

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 17 NOVEMBER 1886

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Mr. SALKELD asked the Minister for Works—

1. What amount of the £160,000 voted on the 31st October, 1882, for a railway from Ipswich towards Maryborough, *via* Kilkivan, has been already expended in constructing the two sections from Ipswich to Esk?
2. When will the survey from Esk to Nanango be completed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

1. None of the £160,000 voted on the 31st October, 1882, has been spent on the two sections from Ipswich to Esk, as the moneys required for constructing those sections were specially voted by Parliament under the following heads, namely:—Southern and Western Railway to Mount Esk, £105,000; Brisbane Valley Branch Extension to Mount Esk, £45,000.
2. In about three months.

BRITISH COMPANIES BILL No. 2.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. J. R. Dickson), this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their approval, by message in the usual form.

FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to:—

By the Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN, for Mr. Chubb—

That there be laid on the table of the House, the reports of Mr. Jack and Mr. Hester upon the boring operations at Coalfields, Bowen; with a statement of the expenditure thereon, and all other information, if any.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that the Speaker leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole, further to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 17 November, 1886.

Questions.—British Companies Bill No. 2—third reading.
—Formal Motion.—Supply—resumption of committee.—The New Guinea Massacres.—Supply.—Messages from the Legislative Council—North Coast Railway Extension—Liquor Bill—Trade Unions Bill.—Adjournment.

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

QUESTIONS.

Mr. PALMER asked the Minister for Works—

If he will authorise a survey for a railway to be made, as soon as practicable, out of the sum of £90,000 on the Loan Estimates of 1884 for the extension of surveys, from Normanton to Etheridge, by way of Croyden Gold Field?

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

As soon as the surveys already authorised are completed and surveyors available, the question of making the survey suggested by the hon. member will receive the consideration of the Government.

Mr. ANNEAR asked the Minister for Works—

Have any claims been made by any person injured in the railway accident which occurred to the special train at Wolston on the 30th October, conveying the Scottish Rifles to Ipswich?—and if it is true that one of the volunteers named Robert John Gamble has been permanently injured?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied—

A claim has been made on behalf of Robert John Gamble, but I am at present not in a position to say that Gamble was injured by the accident.

THE NEW GUINEA MASSACRES.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—I take advantage of the motion before the House to call attention to a matter which concerns the residents of the North particularly, and of the whole colony generally. I am sorry the Premier is not in his place, but as I see five members of the Government present I suppose they have sufficient power amongst them to take the question up, or at all events to answer it. I wish to refer to the massacres which are continually taking place in the islands adjacent to the northern part of the colony of Queensland, and to suggest a remedy for them. It is quite time something was done to prevent these continual attacks upon our subjects, and to remedy the apparent absolute helplessness of the Government to do anything to check them. We see the people of Cooktown, from which port most of the expeditions to those islands set out, continually in mourning for her citizens. These men go out, carrying their lives in their hands, and lose both their lives and property. There appears to be no remedy for these grievances, and the thing happens again and again, until it has become notorious that the name of "an Englishman" seems to carry with it a license to permit him to be tomahawked by any wandering savage able to take advantage of him. We know that other countries are able to take care of their citizens, and whenever their subjects may visit these islands the German and French nations appear to be able to protect them, while if one of our citizens is attacked no notice is taken of it. The fact of a man-of-war going round the island is nothing

