of the line to obtain the sanction of Parliament for the rest? The Minister for Works had said on the previous night, in connection with a line in which he (Mr. Norton) was interested, that the Government would not carry on the works beyond what the money authorised by Parliament enabled them to do; and in answer to the hon. member for Townsville, he also said that none of the lines which were being passed would be carried through until the sanction of Parliament had been obtained for the further sums required for their completion. He would like to know whether the hon. gentleman adhered to that resolution in regard to the Cleveland line?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Government would not spend more money than was voted in the Loan Estimates without the sanction of Parliament. But he was perfectly satisfied that the money voted would be sufficient for this line. Tenders were continually being sent in by contractors that were £10,000 to £12,000 and £14,000 under the engineer's estimate. The Chief Engineer put in large prices so as to leave a wide margin. He was perfectly satisfied that the £80,000 voted would be sufficient for the Cleveland line.

Mr. NORTON said he was glad the hon. gentleman was satisfied, for he found that on every Loan Estimate a sum of money was asked for to complete lines which had been authorised, and on which the money had been spent before the sanction of the House had been obtained. And he thought it was quite possible that the same would occur in the present instance, unless the hon. gentleman adhered to the statement he had made on the previous night. As to the sum appropriated being sufficient, he would accept that opinion as an opinion, but they had also the hon. gentleman's opinion in regard to the duplication of the line to Ipswich, that it would not cost more than £85,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he did not say that.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. gentleman was distinctly reported in *Hansard* to have said it would not cost more than £85,000, and it would cost double that amount. He (Mr. Norton) had no doubt his sincerity in the present matter was equally great. He asked him if he would treat all lines alike—that if he had made up his mind that one line would not be carried out beyond the money authorised, that determination would be applicable to all?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he hoped the hon. gentleman would not carry out the intention he had expressed the previous night, but that he would see his way and find a way to complete those lines without stopping them. It was not his (Mr. Macrossan's) place to point out how it could be done, but it ought to be done. No lines should be finished half-way or two parts of the way, and the Government would be quite justified in finishing all the lines, rather than leaving them unfinished half-way between two stations.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Government had no doubt they would get the money to finish the lines; but they would submit their propositions to Parliament before they appropriated the money.

Mr. NORTON: That is before the liability is incurred?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. NORTON said he did not wish the hon. gentleman to stop half-way; but he did wish, if one line was to be cut off in the middle, that others would be treated in the same way.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; and the CHAIRMAN reported the resolution.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR WORKS, the report was adopted.

## WARWICK TO ST. GEORGE RAILWAY.

### MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER: I have to report the following message from the Legislative Council:—

"MR. SPEAKER,

"The Legislative Council having appointed a select committee on the proposed line of railway from Warwick towards St. George, and that committee being desirous to examine Francis Kates, Esquire, a member of the Legislative Assembly, in reference thereto, request that the Legislative Assembly will give leave to its said member to attend and be examined by the said committee on such day and days as shall be arranged between him and the said committee."

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that leave be given to the hon. member to attend the same whenever he sees fit.

Question put and passed.

The SPEAKER: I have to report the following message from the Legislative Council:—

"MR. SPEAKER,

"The Legislative Council having appointed a select committee on the proposed line of railway from Warwick towards St. George, and that committee being desirous to examine Jacob Horwitz, Esquire, a member of the Legislative Assembly, in reference thereto, request that the Legislative Assembly will give leave to its said member to attend and be examined by the said committee on such day and days as shall be arranged between him and the said committee."

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that leave be given to the hon. member to attend the same whenever he sees fit.

Question put and passed.

## BOWEN TOWARDS AYR RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—I 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 Bowen towards Ayr, section No. 1, in length 30 miles, 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 Bowen towards Ayr, section No. 1, in length 30 miles, 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 the proposed railway would be entirely a surface line; in fact, the estimate of Mr. Hannam for the construction of the line was £2,500 per mile. He (the Minister for Works) had travelled over the country, and knew it very well; but he could not say very much in its favour. Until the line reached Inkerman the land was not of much value; but from that place towards the Burdekin delta there was one of the finest districts in the colony. There was not likely to be much settlement along the first 30 miles; but it would form a portion of the coast line which would be completed at some future day. The object of carrying the line towards Ayr was not for the purpose of connecting with Houghton Gap, but Townsville; and he was satisfied that if he had brought forward the plans drawn from the original survey they would never have met with the approval of the Committee. The Chief Engineer's estimate of £2,500 a mile would satisfy hon. members that the line would be one of easy construction.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Does that include rails?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said there was some difficulty connected with getting information from the engineer in the North, as he was sometimes at Cairns, sometimes at Cooktown, and sometimes at Townsville; but the amount of his estimate was £2,500 per mile, or £75,000 for the whole of the section. None of the gradients would be steeper than 1 in 60, and none of the curves sharper than 10 chains. Ballast and timber were rather scarce along the line, but very little land would have to be resumed—about 12 acres in Bowen and 120 in the country. There would be no large bridges required until the line reached the Burdekin, and he did not know what would be required there; but he knew that if the line had gone according to the original survey, all the money voted for its construction would have been required for the construction of bridges across the Burdekin. He had no doubt that the hon. member for Townsville would agree that the route proposed was the proper direction in which to take the line.

Mr. CHUBB said it appeared to have been the practice lately for the hon. member for the district in which a railway was proposed to be constructed to support the motion moved by the Minister for Works, and he supposed that was on the ground that he knew something about the country through which the line would pass; but he might say at once that he had no personal knowledge of the route of the line now under consideration except for a very few miles. The hon. member for Townsville, however, who proposed a line in the same direction four years ago, had an intimate

knowledge of the country and would be able to satisfy hon. members as to the nature and quality of the country. For some distance from Bowen the country was not very good; in fact, there was not much good country till the line reached the Elliot River, which was at the end of the first section as proposed. He had been furnished with a statement in reference to the quality of the land through which the line would pass, and he had reason to believe that it was a fairly accurate description. The statement was as follows:—

"From Bowen to Euri Creek, distant 8 miles, the land between the ranges and the coast is nearly all suitable for sugar cultivation. The banks of the Don River, distant about 3 miles from town, are exceedingly rich alluvial deposits, and sugar is at present growing most luxuriantly. From Euri Creek to Salisbury, distant about 12 miles, the lands are good, and a great portion suitable for cultivation, but not extending far inland. From Salisbury to Cape Creek the distance is about 20 miles. Immediately after leaving Salisbury, you enter some magnificent black-soil plains of large extent; this land is admirably adapted for sugar cultivation. The banks of the Elliot River, midway on this section, may be classed as among the richest land in the North."

Sugar-growing had gone on for some years on the Don River, but not to a large extent, because the extent of suitable country was not very great there. The Minister for Works said that the land improved as the line approached the Burdekin; and there was no doubt, as many hon. members knew, that the delta of the Burdekin contained some of the finest land in the colony. Other reasons in favour of the line had been given by the hon. gentleman. It was a coast line, part of the line which would connect Brisbane with the North. It did not run very far from the coast—it could not go far inland on account of the ranges—but it went the nearest way towards the good land. The plan showed that the line was almost a surface line. The gradients were very slight—in only one instance, he believed, reaching 1 in 60, and that for only a very short distance. The earthworks were not large, and bridge-work was almost *nil*. Beyond a small bridge or two, there was very little timber-work of that description to be done on the whole section. He was glad the Minister for Works had given an estimate of the cost of construction, which showed that the money voted would be nearly sufficient for the whole distance to Ayr. He was not quite sure as to the distance; he thought it was about 70 miles; and at the rate the line was going to be constructed, the money voted for the first section—£150,000—would almost carry it to Ayr. That was if the original vote, authorised four years ago, got credit for the interest which belonged to it, which would add something like £20,000 to the amount available for the construction of the line.

The PREMIER: We have been paying interest on it; not getting interest.

Mr. CHUBB: It was no part of the £10,000,000 loan.

The PREMIER: No; but we have been paying interest on it.

Mr. CHUBB: No doubt they had been paying interest on it, but the money had not been used, and if it had been expended on other works, and credit was given for the interest which would have accrued upon it, it would increase the amount to the credit of the vote by nearly £20,000, and they should have plenty of money to carry the line the whole distance to Ayr; and if it were continued further, the district had a vote for another £100,000, which would carry it, as the hon. gentleman said, to the junction of the Northern line at such point as might be considered most suitable in the interests of the colony. He did not suppose there would be any

opposition to the line, and he did not propose to occupy the time of the Committee any longer. If any further information was required that he was able to supply, he would be happy to give it.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman who had just sat down disclaimed any knowledge of the district through which the line passed, and referred to him (Mr. Macrossan) as having some knowledge of it. He did know something about it because he had been over it, but it was at a time when it was not thought likely that a railway would be made there, so that he did not look at it from a railway point of view. He must say that the description of the country given by the Minister for Works was fairly correct. There was very little good land on the section of the line now proposed. There was a little about Salisbury, and when the line reached Inkerman it arrived at first-class land, which continued across the Burdekin to Ayr, and even almost to the junction of the main line, at whatever point the proposed line would junction with it. That would be a matter for after-consideration. He was sorry to hear from what the Minister for Works said that there was no chance of employing steel sleepers on that line, because he considered they were as requisite in that part of the country as any other so far as white ants and other nuisances were concerned. It was a line where steel sleepers might very well be used—that was, presuming that they would be a success, which he hoped they would. Timber was very scarce on the line, a large extent of plains being covered with very small stunted timber. As far as ballast was concerned, although there was no great—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is plenty of ballast.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was going to say that, although there was no great appearance of stone ballast, there was plenty of gravel ballast. That was his opinion of the country after going over it twelve or fourteen years ago—perhaps a little more than that. He had gone over the country twice, so that he knew something about it. The line previously projected would not have gone in the same direction as that now proposed. It would have gone further inland towards the junction of the main line higher up. He thought the proposed route was a better one—one more likely to accommodate a large amount of settlement, and also one which would not in any way compete with the line already constructed to Townsville, which was a great point to gain. He did not believe in the Government constructing lines of railway to compete with each other. A portion of the money—the largest portion necessary for the line—had been voted three or four years, and he did not think the Government would be acting unwisely in commencing the line at the other end as well as the Bowen end. He was quite sure the country would gain by it. They all knew that as long as railways were in progress there was very little likelihood of the work paying. It was only when the work was completed that they might look forward to the beginning of the paying period. The proposed line would certainly not pay at the Bowen end, because there was nothing to carry until it reached, he might say, Ayr. When it reached there he believed it would be much better if it were carried quickly on to the other end. Allowing that to be the case, it would be wise if the line were constructed from the other end as well, so as to meet the Bowen end about Ayr, or somewhere on the Burdekin. The Government certainly could not plead the want of money in that case, because, in addition to the

£150,000 voted in 1882, there was £100,000 voted in 1884 for the line to the coalfields. Now, the Government could very easily get the sanction of the House to that vote being transferred.

The PREMIER: It is intended.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said by that means the Government could commence the construction of the line at either end. Of course they had no plans ready for the other end, but if they would consent to his suggestion they could have those plans ready at the beginning of next session, and there would be little difficulty in commencing the line at the other end at whatever point of junction with the main line the engineer and the Government might agree upon. The transfer of the money could be easily obtained. The country was almost as level as the floor of that Chamber; the survey of the first section from the Townsville end would not take more than two or three months at the outside, and the plans for 30 or 40 miles could be got ready to lay before the House at the beginning of next session; so that they might expect to have the line completed probably within two years or two years and a-half. He did not think the whole distance, from the point of junction with the main line to Bowen, could be very much over 100 miles. Supposing it was 100 miles, in that class of country where the line would be simply a surface line, nothing more than laying down the permanent way, it would not be a very extraordinary piece of work to complete the line in two years, seeing that they had the experience of other countries where railways were laid down at the rate of a mile, a mile and a-half, and even two miles a day. Another point to be considered was that it would set the minds of the people of Kennedy at rest respecting the matter. The people of Townsville were very much exercised upon it as well as the people of Bowen, and the sooner they were set at rest the better it would be. It would certainly benefit the country, and possibly benefit the Government as well. He would like to hear what the Minister for Works had to say on the subject before he said any more on the point. He simply threw it out as a suggestion, believing it was a very good idea to carry out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the suggestion of the hon. member was a very good one. Of course they had no survey of the whole line yet. It did not extend beyond Ayr. He was not quite sure whether the trial survey went to Ayr. He believed, however, that it would be a very good plan to have the survey continued during the recess and introduce the plans in the early part of next session. He thought it was worth the consideration of the Government. As to the money voted in 1884 for the line to the Bowen Coal Fields, the Government would be prepared to introduce a short measure to transfer that sum for the purpose of connecting Bowen with Townsville.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was glad the Minister for Works had accepted his suggestion. Now, he would make another suggestion which was equally important to the country. They had heard a great deal from hon. members on his side, especially, as to the lines being extended out west, and they were told that the further they were extended the better they paid. Well, that was a proposition which he could not accept, because he knew from experience that it was the reverse of that. He knew from his experience in the Works Office that the further those lines were extended the worse they paid, and not the better. A great many lines had been passed that session and some last session the money for which was

voted in 1884; but they knew also that the estimates for those lines exceeded the amount upon the Loan Estimates for 1884—some by £20,000, others by £30,000, and others by £50,000, and so on. Now, in 1884 they passed votes for the extension of the three main lines westward from certain points. If hon. members doubted his assertion about the payable nature of the lines westward they had only to refer to the "Votes and Proceedings" of 1880, and they would find that he took the trouble in 1880 or 1881 to ascertain the amount which each section of those western lines paid from Brisbane westward. It would be found that each section decreased regularly step by step, until the last sections paid  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The 1st section of the Western line from here to Toowoomba paid nearly 9 per cent.; so that the section which ended at Toowoomba had to bear the expenses of the whole of the line westward. The same argument applied also in regard to the Townsville line. The section from Townsville to Charters Towers had to bear the whole of the expense westward from Charters Towers to Hughenden. He did not know any objective point on the Central line which stood in the same relations as Toowoomba and Charters Towers; but he knew that the same arguments applied there also. His proposition was a very simple one, and one that the Government might take up just as well as the previous one he had made. In 1884 there was voted to complete from Roma to Charleville, £62,000; and for the extension westward £360,000. For the extension on the Central line there was also £360,000, and for the extension of the Northern line from Hughenden, £300,000; making in all £1,020,000 for extensions westward. Now, his proposition was this: That to complete the lines which they had passed during the present session, the money voted for which was not sufficient, the extensions of the trunk lines should not be gone on with; that the line should stop at Charleville; that the line in the Northern extension should stop at Hughenden when it reached there. He believed they would have got the whole of the trade in the south-west and the whole of the western trade that they were likely to get even if they extended further than Charleville. He was certain they would have got the whole of the western trade at Hughenden even if they extended further. Now, on the Central line it was different. He believed that the Central line should be extended as far as the Thomson River, and there it ought to rest, just as the other two lines would rest at Charleville and Hughenden. That proposition, if accepted, would give to the Government £800,000 or £900,000, which they could spend in the completion of those lines which they knew they had not money to complete, and the money to complete which might be difficult to obtain at the time the Government went to the money market. Now, he believed himself that it would be in the interests of the country if the Government considered that proposition. He did not say that they should take it up just now, but he believed it would be in the interests of the country if the Government would consider the proposition during the recess, and see what could be done towards adopting it. He was quite certain that unless they altered the extension of those main Southern lines and went south-west they certainly could get no more trade, that if they went any further west than Hughenden they would not increase their trade, and that if they went any further west than the Thomson River on the Central line, although they might increase the trade a little, it would not pay. He thought it was in the interests of the main lines that the proposition should be adopted, and he was quite certain it was in the interests of the Treasury. It would also ease the

mind of the Minister for Works, who might have doubts about being able to complete the lines now authorised.

The PREMIER said the subject which the hon. member referred to had already received the careful consideration of the Government on more than one occasion. There was no doubt that Hughenden on the Northern line, the Thomson River on the Central line, and Charleville on the Southern line, were objective points, very much similar to one another in their relative positions to the coast. The question whether the lines mentioned should stop at those points, or be extended further, was, in the present circumstances of the colony, a matter that required very serious consideration indeed. It would have been observed that the Government had not asked authority the present session to go any further than those points. He did not think that in the present circumstances of the colony they would be justified in proposing any further extension, but what conclusion the Government would come to as to the ultimate extension of the lines he would not at present say. The altered circumstances of the colony next year might be such as would justify them in proceeding further with the lines, but as to applying the money voted in the way the hon. member suggested, that required very serious consideration. It was rather a serious thing to divert a sum of money authorised to be borrowed for one purpose to an entirely different purpose. In the case of the Bowen line only a small alteration in the direction of the line had been made; no one could object to that, but to divert money in the way suggested was a proposal which had to be well considered.

Mr. FERGUSON said, after what had fallen from the Premier, he could not see why there should be any objection to placing the plans and books of reference of the extension of the Central line to the Thomson River on the table of the House. They were ready, and after what had been stated by the Premier, the Government had no excuse for delay. The plans could be put on the table on the following day and could be approved of in a very short time. That would give satisfaction to the Central district, and there was no excuse for the Government not carrying out their intentions during the present session. A large number of men would be out of employment shortly when the present railway contract was finished, which would be in about a month, and he would like to know what was to become of those men unless fresh employment was found for them, as there were already a large number of unemployed persons in the district? The Government would be doing something which would be a benefit, not only to the district but to the whole colony, if they were at once to comply with the wishes of the people of the Central district in the manner indicated.

Mr. BROWN said he was very pleased to hear the Minister for Works announce that the line from Bowen to Ayr was intended to form part of the coastal line from Bowen to Townsville. He was very much gratified to hear that, and he was quite sure his constituents would be very much gratified also, because for many years past they had contended that the line from Townsville to Ayr would not only be a profitable line, but would also have the effect of settling a very large population, for the reason that there was an immense area of very good land about the Burdekin River; and Townsville and Charters Towers—two very considerable centres of population—imported a very great amount of produce, such as butter, hay, all descriptions of horse-feed and dairy produce, and would draw their supplies from it. That land could be immensely improved and

developed by irrigation, which had been tried to some extent in that district, and had proved exceedingly successful. They had the good land close to their doors, but hitherto they had not utilised it. It was quite true they had water-carriage to that district, but water-carriage was so irregular and unreliable that it was perfectly useless for the purpose of conveying any produce of a perishable nature to market. The area of land fit for cultivation within a distance of 10 miles from Ayr was about 50,000 acres—really fine agricultural land. He believed there was a very large area on the other side of the Burdekin, in the neighbourhood of Inkerman; and he was perfectly certain that a line from Townsville and Bowen, passing through Ayr, would have the effect of settling a very large agricultural population in the district. He thought that the line should have been commenced some years ago, and he was surprised that it had not, because it would have assisted agricultural enterprise very considerably. He was, however, glad to hear the Government definitely announce the construction of the line; but he thought they might possibly have gone a little further. They should have proceeded to get the necessary legislative authority to enable them to apply the two sums of money that had been on the Loan Estimates for a considerable time to make the line through from Townsville to Bowen. He assumed from the Government having announced that line in the direction of Ayr that they had given up for the present, probably for many years to come, the construction of a line from Bowen to the Coalfields for which £100,000 was voted on the Loan Estimates. It would be a profitable thing, then, if the Government would obtain legislative powers, if necessary, to enable them to divert that money for the purpose of commencing the Bowen to Townsville railway at the Townsville end. It was very necessary, if the district was to be developed and population encouraged, that the line should be commenced from Townsville towards Ayr. So far as he knew the country—and he had some knowledge of it—he thought the railway would be a very easy one to construct, and he would not be surprised to find that the £100,000 voted on the Loan Estimates would be sufficient to make it from the place where it would diverge from the Townsville line right to Ayr. He hoped the Government would during the present session seek such powers as might be necessary to enable them to apply that money in the way suggested.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he had listened with a good deal of interest to the way in which it had been proposed to divert moneys voted for one purpose to another purpose, and he thought the suggestions made and acceded to in part by the Government might be carried a little further, and that that particular line should be begun at the proper end. Most of their lines had either been begun backside foremost or finished backside foremost. He had a knowledge of the country between Townsville and Bowen, and he knew perfectly well that the best of the rich agricultural land there, and that which was now under cultivation, was on the Townsville side of the Burdekin about Ayr. The line going from Bowen to Ayr could not cross the Burdekin very well, and would never take the produce grown about Ayr down to Bowen to be shipped from that port to Townsville.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: On which side is your plantation?

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I have no plantation, I am thankful to say.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Where is your interest?

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I have no interest whatever there—not a shilling's worth.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You are only a mortgagee.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I am not a mortgagee even.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You have something to do with it.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Very likely. He had a considerable interest in the welfare and prosperity of the colony generally, and in all its industries. He knew that nothing that was grown in the agricultural district about Ayr, whatever it might be, would ever go to Bowen, unless it went there to be shipped to Townsville, and then sent on by rail to Charters Towers. It would be much better to start the line from some point on the Townsville Railway, and give the people a market for their produce. What was Bowen? It was a harbour, and a place celebrated for returning Attorneys-General, or ex-Attorneys-General, he did not know which. It was a harbour with no back country. It simply had to resort to Brisbane lawyers for its representative. It could not send down a man here to represent the place. It was a very good business for the lawyers. He held in his hand a return which showed what the representative of Bowen got for himself last year besides his two guineas a day, and he found that the amount was £230 11s. 6d. Bowen was very useful to the legal profession, no doubt; but he did not see that it was any good to the colony, nor why they should make a railway there just as a sop to the people for having returned a celebrated lawyer who was once Attorney-General and might be again. He did not see why the money borrowed for the benefit of the colony should be applied in that way. It was obvious to any thinking man who knew anything about the district that a connection should be made between Bowen and Townsville, and that the line should commence from the Townsville end. From the very beginning there would be a large amount of business done by the railway if it were commenced from the Townsville end. It would then have some prospect of paying; it would at all events carry some produce. But if it was started from the Bowen end, until the line crossed the Burdekin it would carry nothing at all—neither produce nor passengers. And then it would be a tremendous job to take it across the Burdekin River. In the meantime all the produce grown at Ayr, whether sugar or anything else, would be shipped round by Pioneer Creek. There was a little harbour there where small boats could go up, and though it was a precarious way to travel, persons would send produce that way to Townsville, in preference to carting it some distance and taking it to that prospective railway from Bowen. He believed that the Minister would find the Committee perfectly ready to approve his action if he would waive all forms in the way suggested by the hon. member for Townsville, and appropriate moneys voted for one railway for making another line sanctioned by Parliament. That was a most legitimate opportunity for exercising such a privilege. With regard to the specious arguments which had fallen from the hon. member for Townsville about the extreme sections of the line not paying as well as those at the coastal end, he had listened to those arguments with a good deal of interest, but he did not believe in them one bit. He knew perfectly well that the sections nearest the coast—such, for instance, as that between Toowoomba and Brisbane—must pay very much better than such a section as that between Dulbydilla and the Mitchell, because everything that passed over any section of the line had to pass over the terminal section.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You are travelling beyond the question.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he was travelling in the same direction as other hon. members.

The CHAIRMAN said that, his attention having been called to the matter, he must request the hon. member to confine himself to the question before the Committee.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the Chairman was very fond of calling him to order.

The PREMIER: You are so disorderly.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he wondered why the hon. member for Townsville was not called to order for talking about the Central line, and the Premier for talking about the terminus at the Thomson for the Central line, and Hughenden and Charleville as the termini for the other two lines.