more than a burlesque upon the reprisals that should be taken upon those islanders. Notice is given to the islanders to clear out because their villages are to be shelled, but such a course of action only produces contempt amongst these people, and they never miss a chance to carry out their objects of plunder and murder. We have only lately received news of an unwarranted attack upon Captain Craig, of the ketch "Emily," and the massacre of himself and his crew. That is only one of the instances that are occurring continually where our people are needlessly and ruthlessly murdered. Seeing that the Admiralty appear to be unable to protect us, I think that the Queensland Government should be enabled in some way to protect the citizens of Queensland. Bushmen in other parts of the colony know how to protect themselves, and are able to hold their own with the power they exercise and with the protection of the native police. I am quite certain that three or four detachments of native police landed on one of those islands would do more to prevent these continual massacres than any visit from a man-of-war. No one who knows the native trooper doubts his capacity for such work, and a detachment of them properly officered and equipped would soon strike terror into those savages. They could go wherever the savages went through the scrubs, and in fact the savages could not hide from the native troopers. If we could get power to carry out an expedition of that sort I am quite sure we should soon see an end of many of these needless massacres. In the interests of those people who set out to carry on a lawful calling and open up commerce and trade the Government should take this question up, and not refer it, or rather defer it, to the Admiralty, with the result that nothing is done to prevent this state of affairs continuing.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: Mr. Speaker,—This matter has been very fully considered by my hon. colleague the Premier, and especially with regard to the recent attacks made by the natives of some of the outlying islands upon people visiting those islands; and representations have been made by the Premier to the Admiralty upon the subject. I regret the hon. gentleman did not bring this matter forward when the Premier was in his place, inasmuch as he would have no doubt been able to give hon. members the exact terms of the communications made to the Admiralty on the subject, and possibly also the reply received. I am not, however, in a position to state at the present time that any reply has been received. I do not think the Government could very well take up an offensive attitude in a district outside the jurisdiction of Queensland. I suppose the hon. member does not intend that we should assume an aggressive attitude to protect the adventurers and traders who go outside the territorial jurisdiction of the colony of Queensland. That is a matter that must be left to the Imperial authorities. Although our sympathies may go forth for the protection of those adventurers and traders, at the same time it opens up a broad question concerning our right to interfere outside the jurisdiction and territorial limits of Queensland. I agree with the hon. member to this extent, that the Admiralty certainly seem very passive in this matter, and have hitherto not displayed that immediate attention to representations made to them which we all desire to see afforded. I can assure hon. members that it has not been from any want of representations on the part of the Government. No doubt, if the hon. member brings this matter forward at some other time, when the Premier is in his place, he will learn from him that the Government have done all that could be done; and I trust he will also learn from him that the Admiralty are

prepared to do something to protect British traders and others who at the present time seem to suffer from a want of protection in the islands adjacent to the coast of Australia.

Mr. BLACK said: Mr. Speaker,—I regret very much that the Premier is not in his place to give the House some explanation in connection with the whole of this New Guinea business. It appears to me to be in a most unsatisfactory position. This colony, in conjunction with others, has now for some two years been contributing a certain sum of money, on the understanding, I believe, that the colonies jointly have some jurisdiction over New Guinea. We have sent a Commissioner there, the hon. John Douglas, a gentleman in whom every one has the fullest confidence, but so far as I can ascertain he has no power whatever. He appears to be a perfect figure-head down there, and to be unable to do anything. So far as events have proved, traders and others have been led to believe that while engaged in commercial pursuits they would have a certain amount of protection, but when they go there they find the Commissioner powerless to help them, or to redress any attack made upon them. In connection with the outrages that have lately taken place, there has not been the least suspicion that any injustice had been done to the natives by the traders, and yet here we find that people who we might suppose have a right to trade to New Guinea, which has to a certain extent become a portion of the British possessions, and is supposed to be especially attached to Queensland, are openly attacked without having any redress. Men-of-war go down to the islands, and make a ridiculous exhibition, and fail to strike fear into any of the savages. The whole thing is a perfect farce, and yet I understand that the Home Government have suggested an additional contribution of £100,000 from the colonies, though I do not know whether that was suggested as a single or an annual contribution. I hope the hon. member for Burke will take another opportunity before the recess to bring this matter before the Premier, in order that hon. members may know what steps the Government are really taking to protect the legitimate rights of our people, and not only of our people, but of the people of the other colonies as well. I know that there is a feeling of great dissatisfaction at the very unsatisfactory condition the whole affair has assumed ever since we were supposed, by legitimate means, to have acquired a right to a certain portion of New Guinea. I regret very much that the action of the late Premier was not upheld by this Government, for I am certain it would have been upheld by the country if the present Government had shown any inclination to endorse the action the late Government took; and I am sure that Queensland would have been placed in a much more satisfactory condition with regard to New Guinea.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge) said: Mr. Speaker,—There is no doubt that the whole question of this New Guinea business is in an unsatisfactory state; but I do not think it is exactly just to insinuate that the present Government are in any way responsible for the unsatisfactory condition of things that prevails; indeed, I am quite sure that for the present unsatisfactory condition of things the present Government are in no way responsible. The Chief Secretary has been in communication with the Imperial authorities on the subject of New Guinea, and he has recently made very strong representations indeed on the subject of these outrages to which the hon. member for Burke has drawn attention, and has gone as far as to intimate that unless a more satisfactory condition of things is estab-

lished by the Imperial authorities it will be probably necessary to reconsider the whole question of the relation of this colony in regard to the contribution towards the maintenance of British authority in New Guinea. The Chief Secretary is fully alive to the importance of doing something at once, something decisive, to put a stop to the outrages and massacres that are continually taking place. The Government, of course, have not power to dispatch a local ship of war, the "Gayundah," to the scene of the massacres to take steps towards punishing the natives supposed to be guilty of them. All that can be constitutionally and legitimately done has been done, and hon. members need not fear that the Chief Secretary is in the slightest degree losing sight of the importance of insisting that something shall be done at once towards putting an end to this scandal—for it is public scandal that such a state of things should be permitted to continue.

Mr. PALMER: It has been going on for years.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It has for some time. It was hoped that by the British Government taking possession of a part of New Guinea, and establishing Imperial authority there, an end would be put to a state of things which everybody has felt and acknowledged to be unsatisfactory; and I cannot help expressing the belief that, now there is another Government in power in Great Britain, which has recently gone into recess, there will be time for the representations which have been made by the Premier of this colony to have due consideration given to them, and I think we may confidently look forward to some steps being taken by which an end will be put to the present unsatisfactory state of things in regard to British authority in New Guinea.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I think that the Attorney-General, instead of calling this matter a scandal, should have called it by another name. It is far more serious than a scandal; it is a downright iniquity that men engaged in legitimate trade—not adventurers, as they were called by the Colonial Treasurer, any more than the pearl-shellers are—should be ruthlessly murdered and no notice taken, simply because some New Guinea niggers want a few skulls to adorn their huts. It is a serious thing that such barbarity should be permitted, and no notice taken by the Imperial authorities. We know that there have been political disturbances in Great Britain, which have interfered very much with the settlement of matters abroad; but when it is a matter of men losing their lives wholesale, even political disturbances at home should not be allowed to postpone the settlement of such a matter. As far as New Guinea is concerned generally, I give the Chief Secretary credit for desiring to get the matter settled at once, and I also give him credit for desiring to get this matter in particular dealt with without any delay whatever; but everybody must know that the Government here are powerless—and what surprises me is that the Admiralty appears to be powerless too. Surely with all the vessels of war on the Australian station something might be done to punish the guilty natives! If a German subject gets murdered, the Germans very soon see that the natives who committed the offence are punished; and I am quite sure that no other people than the British would submit to see their fellow-subjects murdered in a barbarous way without at once retaliating in such a way as ultimately, if not very speedily, to put a stop to such a condition of things.

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—Everyone must regret the outrages that have taken place in the South Seas for some time past; but

I hope that whatever the Government may do towards mitigating these troubles and doing away with them if possible, they will not take the advice of the hon. member for Burke, and send an expedition of our trained native troopers.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There is no authority to do so.

Mr. MACFARLANE: We could not send them to New Guinea because, as has already been pointed out, we cannot send them outside our own territory; but I hope that inside our own territory such an act will not be perpetrated by the Government as has been even seriously recommended by the hon. member for Burke—namely, sending one class of savages to chastise another class of savages. We know what that would end in. It strikes me that instead of talking about retaliation against these massacres, we should consider that these massacres are in retaliation for other things already committed by the whites towards the blacks. We generally find that whenever any of these murders take place the blacks have been interfered with, and in their retaliation they cannot discriminate as to whom they should kill: they think it sufficient, if they find a white man, to punish him whether he was the perpetrator of the deed that ought to be laid to his charge or not; and I think that, though the Government ought to do all they can to prevent these things, we cannot expect them to take the law into their own hands, and go forth destroying all the natives of the earth because natives sometimes retaliate on the wrong person for a wrong that has been done them. It is unfortunate that the Chief Secretary is not in his place, as he might have thrown some light on the matter.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I have noticed that there is a certain class of particularly charitable gentlemen who think that it is always the wicked white man who is the aggressor and not at all these barbarians. Oh, no! They are poor ignorant things—poor creatures! They ought to be pitied for killing white men—for murdering our kinsmen and friends! I think, from the point of view taken by the hon. member who has just sat down, that the missionaries should be sent to them to pray over them and admonish them. That would be a fitting mode of meeting the exigencies of the case. For my part, I think there is a good deal in the suggestion made by the hon. member for Burke, if it were only practicable; but I am afraid it is not. I certainly think that sharp and severe justice should be meted out to these savages. If they continue to kill and slay with impunity, there is every encouragement for them to go on. The only way to deal with them is by stern and swift punishment, otherwise no man's life is safe amongst them. I am not one who would advocate indiscriminate slaughter, or anything of that kind; but there is only one law these barbarians respect, and that is that might is right. The sooner they are brought to recognise that if they take life their lives will be taken, the sooner there will be peace, and the murders will stop.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member for Ipswich deprecated the idea suggested by the hon. member for Burke, of sending out native police to punish these murderers, on the ground that it is undesirable to send one class of savages to attack another class. It is strange that the hon. member has not given effect to his opinions by voting against the native police estimate which is brought before us every year. I am not aware whether he has on any occasion voted against it.