The CHAIRMAN said the hon. member must ask permission if he wished to address the Committee on another subject.

Mr. STEVENSON: What is the point of order?

The CHAIRMAN: The point of order is that the hon. member is not addressing himself to the question before the Committee.

Mr. STEVENSON said the hon. member could not be prevented from referring to another railway if he was going to use it as an argument. They did not know what argument the hon. member might be going to bring forward.

The CHAIRMAN said he had only to deal with the question because his attention had been called to it. The hon. member was not discussing the question before the Committee.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said it would be extremely inconvenient if hon. members were to be confined to the question of that particular railway, seeing that the discussion so far had travelled all over the railways of the colony. Of course, when the Chairman's attention was called he had to give his ruling according to the rules of the House, and it was all very well to prevent a member from referring to a debate which had taken place during the present session, but if the rules were enforced too stringently it would prevent a very useful discussion from being carried out.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he had no doubt the Minister for Works did not like the criticisms of his policy; but he (Mr. Hill) objected to being called to order when he was discussing points which had arisen during the debate. He was dealing with what had fallen from the hon. member for Townsville with regard to the extreme sections of a line not paying so well as those near to the coastal terminus. Of course they did not, because everything that went over the line had to go over the sections nearest the coastal sections. He would point out that the extreme sections, which of course were the least paying, were in a measure the most valuable, because they really opened up country, in the case of the main trunk lines, possibly 200 or 300 miles beyond them. He was quite content to admit that under the present land laws those railways had been carried far enough, because there was no encouragement for pastoral tenants or any other individuals to improve the country out beyond. If there were he would say that those railways could not be pushed too far, even if they went almost to the Western border. As it was now, with the policy they had adopted, which he was quite content to abide by, he thought they had gone quite far enough, when the Northern line had gone to Hughenden, the Central line to the



Thomson, and the Southern line to Charleville. What he wished to make clear was that it was not the extreme sections of the line which were incidentally the least paying ones. But to return to the Bowen and Townsville line—it was nothing else than that, though it appeared on the loan vote as a line from Bowen to anywhere—he was sure the Government could easily obtain the consent of the House to transfer the vote and commence the line in what was really the proper place—take it from about the Reid River to Ayr. Let them begin at the Bowen end, too, if they liked; but he could safely assure the Committee that the line could not by any chance be a reproductive line from the Townsville end until it tapped the rich agricultural country about Ayr. As for Bowen, they could afford to leave it out in the cold; it was only a receptacle for lawyers, either in a job or out of a job. They could get along very well; that £230 11s. 6d. divided the spoils pretty evenly with the Attorney-General's £247 4s. When he (Mr. Hill) was in the last Parliament, there was a resolution passed by the House that no lawyer or barrister should get any Government fees.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must confine himself to the question.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he thought he had gone a little wide of the subject, but he had no doubt the hon. member for Bowen would be able to connect his remarks with the railway line.

Mr. CHUBB said the hon. member had been kind enough to refer to him as a member of Parliament who came to the House to feather his own nest. Well, he was responsible to his constituents for being there, not to the hon. member. He could say this—that he (Mr. Chubb) had not bought a block of land on the Cleveland line, on which a railway station was to be built, and out of which land it was proposed to resume seven acres, and then come to that House to advocate the adoption of that railway, as the hon. member, Mr. Hill. If hon. members would look at the map and book of reference they would see the name of the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hill, down for land along that line.

Mr. BLACK said there was a certain amount of truth in the remarks of the hon. member for Cook in connection with the line from Bowen to Townsville. If the line was intended to develop the agricultural district of the Burdekin, which was one of the largest and most valuable agricultural districts in the whole colony, there was no doubt that the produce from that district would eventually all go to Townsville. As soon as ever the line was carried right through from Bowen to Townsville, the produce of that district—a district which was able to supply the whole of Townsville, Charters Towers, and all the country out to the West with agricultural produce of various descriptions—must inevitably go to Townsville. It would never come to Bowen. When the line was carried right through to Townsville it would leave Bowen very much in the same unfortunate position that it had been in for the last three or four years. He believed its position had excited the liveliest sympathy in the heart of the Premier when he visited that place last; the promise of support he had there received touched his heart. If that line were carried out as proposed, he did not think it would be for the permanent benefit of Bowen. If it was intended to do something for the permanent advantage of Bowen, which had undoubtedly a good port, and which might become a shipping place of very considerable importance, the diversion of that £100,000 should not be in the direction of Townsville, but to the south, to connect with Mackay. Hon. gentlemen might laugh, but there was already a well-known agricultural district between Mackay and

Bowen—a district which had proved its resources, and in which a considerable amount of settlement had already taken place. Seeing the difficulties which the Colonial Treasurer had to meet, with regard to making a competent port at Mackay, and the large shipping trade that must inevitably take place between England and Mackay in connection with its sugar industry, the hon. gentleman must be convinced of the necessity of finding a suitable port for the shipment of that produce which amounted not to hundreds but to thousands of tons per annum. The railway from Mackay already extended 20 miles towards Bowen. Assuming that the £100,000 was diverted from Bowen southward instead of northwards, it would be the means of developing the port of Bowen as a shipping port very considerably. In making that suggestion he was not advocating that the Government should continue the line from Mackay towards Bowen, for it was a matter of indifference to him if they began at Bowen and worked south; but if the Government wished to do something for the permanent good of Bowen it was in that direction that the expenditure of the £100,000 should take place.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that both the hon. member for Mackay and the hon. member for Cook were slightly in error as to one matter. If the line was made from Bowen to Townsville all the produce would not go to Townsville. The Burdekin River separated the two places—a very strong line of demarcation—and there was no possibility of produce which was intended for shipping outward going to Townsville from any port of the line south of the Burdekin River.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: But there is no cultivation there.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said there was not much at present, he admitted, but there was a very large possibility of cultivation in the Inkerman district, and he had no doubt that cultivation would take place when the line was made. The portion of the line on the northern side of the Burdekin would, he believed, carry the produce to Townsville, that town and Charters Towers being the local markets for it. Each half of the line would get its fair share of the work; he was certain of that. He was also certain that the line would carry a very fair passenger traffic. Many people going south from Charters Towers and Townsville would prefer going to Bowen and taking the steamer there, as it would save them more than half a day, which to business men was a matter of great importance. It would, no doubt, be a good thing to construct the whole line at once, but he was very much afraid the Colonial Treasurer would not be able to find the money. To spend £100,000 on the Bowen end of the Mackay line would be like throwing a drop of water into a bucket, and no return could be expected from it until the line was connected with Mackay. The easier plan was the one he suggested to spend the money on the making of the proposed line and to complete it, if there was enough money available. But he feared there was not. A line 110 miles long, costing £2,500 a mile, would require about £280,000 to complete it, and then there would be a low-level bridge across the Burdekin River which would cost £15,000 or £20,000 more at the very least. Altogether, to take the line to Townsville would cost the greater part of £300,000. The money might be diverted from the amount that was to have been expended west of Hughenden. In making the proposal he made before 6 o'clock, he intended that the money taken from each of the main lines should be expended on the district from whose main line it was taken. He never

intended that the £300,000 taken from the Northern line should be expended in the Central or Southern districts, or that the money taken from the Central line should be expended in the district on either side of it. The money spared from the Northern main line might fairly be spent in the Northern district. A very profitable line might be made from Townsville to Ingham, opening out an entirely new district the possibilities of sugar production in which were quite equal to anything in the North, where there was a large population, and means of access quite as difficult as at Mackay—in fact, of the two the more difficult. That line could be constructed within the amount which would remain after enough had been taken from the £300,000 to complete the line from Bowen to Townsville. It would take a good deal more to make the line from Bowen to Mackay.

Mr. DONALDSON said he trusted that, whatever might be done in the future with regard to the continuation of the trunk lines, the suggestion of the hon. member for Townsville as to the diversion of the money borrowed for one purpose to other purposes would not be acceded to. If it was desirable to construct railways which were not contemplated at the time of the passing of the Loan Bill, the proper course would be to borrow money, on legislative sanction, for such railways. It would be a clear breach of faith to people in the interior if the money voted for the construction of main trunk lines should be diverted to some other purpose. He questioned whether it could legally be done.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: It is quite legal.

Mr. DONALDSON said that, legal or not, it would certainly be a breach of faith. The interior of the colony was not only thinly populated, but its representatives were few in number, and they would easily be swamped if they attempted to oppose any such contemplated diversion of borrowed money. He thought it would be a cruel thing to do. It might not be desirable at the present time to extend the railways beyond a certain point already mentioned in the House. He was not going into that question at present; but if it was not desirable to go beyond that point they could wait. The money need not be borrowed. It was a question for a future Government to determine whether they would choose to borrow the money for that purpose. It was thought in 1884 that the railways should be pushed on beyond the present termini. He thought the same opinion prevailed yet, and he hoped the Committee would pause and take into serious consideration so important a matter before they decided upon such a step as to divert the money from the purposes then contemplated. He knew that he had travelled a little out of the usual course that evening in discussing that matter; but it had already been referred to by the hon. member for Townsville and the Premier in reply, and he trusted he had not gone beyond the proper scope of discussion.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported the resolution.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR WORKS, the report was adopted.

#### COOKTOWN TO MAYTOWN RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—I 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 extension of the Cooktown to Maytown Railway, section 3, from 50½ miles to 67½ miles, in length 17 miles, as laid upon the table of the House on Friday, the 29th ultimo.

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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 extension of the Cooktown to Maytown Railway, section 3, from 50½ miles to 67½ miles, in length 17 miles, as laid upon the table of the House on Friday, the 29th 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 it would be in the recollection of hon. members that when that line was before the House last session there was a misunderstanding about the direction of the route, and consequently the section had been reduced considerably, so as not to go beyond the diversion of the line *via* Palmerville. Since that time the Chief Engineer, Mr. Hannam, had visited the country and inspected it very carefully, and reported on both lines. His report had been laid on the table of the House, and if hon. members took the trouble to look it up it would be found that the cost of each of the routes was about equal. The Government had, however, come to the conclusion that the direct route to Maytown should be taken. The present section terminated where there was no water, and the proposed section carried the line up to the Laura River. There was £85,000 available for the construction of the line. He had discovered that the engineer had some of the gradients very steep, and he thought it would be necessary to ease these. There were some gradients 1 in 33, and he thought hon. members would agree with him that on a line such as that, 1 in 33 was too steep. Of course, that would not in any way interfere with the plans and sections of the line. It was unnecessary for him to say anything about the country, for he believed it was about the most wretched in the universe.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: What?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that the country was unsuitable for any purpose, not even for grazing purposes. He had not travelled over it himself, and he knew that the hon. member for Cook might differ from him, but he was only saying what he had been told. The object, he believed, of the previous Government in deciding upon that line was to bring a railway from Cooktown to Maytown to the goldfield there. He himself believed that that goldfield would turn out very profitable mines yet, and the railway would be a great advantage to the working of the goldfield, which contained immense deposits of other minerals. He had heard lately that the mines had turned out recently a great deal better than some time ago. The proposed section, at all events, would carry the line on to the Laura River, where there was water; and there was ample money for constructing the works. The whole of the line would go through Crown lands, so that no private property would have to be resumed. The timber for sleepers and bridges was very scarce, and the estimated cost of construction, including rails, was £3,700 per mile, in all £63,000. The sharpest curve on the section was 15 chains.

Mr. HAMILTON said he was glad that the direct route to Maytown had been decided upon. The cost of the two routes was nearly alike, but the cost of a line *via* Palmerville would be greater than that of the line proposed, and there was a saving of 24 miles by adopting the direct route. Though he was pleased to see the plans introduced, he had certain faults to find. The ruling grade was 1 in 33, and there were several between that and 1 in 50. The ruling grade on the Southern railways was 1 in 50, and that was a far better grade for working

purposes than a grade of 1 in 33. He also regretted that the Committee had been asked to approve of the plans for 17 miles only; he thought the section should have been taken a mile further on to the Laura. There was no doubt that it would have been better to have had the terminus at the crossing of the Laura where there was good grass, because there would have been more inducement to contractors to tender for the work. He hoped the Minister would not urge the same excuse against calling for tenders for the construction of the 17 miles in the section proposed as he did on a previous occasion in connection with the same line of railway. The plans of the second section of the Cooktown Railway were passed in 1884, and during the following session the Government gave as a reason for not inviting tenders for the work that the section was too short, and also that there was no suitable place for a terminus. It struck him that the same objections might be urged in the present instance, though they had been created by the department, because if the section had been carried to the Laura River there would have been a suitable place, and the section would not have been quite so short. He recollected the Minister for Works stating last year when objecting to inviting tenders for the second section that it was only 18 miles long, and that contractors at a distance were not likely to tender for so short a length. He said:—

"The second section of the Cooktown Railway was only 18 miles in length, and it was not likely that any contractor at a distance would put in a tender for so short a length; therefore a third section, giving an additional 12 miles, had been added."

If a contractor would not put in a tender for the construction of 18 miles it was not likely that he would tender for the construction of 17 miles, and the chances were that next session further plans would be passed, and nothing would be done in the way of inviting tenders for the section now before the Committee until the permanent survey of the fourth section had been made. The railway to Maytown should be pushed on as quickly as possible, because the line from Cooktown could not be expected to pay until it reached Maytown. As the Minister for Works stated, the line would not pass through good grazing country; but the line was initiated in the first instance to develop the mines of Maytown. That goldfield, though much younger than Charters Towers or Gympie, had already turned out about 100,000 oz. more gold than the field which came next in respect to the quantity turned out. It had turned out 1,200,000 oz., and the Towers, which came next on the list, though discovered long before, had only turned out 1,100,000 oz. up to the present time. He had great reason to fear delay in the construction of the section, judging from the past history of the line. During the previous Administration, one section of 32 miles was passed. That was in October, 1882; and not only was the permanent survey made, but tenders were called within eleven months of the date on which the plans were passed. Then the present Government came in and had to decide which of the tenders sent in should be accepted. They all knew that a trial survey could be effected in a much shorter time than the permanent survey; yet it took the present Government two years to get the next trial survey of 18 miles passed; and then, as an excuse for not inviting tenders, they said that a section 18 miles long was too short. Then it took ten months from October, 1885, to get the plans of 12 miles of the third section ready, and after they were ready it was found that the survey had been made in the wrong direction, and a further delay was caused. Then tenders for the construction

of the second section of 18 miles were invited. Had the third section been in the proper direction they would not have had to wait another five months before the permanent survey was made and before tenders would have been called for the aggregate sections—Nos. 2 and 3. Now, however, they had got the third section of 17 miles after the lapse of another year. He hoped no further delay would take place in the construction of that railway. The sooner it was made the sooner it would pay; and he was sure it was in the interests of every member of the House and of the community that when a railway was to be constructed it should be made as soon as possible to the point at which it would pay.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he was pretty certain that that was one of those lines the desirability of which was obvious to the whole of the Committee.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Oh!

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Most decidedly; although it was not a Brisbane line. It was an act of justice to the North.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: A very small act.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said it was a very small act. The only regret he had in connection with it was that it did not go a little further than 17 miles. He knew of his own knowledge that that line would open up country which was well known to be rich in minerals of every description. Discoveries were now going on day by day. Tin, silver, and gold had all been proved to exist there in considerable quantities, and he believed that it would be one of the most reproductive lines the colony possessed. The hon. member for Toowoomba might laugh, because it did not go to a place where they could grow a little agricultural produce. But that was no reason why the line should not become an accomplished fact. There were other industries that paid quite as well, and were quite as useful to the colony to develop, as the agricultural industry; and certainly the mining industry, above all others, was the one which it behoved them most to promote. It was one of the real producing interests of the colony—an industry which, above all others just now, brought money into the colony. Agriculture was very good in its way, and ought not to be in any way neglected; but it did not bring capital or money into the country. The mining industry certainly did so, and it behoved them in every way, more especially when all other industries were flagging to a considerable extent, to encourage its further progress. It had been spreading, and was gaining ground every day in the North—about Cooktown, which was, to his knowledge, one of the most prosperous parts of the colony. There were very few unemployed loafing about Cooktown looking for work.

Mr. ALAND: Through its mining?

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Yes. The mining industry brought others in its trail. Men had not to go about looking for work up there and be utterly unable to find it, as they were in the Southern and Central districts. The only complaint he had had from his constituents was that they could not get labour enough. It was a long way from here, and there was plenty of work.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Why don't you send some of the unemployed there?

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the Government would not pay their passages or he would. There were no unemployed in the North; the mines kept them all going, and other industries followed in their track. He was perfectly certain

that it was useless for him to say anything further in favour of the line, because he was sure the benefits that would arise from it would be at once recognised by the whole Committee.

Mr. PALMER said he was acquainted with the country through which the line passed, and he wished to call the attention of the Minister for Works to the last paragraph in Mr. Hannam's report respecting the line. In the discussion as to whether the line should go to Maytown or Palmerville, one reason that had been urged against taking it to Maytown was that if it went there there would be no possibility of extending it west, and Mr. Hannam, in the concluding paragraph of his report, said:—

"If it has to go further west, the line should not go to Maytown at all."

That was the argument used when the survey to Palmerville was under discussion—that if the line went to Palmerville it could be extended further west, whereas if it was taken to Maytown it could not, as the place was entirely land-locked. But when he was in the district during the present year he was informed by local men that there was a very passable and practicable route from Maytown down what was known as the Little Mitchell, on which he knew there was some first-class country, and where, during the last few months, they had opened up some of the richest reefs on the Palmer field on what was called "The Limestone Ridge," one of the outlying centres of gold-producing ground on the Palmer field. Those limestone reefs were on the direct route from Maytown down the Little Mitchell, or very close to it; so that if those were facts, there was at once very good reason why the line should be continued to Maytown, or even beyond it. He knew that down the Little Mitchell the country was of easy descent, and it passed by what he knew would be a very rich field. A large quantity of gold had already been obtained on the Limestone reefs, and the reason why the road had not been made up the Little Mitchell into Maytown was because the lessee of the country desired to keep it free from traffic on account of his stock—fat bullocks he was feeding there. He therefore thought the argument should never be heard again that the line would have to stop at Maytown; because there was every possibility of its being extended right on to the Mitchell, where there was as good soil as any in the colony, and also some possibility of the best reefs being developed. He hoped that would dispose of any idea of the line ever being taken to Palmerville—a roundabout way, and a more expensive route. The only other matter he wished to mention was in reference to the short section of the line. The reason the Minister for Works had given why the section previously passed was so short was on account of a doubt existing as to the direction the route should take—whether to Palmerville or Maytown. Now that was settled, and Mr. Hannam, in his report, gave as the reason why the present section was so short was because there would be no gain on the present Maytown coach traffic by extending the line beyond the Laura inasmuch as the ranges enclosing the Mossman River were inaccessible for vehicles. Whether that was a sufficient reason he was not prepared to say. He scarcely thought it was. Of course, it would be extended up the Mosman, and it might well be extended in one section, but the argument used by the engineer that the Mosman was so hemmed in by ranges that there was no possibility of vehicles getting beyond it, was not a correct one. That was the only reason given, and the Minister for Works would be able to judge whether it was a good argument. The short section was not fair to contractors, and it

was not fair to the North, because all the sections in the South were much longer than 17 miles. It must not be forgotten that the line would undoubtedly not pay until it reached Maytown, so that the sooner it reached that place the better. He saw no possibility of its paying until it reached that field—a field that was deserving of a little consideration. The Chief Engineer said that there would be no steeper gradient than 1 in 50, but on looking at the plans he saw that there were several far less than 1 in 50. There was one of 1 in 30, and knowing the country to be soft and mostly sandy, he thought steep grades should be avoided.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was very glad to hear the Minister for Works say that the gradients would be altered. There could not be the slightest necessity for such steep grades, and even if there was a necessity, it would be a mistake to put such steep grades on a main line unless they were intended to serve some temporary purpose as on the main line to Charters Towers; so he thought it would be a good thing if the Minister for Works would alter the gradients, and have none steeper than 1 in 50. He had heard what the member for Burke said about the line going on from Maytown. He never had much faith in the story told in that House, that if they once got the line to Maytown they would never get beyond it. He knew something about the country, and he always doubted that story very much. He recollected the same thing being said when he was Minister for Works in regard to the Gympie line. It was said that if the line was taken into Gympie it would have to stop there, and they could never take it on to Brisbane; but it was on the way at the present time. He thought those engineering stories were frequently set up to avoid a little difficulty that the engineers did not want to get over themselves. He had never had any doubt about the line being taken anywhere from Maytown when it got there, and he hoped the Minister for Works would make it his business to get it there as soon as possible. He quite agreed that there was little chance of the line paying until it reached Maytown—until the reefing prospects had a chance of being developed; and certainly there were great openings for development—probably greater than any field in Queensland except the Etheridge. It was to be hoped also that the Minister for Works would make the next section much longer. The sections in that line were far too short. They certainly tended to increase the cost of the line. It cost as much for a contractor to get plant for a short section as for a long one, and the country had to pay the difference in an increased cost per mile. He thought the Minister for Works might very well try and make the remaining portion of the line in one section, or certainly not make more than two sections of it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member knew very well that he had a great objection to steep gradients, and the engineer would be instructed to make the ruling gradient in the line 1 in 50, because there was no difficult work on the first sections. As to not being able to get out of Maytown, he did not think there would be any difficulty about that when the time came, but he might point out that, before Maytown was reached, half-a-million of money would have to be expended. At all events, that was the estimate of the engineer.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Don't you believe him!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Government could give far more substantial reasons for the short section, one of which was

that it would take all the available money to carry the line up to the Laura, and unless more funds were voted the line could not be gone on with.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked if he was to understand from what the hon. gentleman said that the money for the line would be exhausted when the section under consideration was finished?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the whole of the money available was £85,000, and the engineer's estimate for the section was £63,000. Perhaps it would be advisable to cross the Laura, and that would exhaust the balance of the money.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had been to Maytown twice, and he knew a little about the country. He did not believe the engineer when he said it would cost half-a-million of money to take the line to Maytown from the Laura. That was like many other statements made by engineers. They more frequently made the error of under-estimating the cost of construction, but he thought in the present instance an over-estimate had been made. In some cases the difficulties were made out to be greater than they really were, and he thought the estimate was made chiefly on account of the mistake which was made by the engineer, which nearly passed the House—namely, taking the line towards Palmerville instead of to Maytown, and getting the House to pass a line which it never intended to pass.

Mr. HAMILTON said, whether the money would be exhausted or not on reaching the Laura, that was no excuse for making that section so short, especially when they recollected that the Minister for Works, after the former plans were passed, stated that he would not invite tenders for the construction of 18 miles, on account of the section being so short that contractors would not tender. But if contractors thought the section too short then they would think the same now, and the Minister for Works' statement was tantamount to saying that there was no intention of calling for tenders for the construction of the railway until plans of another section were passed. At any rate, he regretted very much that the line was not carried on in one section to the Laura. One of the reasons given last year for not constructing the 18-mile section was that there was no satisfactory site for a terminus; and that would occur again unless the line was carried to the Laura. The hon. member for Burke was slightly in error when he stated that the engineer justified the section terminating where it did at present—namely, a mile from the Laura—because what he really did say was—

"It is important to note that no gain on the present Maytown coach route can be effected by extending the line beyond the crossing of the Laura River."