Mr. MACFARLANE: I have.

Mr. HAMILTON: The hon. member thinks it may be merely in retaliation. Well, when white men murder blackfellows, it is not considered

any mitigation of their action that it might be in retaliation. There is the fact that murder has been committed, and they are punished, and deservedly punished for it, unless they can prove that they were justified in their action. That is the course we should take in this instance. I have known Captain Craig for ten years. He was an old resident of Cooktown, an honest and straightforward man, and anyone who knew him would know perfectly well that he would be the last man to be guilty of anything to provoke that barbarous murder. That is, no doubt, why the residents of Cooktown are so indignant in the matter, knowing his character as they do. Perhaps it might be illegal to send native police to punish the murder of our own countrymen, committed in British territory; but I think, even if it were illegal, it would receive the sanction and approbation of every individual. When it was thought that Captain Everill was murdered in New Guinea, did not the Hon. John Douglas sanction such an expedition? Men started from Cooktown to avenge the murder of those individuals, and they had the good wishes and sympathy of everyone in the course they adopted. Fortunately it was discovered at that time that no murder had been committed. If a similar action were taken in this instance, I am sure every right-thinking person would sympathise with those who take some action to avenge the murder of our countrymen.

Question put and passed, and the House went into Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY.

SOUTHERN AND CENTRAL RAILWAYS—CHIEF ENGINEER'S DEPARTMENT.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles) moved that a sum not exceeding £1,975 be granted for the Chief Engineer's Department. Hon. members would observe that there was an increase of £50 to the chief clerk, who had several times been promised the increase. Apart from that, since the Central Railway had been taken over by the Chief Engineer, a great deal of additional work was thrown on the chief clerk.

Mr. NORTON said that in connection with the subdivision by which two engineers-in-chief had been appointed instead of three, he would like to know where the Engineer in charge of the Northern Railways would have his office?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said his headquarters would be at Townsville. Within the last day or two the Government had received a communication from Mr. Hannam proposing that his headquarters should be at Cairns, but the Government were of opinion that they should be at Townsville. Townsville was chosen some time ago, and there seemed to be no reason for making a change.

Mr. ANNEAR said he was glad to hear that the Minister for Works approved of increasing the salary of the chief clerk in the Railway Department; and he was much surprised that the increase was not given long ago. The hon. gentleman gave as a reason why the increase of £50 should be granted that a large amount of extra work was thrown on that officer by having the Central Railway attached to the office in Brisbane.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No; that is not the reason.

Mr. ANNEAR said at any rate there was extra work, and there was a great inequality in the salaries of the chief engineers of the colony. The Chief Engineer appointed for the North—the Cooktown and Carpentaria districts, he believed they were called—had sixty miles of railway under construction, while in the Southern and

Central districts of the colony there were at the present time 360 miles under construction, and both gentlemen received the same salary. Where there was greater responsibility, and a greater amount of work to be performed, the pay should be in proportion. He did not wish to say a single word against Mr. Hannam; he did not think that gentleman was receiving a shilling too much, as he was a competent officer; but he thought a difference should be made between the salaries of the two officers. By the Loan Act of 1884, a sum of £6,144,000 was voted for the construction of railways, and out of that sum the amount to be spent in the Southern and Central divisions was £4,304,000. The salaries of the chief engineers in Queensland were very small in comparison with what were paid in the southern colonies. Last year alone there was paid, in the Southern and Central divisions, for construction, £496,851. He was very glad to see Mr. Stanley appointed to take charge of both divisions, but his salary ought to have been raised, at the very least, to £1,500 a year, clear of travelling expenses. Whoever held that position ought to be properly paid, and he maintained that that was not the case with regard to Mr. Stanley. In fact, the work of the Central division had been put upon him without any extra remuneration.