He (Mr. Hamilton) wished the line had been extended beyond the crossing of the Laura. There would be about 1,000 feet of bridging to be done, and if that were included in the first section there would be a greater prospect of the more speedy construction of the railway.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the resolution.

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

Question put and passed.

#### BRITISH COMPANIES BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—The Government have had this Bill under consideration since it was introduced, and there are some

amendments that they desire to introduce into it. As the subject is rather a delicate and difficult one, I think it will be more convenient for hon. members to have the Bill in the form in which the Government desire to pass it. I therefore propose to ask the House to allow this Bill to be withdrawn, and another Bill containing the amendments substituted for it. I therefore move that this Order of the Day be discharged from the paper.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker,—I move that the Bill be withdrawn.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker,—I move that the Order of the Day for leave to introduce the Bill be read by the Clerk.

Question put and passed, and the Order of the Day read by the Clerk, as follows:—

"Upon motion of Mr. Dickson, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend and declare the law of Queensland with respect to joint-stock companies incorporated in other parts of Her Majesty's dominions.

"The Chairman reported the following resolution, namely:—'That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend and declare the law of Queensland with respect to joint-stock companies incorporated in other parts of Her Majesty's dominions.'

"Mr. Dickson then moved, that this resolution be now adopted by the House.

"Question put and passed."

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker,—I move that leave be granted to introduce another Bill, founded on the same order.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to present the Bill, and move that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER: I move that the second reading of the Bill stand an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

Mr. CHUBB: Does the Premier propose to take the second reading to-morrow?

The PREMIER: No; some day next week.

Question put and passed.

#### GOLDFIELDS HOMESTEAD LEASES BILL.

##### COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR WORKS, the House went into Committee of the Whole, to consider this Bill in detail.

Preamble postponed.

Clause 1—"Short title"—put and passed.

On clause 2, as follows:—

"The Acts specified in the First Schedule hereto are hereby repealed. But such repeal shall not, except as hereinafter expressly provided, affect anything lawfully done under the said repealed Acts, or any right or liability acquired or accrued thereunder"—

Mr. MELLOR said that clause might affect something in connection with the homestead holders. It said, "except as hereinafter expressly provided"; and he confessed he did not like that. When the second reading of the Bill was before the House, he had pointed out that before 1880 there were homestead holders who had more than 40 acres, and they were registered still in the books of the office as holding more than 40 acres now.

Now, clause 8—which he supposed was the part of the Bill referred to in the words “except as hereinafter expressly provided”—distinctly stated:—

“No person may apply for or hold under this Act a greater area than the following, whether it is held in one holding or several holdings, that is to say—Within the limits of a proclaimed township, half-an-acre; within five miles of the boundary of any such township, forty acres; and beyond five miles from such boundary eighty acres.”

That was what he wanted to point out. He thought the clause might take away the right held at the present time. Some persons now held more than 40 acres, and if the clause was passed as it stood he was of opinion that it would take away their right to hold that area. He thought the words “except as hereinafter expressly provided” should be omitted.

The PREMIER said that all existing rights were secured by the clause.

Mr. SMYTH said the interpretation clause also dealt with it under the definition of a “holding,” which was defined as “the land comprised in a lease under this Act, or the said repealed Acts.”

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—“Interpretation”—put and passed.

On clause 4, as follows:—

“Any lessee of a holding held under the said repealed Acts, and the area whereof is not less than two acres, may surrender his lease to Her Majesty and obtain a deed of grant of one-eighth part of such land, subject to the following conditions, that is to say—

- (1) The lessee must lodge with the warden an application stating his desire to surrender his lease and to obtain a deed of grant of a specified portion of the holding;
- (2) The application must be accompanied by a plan certified by the mining surveyor or a licensed surveyor, showing the boundaries of the land comprised in the lease, and of the portion thereof of which the lessee desires to obtain a deed of grant;
- (3) The frontage of such portion to a main road shall not exceed the depth;
- (4) The lessee must post a notice of such application at the warden's office, and within two days thereafter publish the same in some newspaper published on the goldfield, or, if no newspaper is so published, then in some newspaper generally circulating on the goldfield;
- (5) If any objections are lodged within fourteen days after such posting of the notice or publication, whichever is the later in date, the warden shall hear the objections in open court;
- (6) If no objections are lodged, or after hearing the objections, as the case may be, the warden shall forward the application to the Minister with a report thereon recommending that the application be or be not granted;
- (7) Upon receipt of the warden's report the Minister may recommend to the Governor in Council that the application be granted, and thereupon the Governor in Council may issue a deed of grant accordingly;
- (8) In any deed of grant so issued there shall be contained a reservation of all such rights and powers as may be necessary for enabling holders of miners' rights to mine for gold under the surface of the land comprised therein.

Mr. HAMILTON said it would be very undesirable to pass that clause in its present shape. He had been informed by a resident of Gympie that since it was known that clause was going to be passed a great many persons had taken up land simply for the purpose of getting a freehold. He had been informed that a syndicate had taken up the old racecourse at Gympie, containing, he thought, about 240 acres, in 40-acre blocks, with a view to getting a portion of it as freehold. They had paid compensation to the extent of some £200 to the racecourse committee, and the cheques paid for the rents of the various 40-acre lots were all paid by one man, evidently for the purpose

of taking advantage of that clause to secure a freehold. There were, of course, certain cases where it was justifiable to allow a man to obtain a freehold. The clause was introduced to encourage settlement on goldfields and to encourage diggers to make homes for themselves. Where there was *bond fide* residence for six, seven, or eight years it was quite right to allow a miner to take the piece of land on which he had his mine and have it as a freehold, and there were many such cases on Gympie. There were other cases, however, where land was taken up and used as horse paddocks on which people did not reside, and which were simply enclosed with a two-rail fence, and in such cases it was not desirable to allow the persons who took up that land to secure a freehold on it. They simply held it for grazing cattle and horses, and did not want it as a freehold. It was not desirable either that persons should be enabled to take advantage of the Act by taking up 40-acre blocks just in order to get one-eighth of them as freeholds, as he was informed had been done lately on Gympie. He therefore put it to the Committee to say whether it would not be advisable to introduce some amendment by which only a person who had *bond fide* resided on a homestead for a number of years would be enabled to secure a portion of it as a freehold on which he could make his home.

Mr. SMYTH said that what the hon. member for Cook had said was quite correct. The racecourse at Gympie had been taken up by a syndicate since that Bill had been introduced, though he did not know what their intentions were. However, if hon. members looked through the various subsections of the clause they would find that before the syndicate could get the land they would have to make application in the warden's court. The case would be heard in the warden's court, and if any objections were laid they would have to go before the Minister, and be dealt with by him before the applicants could get the land as a freehold, so that there would be any amount of time to block them if anything wrong was attempted to be done. The best portion of the clause was subsection 8, which gave the right to mine under a freehold.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: No, it does not.

Mr. SMYTH said the principal object of the clause was to give persons, who had erected very nice houses on their homesteads, a chance to surrender seven-eighths of the whole and accept one-eighth as a freehold. That would be very good provided that the seven-eighths surrendered was handed over to the municipality or divisional board to be by them subdivided for residence areas, or for any other purposes they might think fit. If that was not done the consequence would be that the person who applied for one-eighth would get his friends to apply for the other seven-eighths under the Bill. He thought they could get over the difficulty about the syndicate taking up the racecourse to convert a portion of it into freehold, if they provided that a person should have rented a homestead for three years before he could obtain a portion of it as a freehold. That would get over the difficulty raised.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he thought the clause a very dangerous one altogether—whether it provided for a residence of three, seven, or ten years, it did not matter. The majority of the miners of the colony did not wish for any such clause; they did not wish to have freeholds on goldfields. Let them have every facility for settlement on a goldfield, but no freeholds to interfere with mining. The hon. member for Gympie appeared to be under the impression that subsection 8 gave the right to

mine. It did not; it reserved the rights to mine, but it did not give the right to the miner to enter upon freeholds and mine, and that was the key of the whole thing. The miners did not want the clause, and he would advise the Government to have nothing at all to do with it. He thought their action would meet with the approbation of members of the Committee if they allowed it to drop.

Mr. SMYTH said he strongly objected to freeholds on goldfields himself, but he was speaking now on behalf of the miners, and he thought some of them would be glad to surrender seven-eighths of a homestead to be enabled to secure one-eighth as a freehold. They had good reason to object to freeholds on goldfields. He knew of a case where miners had to pay £15 for the right to sink a shaft. They had also to pay for working the ground and running a winze. He knew of another case where there was a little corruption in the warden's office. A person secured a homestead on No. 6 Monkland, and on that same homestead, at the Great Eastern mine, there were 2,000 ounces crushed from a little over 200 tons of stone. The man who got it was dead and gone, and it was perhaps wrong to say too much about the matter, but because of something between the owner of the place and the warden the exorbitant sum of £65 had to be paid as compensation on it. The framer of the present Act was very clever, and he was a warden also. He had a homestead put in the Bill he framed; there was no clause providing for resumption for mining. There might be resumption for public purposes under the Act, but not for mining, and the consequence was that if a miner wanted to mine on a homestead he had to pay compensation to the parties. There were two arbitrators chosen to arrive at the amount of compensation to be paid, and of course the homesteader chose another homesteader for his arbitrator, and the miner chose another miner. Between the two of course they could not agree, and the warden was called in, and hon. members knew how that generally resulted.

Mr. HAMILTON said he was glad to think that the hon. member for Gympie was in accord with him in the opinion that it was not desirable to allow persons to take advantage of that clause unless they had resided on the land for a certain time; although they were not exactly at one as to the term for which persons should reside on the land before they became entitled to secure it as a freehold. He thought three years was too short a period, and that six or seven years would be better.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Say fifteen years.

Mr. HAMILTON said he would sooner see the period fixed at fifteen years, but thought that objections might be raised against that term. At any rate there should be eight or ten years *bonâ fide* residence before a person was entitled to the freehold of land under that clause. If eight or ten years were allowed to elapse before a person became entitled to the freehold of the land on a goldfield, miners would have the advantage during that period of getting on the ground without very much trouble, and on the other hand there would be no chance of persons taking up the land with the view of securing it as a freehold, unless they took it up for themselves. Moreover, if the clause was passed as it stood, persons would be able to acquire land under easier conditions than they could now under the present Land Act. He certainly thought they should not be allowed to acquire a freehold on a goldfield easier than in any other part of the colony. It had always been considered desirable to hamper the conditions under which persons should be able to obtain freeholds

on goldfields, but if that clause passed it would be easier to get a freehold on a goldfield than anywhere else.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge) said he believed it would be just as well to omit that clause from the Bill altogether. He knew that the miners as a body objected to the multiplication of freeholds in and about goldfields, and probably the creation of fresh freeholds under that section would tend to complicate matters somewhat. There was no doubt that in the near future there would have to be a measure passed which would deal with the whole question of mining for gold under freeholds; and he thought that the creation of freeholds might very well be deferred until some such provision as that had been brought into operation. There were some residents he knew on Charters Towers who would like very much to convert the leaseholds they had inside the municipality into freeholds; but he told them when they mentioned the matter to him on the occasion of his last visit there that there was an element of danger in the creation of leaseholds into freeholds, by reason of the difficulties that would be put in the way of mining enterprise when once vested rights as freeholders came into operation. There was only one other matter in which, as far as he was aware, his constituents had an interest, and that was the right to obtain residence areas outside the boundaries of a municipality. There was however, as far as he could find out, no statutory provision forbidding the granting of areas for suburban residences outside the boundaries of towns. There was no necessity to grant 40 acres, but an area of from 1 to 5 acres might be granted, and should be held on the same tenure as any other homestead on a goldfield was held, and that would be quite good enough title until the time came when the whole question of freeholds should be taken into consideration. He quite agreed with the member for Townsville that that 4th clause would be better left out of the Bill.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said a matter of the kind referred to by the hon. gentleman could fairly be dealt with by the Minister himself. The warden had to recommend to the Minister whether the application for a homestead lease should be granted or not, and he need not make a favourable recommendation if the land asked for was in an unsuitable locality. With regard to the areas for mining, the law at present allowed 25 acres. That was the maximum area in the colonies, but at one time when he was in office he gave instructions that the limit should be 10 acres on Gympie, owing to the limited area of the field, and he found that that did not work badly. The Minister for Mines had power to act in that way. He thought the suggestion of the Attorney-General would meet the case exactly, and he quite agreed with him that it would be better to omit the 4th clause altogether.