Mr. NORTON said the work to be done by the two chief engineers was very unevenly divided, although both were receiving the same salary. There was a much larger amount of railway construction authorised and going on in the Southern and Central divisions than in the Northern. In addition to the extension of the Central line, there was the extension to Emu Park, and a large number of small lines in the South, compared with which the work to be done in the North was almost nothing. He had been of opinion from the first that the division was a mistake, and the more he examined into it the greater difference he found in the proportion of the work of the two men. The responsibility was no doubt very great in the North, and the Chief Engineer there had a large amount of travelling to do; but for some time to come his attention would have to be chiefly devoted to the line from Cooktown and the line from Cairns to Herberton, so that, after all, his work was comparatively light compared with that of the Chief Engineer in the Southern and Central divisions. He did not believe a bit in the division which had been made.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was not surprised at the mistake the hon. member for Maryborough had fallen into in connection with the Chief Engineer, but he was surprised at the leader of the Opposition, who must know perfectly well that Mr. Stanley had an assistant engineer.

Mr. NORTON: I know that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not only so, but the whole of the maintenance was taken out of the control of the Chief Engineer, who had nothing to do with any lines but those under construction. Mr. Hannam, on the other hand, had the whole of that work to attend to. The chief engineers were very highly paid officers, and the present was not the time, seeing that they had had to resort to increased taxation, to still further increase those high salaries.

Mr. NORTON said he was not advocating any increase to the salaries of the chief engineers. He was simply referring to the work for which they were respectively responsible; and he repeated that, notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Stanley had the services of an assistant engineer—and a very good one too—his work was disproportionately large compared with that of Mr.

Hannam. He did not believe the work in the Northern division was one-fourth of that in the Southern and Central divisions, despite the fact that the Northern Engineer had to look after maintenance as well as construction.

Mr. ANNEAR said the chief engineers were not the highest paid officers in the service. There was an Engineer of Harbours and Rivers with £1,200 a year and travelling expenses, and what was his work in comparison with that of Mr. Stanley?

Mr. NORTON: Mr. Stanley gets more than £900 a year.

Mr. ANNEAR said that in Victoria there was a chief commissioner of railways with £3,000 a year, with two assistant commissioners at £1,500 each. The Queensland Commissioner for Railways was very much underpaid for carrying out the important duties he had to perform. It should be remembered that the Northern Engineer, who had only 64 miles of railway under construction, had also assistance, because there was a district engineer at Cairns, another at Cooktown, and another at Mackay. To give both the chief engineers the same salary did not seem to his mind exactly fair, taking the amount of work each had to do into consideration.

Mr. BLACK said he would point out to the hon. member for Maryborough that Mr. Stanley's salary was considerably larger than the £900 which appeared on the estimate now under consideration. From the loan vote that officer received another sum of £500, making a total of £1,400.

Mr. ANNEAR: But he has to pay all his expenses out of that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

Mr. BLACK said the hon. member, Mr. Annear, had expressed his opinion that the Southern Chief Engineer's salary should be £1,500, so that there was not much difference between that sum and the salary which Mr. Stanley actually received. The Estimates were very misleading, and it was impossible to ascertain what an officer was actually getting without referring to the schedule. The salary of the Chief Engineer for the Southern and Central divisions was £1,400, and he presumed travelling expenses in addition. He did not know why a portion of the salary should be paid out of Loan Fund and the balance out of the consolidated revenue. He supposed it was to make the working of the railways appear as favourable as possible.

Mr. ANNEAR said he believed the Minister for Works would bear him out when he stated that the Chief Engineer of the Southern division paid all his own expenses out of his salary, unless he went north of Maryborough.

Mr. NELSON said he would like the Minister for Works to explain why a large proportion of the salary—£900—was paid out of revenue, and £500 out of loan. What principle was it based upon?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the only explanation he could give was that that was the principle that had been adopted ever since they started the construction of railways in Queensland. It had always been the system to pay a portion of the Chief Engineer's salary from revenue and the remainder from loan.

Mr. NELSON said that might have been right enough when they started the building of railways, but it did not follow that it was right now. He did not think that was any explanation. Upon what principle the practice was based he was at a loss to see. There must be some principle at the bottom of it, surely.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the principle underlying the partition of the salary of the Chief Engineer in the manner in which it appeared on the Estimates was that a certain proportion of the time of the Engineer was spent in attending to works under construction, and the cost of all construction was paid out of loan.

Mr. NELSON said the whole of the Chief Engineer's time was taken up with construction. He had nothing else to do. What else had he to do except to arrange for new lines? So that if that principle was correct, the whole amount should be paid out of loan.

Mr. NORTON said no doubt the object of making separate charges years ago was that the Chief Engineer was in charge of both open lines and lines under construction, and a certain allowance was made for lines under construction and was charged to loan. The other portion was set down to the ordinary expenses of making the railways. That was the principle upon which the division was made, and there had been no re-adjustment made for years. But now the Minister for Works had explained that the Chief Engineer of the Southern division did all the work in connection with the construction of new lines; therefore if the same principle was continued that was adopted in the first instance, the whole salary ought to come out of loan. The practice was rather unsatisfactory, because there was no sound principle upon which it was based.

Mr. PALMER said the principle ought to be more definitely settled, instead of paying out of loan what should come out of revenue. The question had been discussed every session since he had been in the House, and on looking over the report of the Commissioner for Railways for last year hon. members would see that the same principle was still carried out—paying out of loan what ought to be paid out of revenue, and by that means falsifying the percentage of the railway returns. In fact, the lines were not making the percentage they were represented to be making. They were going on a wrong principle altogether. He would read some of the items of loan expenditure from the report for 1885. There were a great many relating to renewals of work on page 26; he would pass over those, because they were old-established works; and those renewals, he contended, should be constructed out of revenue, instead of taking fresh money from loan to build up what the revenue should build. Then he came to "Extra sleepers, between Dalby and Warra, £1,091." Surely no one could defend a principle of that sort! "Cutting down trees overhanging line, £76;" that was an item that ought to have come out of revenue. "Collecting cast rails, £34;" on what principle could that be defended as a payment out of loan? "Relaying Main Range with 60-lb. rails, £17,657;" could the Minister justify expenditure like that from loan?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes.

Mr. PALMER said he would prove that it was not done in other places, and consequently the railway returns there must be more reliable. Then there was "Ipswich shops—engines injured, Darra accident, £170." He had always thought items of that kind were provided out of revenue. Compensation to persons injured was provided for out of revenue, and why should not the repairing of the engines injured be paid for out of revenue also? Then there was an item "Completing engine (commenced in 1877), £268." Fancy nine years building an engine! There were a great many other items hon. members should study. On every page there was the item "Land resumed and costs," relating to old-established lines, and amounting to thousands of pounds. He did not know how the Minister

could defend that. As the Minister said it was quite right that renewals should be taken out of loan instead of out of revenue, he (Mr. Palmer) would quote from the report of the Commissioner for Railways in New South Wales for 1885 to show that they carried out a different principle there, and that their return of percentage of interest was, therefore, much more reliable than ours, because here certain deductions should be made for the moneys expended out of loan. At page 12 the report said :—

"The renewals of both rails and sleepers on the line between Sydney and Picton, the whole of the expense of which has, of course, been charged to revenue, has been heavy, and must continue to be heavy until the whole line (53 miles in length) has been re-laid."

That was one item.

"On the extensions beyond Goulburn, and from Bathurst to Wellington, the sleepers used, when the lines were constructed, were of the timber obtainable in the districts through which the railway was taken. This timber was known to be of inferior quality, but the object sought in allowing its use was to make the first cost of the lines less severe than otherwise would have been the case. The sleepers, as a natural consequence, have had comparatively but a brief life, and in renewing them (the cost of which has been charged to working expenses) it has been considered true economy to use sleepers of ironbark. The first renewal cost comes earlier upon 'maintenance' than it otherwise would, but in replacing the sleepers with durable material the maintenance cost in the future will be proportionately reduced."

"The working expenses have also been largely encroached upon by being debited with the cost of ballasting caused by the subsidence of many of the banks on the newly opened extensions, which were made up originally during continuous dry weather. It may be worthy of mention that it is not an unusual practice in other countries to charge to the construction fund the expense of remedying defects arising from the cause stated, upon the reasonable ground that 'maintenance' should not be saddled with the cost of work which is not occasioned by fair wear and tear, or is not an incidence of traffic operation; but it has been the practice here to debit current revenue with the cost of such works, and I am not, on broad grounds, prepared to depart from that practice, although its observance necessarily decreases the return of interest which the net earnings give to the capital invested."