The PREMIER said he was inclined to think, as he had said on the second reading of the Bill, that the Bill would be a very good one without that clause—that the 5th clause was better than the 4th and 5th clauses together. There were some reasons for inserting the clause in the Bill. It was thought that there might possibly be some objection to carrying clause 5 in its present form without offering some greater concession to the holders of homestead leases. He did not think himself that they were entitled to any greater concessions. He believed that the Bill would be very much better without that clause, and he would be very glad indeed to see it negatived and clause 5 passed as it stood.

Clause put and negatived.

On clause 5, as follow :—

"The Governor in Council may resume the whole or any part of a holding held under the said repealed Acts.

"Upon such resumption the lessee shall be entitled to compensation for any improvements upon the land which are taken or destroyed or rendered useless, and also for the value of his interest in the land, but the amount to be allowed for the value of such interest shall not exceed a sum equal to twice the amount of the fair value of the use and occupation for one year of the land so resumed."

Mr. MELLOR said he thought some little amendment should be made in that clause. It seemed to him that it made the holders of leases simply tenants at will. Hitherto persons had been under the impression that in getting a lease they had got a sound tenure, and he thought that they should always have confidence that it was a good tenure. And then with regard to the amount allowed for the value of the lessee's interest in the land, he thought that was too small altogether. He would like to see the clause amended in a way that would make it more satisfactory to holders of leases.

The PREMIER said he believed himself that under the Act of 1870 it was understood that homestead lessees were the holders of the land until it was wanted for other purposes. They were in effect tenants at will, but owing to what he conceived to be a flaw in the drafting of that Act, they had in some cases claimed to be perpetual tenants. He did not think that was the law. It certainly was not the intention of Parliament. The intention was that the land should be resumed when it was required for purposes of public utility. What were purposes of public utility? Was it not putting the land to a better use? That was the meaning of the Legislature when they passed the Act of 1870. The Bill made a concession, for if their land was taken they would get two years' value of their interest in the land. He considered it was a very fair bargain to make. As to giving them perpetual tenure, he certainly objected to that.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6 passed as printed.

On clause 7—"Lease may be applied for"—the 1st paragraph, as follows :—

"Any holder of a miner's right or resident on a goldfield, being not less than eighteen years of age, may, subject to the conditions hereinafter prescribed, make application in the prescribed form for a lease of any land upon the goldfield"—

was amended, on the motion of the PREMIER, by the insertion after the word "age" of the words "and not being an Asiatic or African alien."

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 8, as follows :—

"No person may apply for or hold under this Act a greater area than the following, whether it is held in one holding or several holdings, that is to say:—Within the limits of a proclaimed township, half-an-acre; within five miles of the boundary of any such township, forty acres; and beyond five miles from such boundary, eighty acres.

"In cases where no township has been proclaimed on a goldfield the warden shall mark and determine the boundaries of land to be reserved for a township before he approves or recommends the issue of any lease under this Act."

The PREMIER proposed to insert after the word "Act" in the 1st paragraph the words "upon the same goldfield."

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that when the Bill was going through the second reading he had pointed out the objections to granting 80 acres, and had also referred to the necessity for making some alteration in regard to the Etheridge Gold Field, as it was so large. He would like to know from the hon. gentleman in

charge of the Bill if an amendment could be made so as to meet the case of the Etheridge Gold Field without applying the system all over the colony. The Etheridge Gold Field was, he believed, larger than any other in Queensland; the Palmer was also extremely large, and he supposed those two fields embraced an area nearly as large as all the other goldfields in Queensland, and some concession ought to be made in regard to them.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. HAMILTON said he thought that 80 acres beyond 5 miles from the township was too large an area altogether. It did not protect the goldfield, for he had known many places where the township was many miles from the workings. On the Palmer, for instance, there was no proclaimed township within 20 miles of the head centre of the alluvial deposits where all the gold was being obtained; so that under such a Bill the richest portion of the field could have been taken up in 80-acre blocks. Of course, by some subsequent clauses any miner could enter upon those large areas, but he had to comply with certain conditions regarding compensation; and it would be a bar to the miner, because the mere fact of those portions being closed on the field would tend to prevent him from prospecting.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that people on goldfields desirous of building a residence complained that half-an-acre was too small, and that they should be allowed to take up at least 5 acres close to the town. He agreed with that, and he thought also that the 80 acres should be reduced to 40. He proposed to amend that part of the clause "within five miles of the boundary of any such township, forty acres," by substituting "two" for "five," and "five" for "forty."

Mr. SMYTH said that in some parts the miners complained that the land was very poor, and 40 acres would be too small. The land was mostly picked, and they had to take the 80 acres of second-class land. Very few people would avail themselves of the Act; why should they pay 80s. when they could get the freehold of agricultural land at 2s. 6d. an acre?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: You cannot get the freehold on a goldfield.

Amendments agreed to.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that the word "five," in the following line, be omitted, with the view of inserting the word "two."

Mr. MELLOR said the effect of the amendment last passed, and of the proposed amendment, would be to take away existing rights.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that all existing rights were preserved.

Mr. MELLOR said it would result in a repetition of what happened when the Act of 1880 was passed, when existing rights were taken away.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: No rights were taken away by that Act.

Mr. MELLOR said he had a personal reason for knowing that they were, because he himself was a sufferer. He knew of a farmer who had purchased a 40-acre block for £200 before the Act of 1880 was passed; he bought on conditions, and when those conditions were fulfilled he could not get a transfer for the land. He (Mr. Mellor) had five selections—two acquired by purchase, and three by mortgage.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Of 40 acres each?



Mr. MELLOR said there were 87 acres in one lot and 60 acres in another. He held the whole of them in his own name, but the right of transferring them was taken away. The same thing would happen under the present Bill; a man might be able to hold 40 acres of land but he would not be able to transfer more than 5 acres of it.

Mr. SMYTH said clause 23 provided that a man could transfer any portion of not less than 5 acres; that would give him the right to transfer the whole of his 40 acres if he thought fit. Under the old Act persons acquired holdings to which they had no right, and great frauds were committed under it. The intention was that a man should hold only 40 acres, but some people managed to acquire as much as 200 acres, chiefly by means of "dummying." With regard to transfers, he knew of a case at Gympie where a man died and left his wife a homestead under two different names. She could not get a transfer; but her case would be met, he thought, by the 23rd clause of the present Bill.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Act of 1880 only limited the amount of land, as a homestead, that one miner could take up. It was a very easy matter to break through the intention of the principal Act. The hon. member (Mr. Mellor) had just told the Committee that he held 147 acres in two blocks, whereas the intention of the Act was that no man should hold more than 40 acres. That must have been a case of pure "dummying." It was not his intention in passing the Act of 1880, nor was it the intention of the lawyer who drafted the Bill, that it should affect transfers. The principal Act never intended that more than 40 acres should be taken up by the owner of one miner's right, and if men were enabled to take up more—as it was evident they were—it must have been owing to the maladministration by the wardens.

Mr. MELLOR said that, however that might be, the right was given, and when a right was given it should be protected.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I question whether it is a right.

Mr. MELLOR said he believed it was the intention of the framers of the original Act—although it was not expressly so stated—that a man should be able to take up more than 40 acres. He had never selected under the Homestead Act. He acquired by purchase, or they had fallen into his hands as mortgagee. The right was there, and in giving a mortgage they had to give simply a transfer. The transfer was registered in the office, and it was still there. As he had said before, there were nice little compact estates acquired under that Act—legally acquired—and that right had been taken away by the amending Act of 1880. He was glad to see something in the present Bill to give them that right again. It would affect a very few homesteads; only those acquired before the Act of 1880.

Question put.

Mr. MELLOR said he would like to know if that did not affect the transfers, because within 2 miles of a goldfield there were a great many homesteads of between 20, 30, and 40 acres.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Read clause 2.

Mr. MELLOR said he thought the same thing appeared in the amending Act of 1880, but it had never been adhered to.

The PREMIER said that clause 2 covered all existing rights, but it did not cover existing wrongs, and was not intended to do so. If a man had acquired a thing unlawfully the Act

did not make it lawful. If more than 40 acres was taken up under the Act of 1870 it was by evading the law. That was one of the lessons taught by the old dummying system. The Act of 1866 said that a man could not take up more than 320 acres, but some people held that there was nothing to prevent them buying as much more as they liked, and so large areas were alienated by dummying.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved the omission of the word "eighty" on the 28th line with the view of inserting the word "forty."

Mr. PALMER said he would like the Minister for Works to consider other goldfields which were on a larger scale than Gympie or Charters Towers, such as the Cloncurry Gold Field. He knew that there was a petition now from the miners there to reserve to them the rights belonging to them on that goldfield.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: What are the rights?

Mr. PALMER said the petition referred to the rights—the occupation licenses. The miners complained that there was no room for feeding their stock or horses on the goldfield, and if they had to confine themselves to 40 acres under that Bill that would be scarcely sufficient. The member for Townsville had referred to an exception being made of the Etheridge Gold Field. The Act would not apply to all goldfields alike. The Etheridge consisted of 10,000 square miles, and the townships were 20 or 30 miles apart.

The PREMIER said that the Bill was not, in any sense of the term, a Pastoral Leases Bill. It was a Gold Fields Homestead Leases Bill for providing paddocks round the miners' houses.

Amendment put and agreed to.

The PREMIER said that in regard to large goldfields like the Palmer and the Etheridge, where the centres of population were at a considerable distance from one another, he thought their case would be met in the best way by the following new provision, to follow clause 8:—

For the purposes of this section any portions of the land of a goldfield distant more than twenty miles from each other shall be deemed to form parts of different goldfields.

He moved the insertion of that new paragraph.

Question put and passed; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 9 to 11 put and passed as printed.

On clause 12, as follows:—

"Any holder of a miner's right may lodge at the warden's office an objection to an application"—

Mr. HAMILTON said it was provided in a subsequent clause that all applications and objections thereto should be disposed of by the warden in open court; and he wished to know whether it followed, when an objection was made, that the grounds of objection should be stated. It would be unfair if objection could be made and the applicant did not know what the objection was till the case came on, and it might be desirable to add that the grounds of objection should be stated.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that sufficient time should also be given to the applicant to answer objections. If an application was heard thirty days from the date of lodging the application, the applicant should have at least seven days' notice of any objection.

Mr. SMYTH said that thirty days seemed a long time to wait before a man knew whether he was to get a piece of ground, or whether he would have to look out for a fresh piece. He thought fourteen days quite long enough.

Mr. HAMILTON said that, in addition to the objection being posted at the warden's office, it should be posted on the homestead area as in the case of a claim, and then perhaps seven days' notice would be sufficient. Perhaps the homestead area might be 8 or 10 miles from the township, and the applicant might not call in for five or six days at a time, and might not be aware when an objection was posted at the warden's office.

The PREMIER said the time for lodging objections should depend on the time which must elapse between the making and the hearing of an application. If an application was heard fourteen days after it was lodged, the time allowed for lodging objections should be a week; if it was heard a month after being lodged, twenty-one days should be allowed for objections. He did not think thirty days too long in many districts—the Etheridge, for instance—though seven days might be long enough at Gympie.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the clause was amended to read as follows:—

"Any holder of a miner's right may, at any time within twenty-one days after the lodging of an application, lodge at the warden's office a notice of objection to the application, specifying the grounds of objection."