In New South Wales they followed out much more business-like principles in charging to revenue the ordinary wear and tear of the railway lines. Now he came to the locomotive engineer's report, and there also the same principle was thoroughly carried out :—

"As reference has been made on more than one occasion to our working expenses not having been debited with the cost of the proper repairs and renewals of our stock, I would take the liberty of stating, so far from such being the case, we are continually making improvements in our stock irrespective of repairs and renewals, and thereby adding to their value as an asset of the department, and the entire cost has been charged to working expenses. As bearing on this I would mention that, when renewing wheels, axles, and draw-gear, we give a much improved article, which enables a much heavier load being carried in the vehicles, thus adding to our train-mile earnings, and the entire cost is charged to working expenses."

That was a principle which was not carried out in any way here.

"Then again, the improvements to our sheep and cattle trucks recommended by the board appointed to inquire into our live-stock traffic have been similarly charged. In fact, the cost of every improvement introduced in our existing stock is borne by working expenses."

And a very healthy plan it was to carry out. It would materially alter the percentage of the returns, no doubt, but at the same time they would be more reliable. They should not attempt, at any rate, to pay out of loan any deficiencies in the working of the line. He was quite certain that a straightforward statement of the case would be much better. The report was in many respects an improvement on that of last year. The statement was much clearer. The Chief Secretary had accused

them of asking conundrums last year when they were asking for information on the report, and some of the defects had been remedied since. Although the percentage on the railways was fairly enough stated, it was not stated on a fair basis. The percentage was taken on the lines open for traffic. Those cost £9,266,000. But there was another very large item—£761,000 for lines under construction or survey. He held that that also should be added to the general account of expenditure from loan, and that they should take the percentage on the whole. Those were all moneys that had been spent already and the interest was going on. Why should they not charge them to construction of lines? By doing so, even allowing for what was called the non-paying traffic, he made out that the returns would be little over 2½ per cent, instead of that which had been represented. He would ask the Minister for Works if that principle was to be continually carried out—namely, of expending money from loan which should come out of revenue, and which was shown to be paid out of revenue in the other colonies?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that that was what he was endeavouring to do. The Main Range had been relaid with 60-lb. rails, and he believed that had been paid out of loan. The Little Liverpool Range had also been relaid with 60-lb. rails, and that had been paid out of loan. But the relaying of the line between Laidley and Murphy's Creek had been executed out of revenue. On the vote for maintenance last year there had been a saving of £8,000, and that £8,000 had been carried forward and appropriated to relaying the railway between Laidley and Murphy's Creek with 60-lb. rails. He believed that all relaying should be done out of revenue, and that was exactly what the Government were endeavouring to do.

Mr. NELSON said he would ask the Minister for Works what provision was made for the renewal of rolling-stock. He did not see any provision from revenue for renewing engines, carriages, trucks, or anything else. Everything was paid for out of loan. A great deal of repairs was paid for out of loan, so far as he could make out from the report. At any rate, all new stock was paid for out of loan straight away. In regard to the report of the Commissioner for Railways, he did not agree with the member for Burke that it was clearer than that of last year. He thought it had gone greatly backwards. If they looked at the account rendered of expenditure out of the Loan Fund—and he knew that the Treasurer was very anxious that it should be correctly stated—they would find that the Minister for Works had given instructions to the Commissioner to alter that account completely; and instead of giving full details of expenditure, as he used to do, the whole thing was put down in vague, general terms which had no meaning whatever to the public. They found the phrase "general construction" eighty or ninety times, but there was no definite meaning given to "general construction." It was so on through page after page, and all through the accounts. That conveyed no meaning to the public, who did not know what "general construction" was. He did not know either, and he would like to know. He was referring to pages 24 and 25 of the Commissioner's report, which gave an account of the loan expenditure. That was a thing he had been asking for for a long time, and he believed that the hon. the Treasurer, at any rate, was anxious to give them all the information he could in regard to loan expenditure. But the way that account had been altered was really suspicious, because last year the Commissioner's loan account gave them details, whereas it was now wrapped up in this