On clause 13, as follows:—

"All applications shall be heard on a day appointed by the warden, of which public notice shall be given by posting it at his office, and not being less than thirty days from the date of lodging the application"—

Mr. MELLOR said he thought thirty days was too long; fourteen days would be sufficient.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said it had just been pointed out by the Premier that, although seven days even might be long enough on Gympie, the hon. gentleman must recollect that there were at least two goldfields in the North larger than the area between Gympie and Maryborough. Therefore fourteen days would be too short a time. They were legislating for the whole of the colony, and not for Gympie alone. Gympie was a very small field when compared with some others. The Etheridge was about 100 miles in length.

Mr. MELLOR said he thought seven days would be long enough on Gympie, but he did not want to do anything that would be unjust to any portion of the colony. There were very few cases in which fourteen days would be too short a time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the clause was meant to apply to the whole of the goldfields of the colony, not to any particular one.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 14, as follows:—

"All applications and objections thereto shall be disposed of by the warden in open court. The warden shall state in open court his reasons for approving or rejecting any application to which objection has been made."

Mr. SMYTH said he thought it would be necessary, when an application was made for a homestead, that notice should be given in the newspaper, if there was one published in the neighbourhood, of the intention of parties to apply for such homestead. On the Gympie Gold Field all applications were published in the papers; but he did not know if that was done elsewhere.

The PREMIER said there were some goldfields where there were no newspapers.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said there were no newspapers published on the Etheridge or the Cloncurry Gold Fields.

The PREMIER said it would be sufficient to put up the notice at the warden's office under most circumstances.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said, on the second reading of the Bill, he pointed out that he thought it would be necessary that the warden should inspect every area before he granted an application, and he understood that the Premier agreed with him that it was a necessary precaution to take.

The PREMIER said he did agree with the hon. gentleman, but since then it had occurred to him that the warden might not have time to do so. Supposing the warden at Georgetown required to deal with an application for a homestead lease at Gilberton, or at Woolgar, the applicant might have to wait for nearly a year.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said at the present time there were only small populations at Gilberton and Woolgar; but he thought the warden visited them oftener than once a year. He knew the warden would not like to have to ride a long distance to inspect. The principal Act provided for inspection.

The PREMIER said there was no difficulty in making the amendment if it were considered desirable. The way to do it would be to insert the words "after personal inspection of the land by him," after the words "open court" in the 2nd line. A great deal might be said in favour of it. The land might contain the only water in the neighbourhood.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that was the case once at Charters Towers, and he had to resume a homestead for that very reason, at a cost of £200 or £300.

The PREMIER moved that the words "after personal inspection of the land by him" be inserted after the words "open court" where they first occurred in the 2nd line.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 15, as follows:—

"If the land applied for includes any claim or any land in the authorised occupation of any person, or if the granting of the application would, in the opinion of the warden, in any way interfere with the requirements of the public, the warden may make such alterations in the area and boundaries of the land as seem advisable to him, or he may absolutely reject the application."

"If the land contains valuable improvements he may impose a condition that the applicant shall pay the value of such improvements, to be fixed by arbitration."

Mr. MELLOR said he thought the clause might be improved by altering the 1st line so as to read, "any claim, known quartz reef, or alluvial lead." There were plenty of places where there were quartz reefs and alluvial leads also.

The PREMIER said, considering the ample powers given for mining under those leases, it was hardly worth while to provide for that.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I think many miners themselves would object to it.

The PREMIER said that ample powers were given under clause 28, which provided:—

"Any holder of a miner's right may apply for and take up for mining purposes, in accordance with the provisions of the Gold Fields Acts, any land comprised in a holding under this Act, and may mark off the claim or land to which he is entitled, and may obtain registration thereof in the same manner as if the land were unoccupied Crown land."

Of course it was possible that a man might improve to such an extent as to obstruct mining. What occurred to his mind was that if they inserted such a provision it might be taken as an indication to the warden that if there was a quartz reef on the land it was not to be granted as a homestead lease.

Mr. HAMILTON said there might be a quartz reef on the ground without any gold in it. There were more quartz reefs of that kind than any other, and he was under the impression that there was sufficient provision to enable the warden to withhold granting a lease of ground if he thought the land was likely to contain payable gold. The clause stated that if the land applied for included any claim, or any land in the occupation of any person, or if the granting of the application would, in the opinion of the warden, in any way interfere with the requirements of the public, he might alter the area or reject the application. The requirements of the public on a goldfield were that auriferous ground should not be monopolised or retained from them, and he imagined that the warden would consider that the requirements of the public were attacked if he enabled persons to monopolise ground for any purpose other than that of extracting gold from it.

The PREMIER said he thought it would be an improvement if the clause were made to read in this way: "interfere with mining or the requirements of the public." That would also exactly carry out the object the hon. member for Wide Bay desired. He therefore moved that the words "with mining or" be inserted after the word "interfere," in the 3rd line of the clause.

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 16—"Survey and warden's report thereon"—put and passed.

On clause 17, as follows:—

"Upon receipt of the surveyor's plans and the report of the warden, the Minister may recommend that a lease be issued to the applicant, and thereupon a lease may be issued accordingly, which shall be in force, subject to the conditions hereinafter contained, so long as the lessee pays the rent as hereinbefore prescribed."

The PREMIER said a verbal amendment was suggested on the second reading to omit the word "hereinbefore" in the 5th line. He moved that amendment with a view of inserting at the end of the clause the words "by this Act."

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 18—"When application rejected, rent and survey fee to be returned"—passed as printed.

On clause 19, as follows:—

"When the warden has approved of an application for a lease the applicant shall be at liberty forthwith to enter upon and occupy the land applied for."

"But if, at the expiration of two calendar months from the completion of the survey and notice thereof to the applicant, he has not occupied the said land either by himself residing on it, or by cultivation, or by enclosing it with a substantial fence, or by erecting substantial improvements on the land, or by carrying on some manufacture or business upon or in connection with the land, he shall be deemed to have abandoned the land, and shall cease to be entitled to a lease thereof, and shall not be entitled to a return of any moneys paid by him as rent or survey fee, and the land may be immediately applied for by another applicant."

Mr. SMYTH said in the 1st paragraph it was stated—"When the warden has approved of an application for a lease, the applicant shall be at liberty forthwith to enter upon and occupy the land applied for." According to that, a man, upon entering upon the land, might erect buildings and make improvements; but a previous provision stated that the warden should send the plans down to the Minister for his recommendation. He thought a man would hardly be safe in entering upon land until the Minister had approved of his application.

The PREMIER said the applicant would be pretty safe; he would have a preliminary title. It was just like a commissioner's certificate under the Land Act. A man acted under

that, although it was not finally approved of by the board. There might be considerable delay before getting the business through the department in Brisbane. For instance, if it was a case a long way off it might be a month before the lease was issued. Practically, as soon as the warden had approved of the application the title was complete.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 20—"Rent, how to be estimated"—passed as printed.

On clause 21, as follows:—

"The rent shall be payable yearly in advance to the warden on or before the first day of January in each year, and if default is made in the payment of rent the lease shall be forfeited. Provided always that such forfeiture may be defeated by the payment within ninety days of the full amount of rent, together with a sum added by way of penalty, at the rate of five per centum for every month or part of a month during which the default continues. If the full amount of rent, together with the penalty, is not paid on or before the last day of March the lease shall be absolutely forfeited."

Mr. MELLOR said some amendment was necessary in the clause, although it was an improvement on a somewhat similar clause in the existing Act. Absolute forfeiture for non-payment of rent was rather severe, for it was quite possible that a man might fail to pay the rent through causes over which he had no control. He thought it would be better to distrain for the rent.

Clause put and passed.

Mr. MELLOR said he hoped the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill would not proceed any further.

The PREMIER: Why?

Mr. MELLOR said he had a new clause to move which could not be moved without a special recommendation from the Governor, as it dealt with money matters.

The PREMIER: It will come in just as well anywhere else.

Mr. MELLOR said he was sorry the Chief Secretary did not give the necessary recommendation before the House went into committee.

The PREMIER said the amendment required a recommendation from the Crown, because it certainly dealt with the consolidated revenue. He had omitted to communicate a recommendation to the House. He asked the hon. member to remind him of it, but he did not. The Bill could, however, be recommended for the purpose of considering the amendment, and if it was decided to insert it it could be inserted anywhere. It could be added at the end of the Bill; but he hoped the hon. member would not propose his amendment.

On clause 22, as follows:—

"Leases granted under this Act shall be transferable, and may be transferred by the lessee at the office of the warden, upon signing an instrument of transfer in the prescribed form and paying a fee of ten shillings. Every transfer shall be entered in a book to be kept for that purpose, and the warden shall endorse a certificate of the transfer upon the back of the lease."

"Provided that the maximum area allowed to be held by one person must not be exceeded, and that the transferee must be a person qualified to apply for a lease under this Act."

"Returns of such transfers shall be forwarded monthly to the Minister."

Mr. SMYTH said there might be cases where persons left the colony or district, and in those cases they would have to make an absolute transfer. Why should they not be allowed to put a tenant on the property?

The PREMIER said there was nothing to prevent that. There was nothing in the Bill against sub-letting. A man need not occupy all his property himself.

Mr. HAMILTON said there was one thing not very clear in the clause. It said that land could be transferred to any individual, provided the maximum area allowed to be held by one person was not exceeded. As the law now stood the maximum area inside a township was half-an-acre, within two miles 5 acres, and outside of two miles 40 acres; but one person could hold portions of land inside a township and outside of it provided he did not hold more than the maximum allowed to any one person. Now, say a person held half-an-acre in such a township,  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres within two miles, and an additional 20 acres outside of five miles—was that all he was entitled to hold? Outside he was entitled to hold 40 acres; say, however, that he only held 20 acres, or half of what he was entitled to hold there. Inside he could hold 5 acres; but say he only held  $2\frac{1}{2}$  acres—were those two areas combined the maximum he was entitled to hold?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he did not understand what the hon. member meant. If he referred to land two miles outside of townships he knew that the miners of Charters Towers were very desirous of having two holdings for residence purposes. He presumed they could transfer them if they thought proper.

Mr. HAMILTON said a person might be entitled to hold land for two residences—a town and country residence—but he was only entitled to hold land according to the distance he was away from the township. Provided he held 30 acres of land five miles away, being entitled to hold 40 acres, how much in addition would he be entitled to hold within two miles? According to the regulations a person could hold 5 acres within two miles, another 40 acres outside two miles, and quarter of an acre inside the township. Could one man hold the whole three at the same time? Perhaps the Attorney-General would solve the problem.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said if the hon. member wanted to know if he could hold 10 acres inside two miles, he could.

Mr. MELLOR said he understood the hon. member wanted to know whether a man could hold within a township half-an-acre; two miles outside, another allotment; and beyond that again another allotment.

Mr. HAMILTON: Yes, that is it.

The PREMIER: Yes, of course he can, so long as he is inside the maximum.

Mr. HAMILTON said he did not suppose a man could hold half-an-acre inside the township, 5 acres within two miles, and 40 acres outside. Could he do that?

The PREMIER: The clause says so.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 23, as follows:—

"Any lessee under this Act may, upon application to the warden, and upon payment of the fee of ten shillings, transfer any part of the holding, not less than five acres in extent, to any person qualified to be the lessee of a holding under this Act.

"The application must be accompanied by proper and correct plans and descriptions showing the proposed division of the holding, and certified by the mining surveyor or a licensed surveyor, and an endorsement shall be made on the original lease showing the portion of the holding so transferred."

Mr. SMYTH said he would move as an amendment that the word "five" in the 3rd line be omitted, with the view of inserting the word "two." On the goldfield on which he lived there were some large holdings in the most thickly populated part of the field, and if the holders were unable to transfer a smaller portion than 5 acres, miners would have to go some

distance out to get a place, and as they worked hard all day they did not care to have to camp far away from their work. Besides, the amendment he proposed would have the effect of securing closer settlement.

Mr. MELLOR said he thought it would be better to make it half-an-acre instead of 5 acres.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the holder could transfer the whole of his holding if he liked, but it was a question whether it would be desirable to allow a homestead of half-an-acre inside the township to be cut up.

The PREMIER said the hon. member for Gympie was referring to holdings of 30 or 40 acres in extent inside townships. Half-an-acre was the maximum allowed within a township, and he thought that holdings might be subdivided to that extent. There ought not to be a subdivision of half-acre homesteads, but there was a good deal in what the hon. member said in allowing those who had big homesteads to subdivide them.

Mr. HAMILTON said he thought the amendment was a good one, but that the suggestion of the hon. member for Wide Bay to reduce it to half-an-acre was better. At present a man was allowed to hold a quarter of an acre, but that might be rather too small, as it was always a consideration, especially on goldfields, to prevent persons from being crowded up. There was a number of 40-acre selections in the town of Gympie, and it would no doubt be very desirable to enable the holders to subdivide them into half-acre blocks.

Mr. SMYTH said if the land was to be cut up into small blocks the local authorities should have some say in it, so that proper roads should be laid out and the subdivision carried out from a sanitary point of view. If the local authorities had no say in the matter, they would probably have the 16-perch business carried out again. Some of those people would be placarding their places all over the town, giving champagne luncheons, and making them all drunk for the purpose of selling-off their allotments.

Mr. HAMILTON said he agreed with the hon. member that the local authorities should have some power in connection with the making of proper roads, but he thought the area should be reduced to half-an-acre.

The PREMIER said it would be inconvenient to leave it to the local authorities. If it was to be done at all, it should be left to the warden or the Minister. Such a thing would only happen very seldom in the case of an old settled goldfield where homesteads had got to be in the middle of the township, and the owners should be allowed to subdivide them into half-acre blocks within the boundaries of the township. When they were dealing with the Divisional Boards Act they did not see their way to allow divisional boards or local authorities to veto the subdivision of land, and there was no reason why they should be allowed to do it under that Bill. He thought himself it would be better to leave out the word "five," and put in the words "not less than half-an-acre in extent if the holding is within the limits of a proclaimed township, and not less than two acres in extent in any other case." He would suggest that the hon. member for Gympie should withdraw his amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The PREMIER said the amendment he proposed would give effect to the suggestion of the hon. member for Wide Bay.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Have you not an amendment to make before that?

The PREMIER said he did not think they should leave it to the local authorities, as that might be found inconvenient.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I think that it should be left to the warden.

The PREMIER said that perhaps that would be a good thing to do, as the warden would be subject to the direction of the Minister. He would move that the words "upon application to," in the 1st line, be omitted with the view of inserting the words "with the approval of."

Amendment agreed to.

The PREMIER moved that the words "five acres in extent," in the 3rd line of the clause, be omitted with the view of inserting the words "half-an-acre in extent if the holding is within a proclaimed township, and not less than two acres in extent in any other place."

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 24, as follows:—

"A holding under this Act or the said repealed Acts may be charged or made security for the payment of a sum of money.

"When a holding is intended to be so charged, the lessee shall execute a memorandum of mortgage in the form in the Second Schedule to this Act or to the like effect.

"Every memorandum of mortgage must be in duplicate, and one original must be registered in the warden's office; and in the case of several mortgages of the same holding they shall take effect according to priority of registration.

"A fee of five shillings shall be payable upon the registration of every such memorandum of mortgage.

"A mortgage may be transferred on payment of the like fee for registration of the transfer."

The PREMIER said it had been suggested that, as there was no provision in that clause to the contrary, a mortgage might be made to an alien. He moved that the clause be amended by adding at the end thereof the words, "No mortgage shall be made in favour of an Asiatic or African alien."

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 25—"Effect of mortgage"—passed as printed.

On clause 26, as follows:—

"If default is made in the payment of money secured by a memorandum of mortgage according to the tenor thereof, or upon the happening of any event which according to the terms of the memorandum entitles the mortgagee so to do, the mortgagee may—

(1) Enter upon and take and retain possession of the holding for any period not exceeding twelve months;

(2) Sell the holding by public auction after not less than thirty days' notice of the intended sale published in the *Gazette*, and a newspaper (if any) generally circulating in the district;

Provided that the purchaser must be a person who is not disqualified by reason of the quantity of land already held by him to be the lessee of the land under the provisions of this Act.

"Provided nevertheless that the warden may extend the time during which the mortgagee may retain possession of or sell the holding."

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that clause gave the warden unlimited power to extend the time during which a mortgagee might retain possession of or sell a holding on which he had foreclosed. He thought there should be some limit fixed to the extension of the time.

The PREMIER said before dealing with that matter there were a few words in the first proviso which should be left out. He moved that the words "by reason of the quantity of land already held by him" in the 2nd and 3rd lines of the first proviso be omitted.

Amendment agreed to.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he thought the warden should be allowed to extend the time during which a mortgagee might retain possession of or sell a holding.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: For how long?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it would be very hard to compel a mortgagee to sell, as he might be forced to sell at a disadvantage. He thought the warden might very well be allowed to extend the time.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not want the mortgagee to be forced to sell. He also thought the warden should have power to extend the time. But for how long? The time should not be unlimited. That was his objection.

The PREMIER: Would you say for a further period not exceeding twelve months?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Yes; that would do.

The PREMIER said that, before that was put, he would propose to substitute the words "a transferee of the holding" instead of "a lessee of the land." Those words occurred in another clause, and some argument might be raised if they did not use exactly the same words.

Amendment agreed to.

The clause was further amended by the addition of the words, "for a further period not exceeding twelve months."

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 27 passed as printed.

On clause 28, as follows:—

"1. Any holder of a miner's right may apply for and take up for mining purposes, in accordance with the provisions of the Gold Fields Acts, any land comprised in a holding under this Act, and may mark off the claim or land to which he is entitled and may obtain registration thereof in the same manner as if the land were unoccupied Crown land.

"2. A gold-mining lease may be granted under the Gold Fields Acts of land comprised in a holding under this Act. But in any such case the mining lease shall be of the mines under such land only, and not of the surface of the land.

"3. When land comprised in a holding under this Act is taken up for gold-mining purposes, or is included in a gold-mining lease, the person entitled to mine thereon shall also be entitled to access to the mines through the land comprised in the holding."

Mr. SMYTH said he would like to see the clause a little more definite as to working on the lease. He would suggest the addition to the clause of words giving the right to erect buildings, sink shafts, and carry on the necessary works required to work the mine. The Bill provided for access to the ground, but not for the carrying on of necessary works.

Mr. HAMILTON said he thought an amendment should be made before that, in subsection 2 of the clause. He wished to propose that all the words after "Act" be omitted. According to the clause, if the alluvial workings happened to be shallow the owner of the homestead area could prevent anyone from having access to them. There were many places where there was very valuable surfacing, and according to the clause no person could work it, because by so doing he would be breaking the surface of the ground. Or if the homestead area comprised an alluvial gully, where gold could be obtained by sinking only a foot or two, to obtain that gold one would have to break the whole of the surface; but because it was easily obtained the miner was not allowed to attempt to obtain it. That would be very unfair. He knew that, on the Palmer, for instance, it would be impossible to take up 40 acres anywhere without including gullies. The place was simply a network of gullies with gold

in nearly every one of them. According to that clause those gullies would be tabooed to the miner, because the only way to obtain the gold would be by breaking the surface. For that reason he proposed that all the words after "Act" in the 2nd subsection be omitted.

The PREMIER said it would be rather awkward to have two titles to the surface of the same land; very awkward complications might arise. There ought to be sufficient means of access, and he was inclined to think the words of the 3rd paragraph were not sufficient for the purpose. If a man had a homestead lease of 40 acres, and 10 acres of it were comprised in a gold-mining lease, the rights of the gold-miner were of course limited to the 10 acres, with the right of access over the rest. He did not see how they could have two leases, each giving an exclusive right to the surface. The simplest way would be to resume it, but that might be unfair, because the gold-mining lessee might get tired of it, and then the homestead lessee would have lost his holding and nobody would have it. He felt at first disposed to leave out the latter part of the 2nd paragraph, but on consideration it seemed better to leave it in and add the necessary words, providing not only for sufficient means of access to the surface of the land, but also for a right to mine by sinking. He thought it would be clear that if they gave two leases of the surface there would be conflicting rights which would constantly lead to litigation.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that, no doubt, there would be litigation if two leases were granted for the same surface; but the gold-fields were established for the purpose of working for gold, and a gold-mining claim or lease should have the preference over anything else. Therefore he thought that, when it was necessary to break the surface to get the gold, either the gold-mining lease should have priority over the homestead lease, or that portion of the goldfield homestead which was required for mining should be resumed entirely. He thought it would be dangerous to leave it as it was.

The PREMIER said he thought it could be altered in the next paragraph.

Mr. HAMILTON said that in nearly every instance the surface would have to be disturbed to a certain extent. Supposing that in a 40-acre block a reef was discovered about the centre, anybody wanting to prospect the reef would have to break the surface to the extent of sinking a shaft. According to the clause as it stood, if another field like the Palmer were discovered, it could be at once monopolised by a number of 40-acre blocks, and people would be absolutely prevented from entering upon them. In nearly every instance on the Palmer, the surface would have to be interfered with as gold there was generally found within two or three feet of the surface.

The PREMIER said the best way to meet the difficulty would be to amend the last paragraph of the clause, by inserting the following words after the word "shall":—"be entitled to erect buildings, sink shafts, and carry on all necessary mining operations upon the surface of the land comprised in the claim or gold-mining lease, and shall." He moved the insertion of those words. It was not desirable to break up a homestead lease for what might be only a temporary occupation. The only alternative was resumption, which was objectionable for many reasons.

Mr. HAMILTON asked whether the clause, as amended, would enable any person to enter on the land to work the surface?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Amendment put and agreed to.

The PREMIER moved that the clause be further amended by the insertion of the words "residue of the" between "that" and "land," in the last line of the clause.

Amendment agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 29 passed as printed.

Clause 30 passed as printed.

On clause 31, as follows:—

"When a miner has put up any building or other erection upon land leased under this Act, and afterwards leaves the land, the lessee shall not remove or destroy such building without the sanction of the warden. Any lessee offending against the provisions of this section shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds"—

Mr. SMYTH moved the insertion of the words "or put down a shaft" after the word "erection" in the 1st line.

Amendment put and agreed to.

The PREMIER moved the insertion of the words "erection or shaft" after the word "building" in the 3rd line.

Amendment put and agreed to; and clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 32 to 36 passed as printed.

On the first schedule—"Repeal of Acts"—

Mr. MELLOR asked, in reference to the leaseholders who had rights under the Act of 1870, if they had still those rights?

The PREMIER said that those people who had not got rights were not protected by the Act, but those who had rights were.

Mr. MELLOR said that the people had rights given to them by the Crown officers, and they were still registered in the books for more than 40 acres.

The PREMIER said that the Act of 1880 expressly said:—

"Nothing in this Act contained shall be held to affect the right, title, and interest of any person to any land heretofore acquired and held by him under the provisions of the principal Act."

What more would the hon. member have?

First schedule passed as printed.

Second schedule passed as printed.

Preamble passed as printed.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR WORKS, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, and reported the Bill to the House with amendments.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR WORKS, the adoption of the report was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn. There is no private business on the paper for to-morrow, except a formal motion relating to the "Rockhampton"; and it is intended to devote the greater part of the day to the Land Bill, with which we hope to make substantial progress, if we do not finish it. Before that, however, we intend to consider the message of the Legislative Council with reference to the Employers Liability Bill; and we shall probably take the recommittal of the Gold Fields Homestead Leases Bill, to consider a new clause of which notice has been given—clause 21.

Question put and passed.

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