way, "General construction at Roma," and so on. The words were repeated time after time, but they did not know what it was for, and even if they had a definition of "general construction," they wanted to know if really the items that came under that definition had anything to do with loan. They must remember that that involved an expenditure of over £1,000,000 last year, and that was the kind of account put before the public which they were asked to take an interest in. Well, besides the one general head of "general construction," they found other things. For instance, "station work," £2,000 here and £6,000 there. Then there was "supervision" carried down the page in the same way. Then an item of "paid to contractors" and "sundries." That was not the way in which to induce the public to take an interest in those things—to render the accounts in such a way that it was impossible to make head or tail of them. They did not know whether any one of those items was properly charged to loan, and when they were particularised it was very doubtful whether they were rightly charged.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said if the hon. member supposed that rolling-stock was to be supplied from revenue then they would have to shut up the railways at once. He understood the hon. member complained that it was not provided from revenue, and if it had to be then there would be no rolling-stock at all. If the hon. member looked to the Loan Estimates he would find sums put down for rolling-stock, and the money voted was appropriated exactly as it was voted. He knew the hon. member held peculiar ideas as to how accounts should be kept and charged, but he might talk for ever and would convince no one but himself.

Mr. NELSON said the hon. member put him in mind of a chapter from Nicholas Machiavelli, where the kind of minister that a prince ought to select was described. There were three kinds of ministers—the man who would know a thing when he saw it, the man who would know a thing when shown it, and the man who would know neither one thing nor the other. The first class was said to be valuable, the second class useful, and the third class wholly useless. Now, there was another class that might be added: the minister who was perfectly well aware of what was wanted, but who put on a semblance of simplicity, and pretended he did not see it. The Minister for Works knew what he meant. He (Mr. Nelson) had never said that rolling-stock should be provided from revenue. What he said was that there was no fund provided for renewals of rolling-stock, and that a large portion of the funds now being disbursed from loan was improperly disbursed, and ought to be charged to revenue. The hon. member for Burke had quoted various instances of that sort of thing, and he would quote from the home country. In one of the latest volumes of the "Encyclopædia Britannica" there was an article on railways, and he would read a short extract from it. In referring to rolling-stock, it said:—

"The capital cost of working-stock is given by the London and North-Western Railway Company. Excluding a considerable number of engines and carrying stock which had been constructed as duplicate stock—charged to revenue, no doubt—at 31st December, 1884, the quantities and costs were as follows:—2,323 locomotives, 1,647 tenders, £3,574,284—£1,538 per engine; 3,463 passenger carriages, 2,116 horse-boxes and guard-vans, £1,496,212—£268 per vehicle; 51,847 waggons, £3,320,322—£64 per vehicle. It is to be explained with reference to these low rates of cost that the original cost of the early working-stock stands unaltered in the books of the company, while the whole of the original working-stock has been replaced, at the charge of revenue, by engines and vehicles of modern design and larger capacity."

Well, that was what he wanted to ask now. They had got engines which had been working since 1864. They would want renewing soon, if they had not been renewed already. Repairs were paid out of revenue. He knew that an engine might last a long time, so might carriages, but some carriages had been destroyed. Were they quite sure that all renewals were paid out of revenue? Was it not a fact that new rolling-stock was distributed over all the new railways, and renewals provided for in that way? He could see nothing in the Estimates which provided for renewals of rolling-stock. There appeared to be no account for that purpose, and if there was he wanted the Minister for Works to show it to him.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he hoped the hon. member was not going to expect him to follow him through all his maundering. During the debate on the Financial Statement the hon. member went through the whole of the Estimates item by item from the beginning, and commented on them all. He wearied the Committee and convinced nobody. Everyone was disgusted with him, and he hoped the hon. member was not following the same course in reference to the Commissioner's report. At all events, he (the Minister for Works) had not the slightest intention of doing so.

Mr. NELSON said every man and woman in the colony was a shareholder in the railways. They were all liable to have calls made upon them—very heavy ones, too—and they were not able to get the information they should have, seeing they were all so deeply interested. The Minister for Works got up and said something which he thought very funny; but that was no answer. They wanted information. They wanted the public to take an interest in those matters, and the way to accomplish that was to put facts clearly before them. That was all he was asking, and he wanted nothing more. He wanted to put things in a straightforward manner before the public, and not have everything wrapped up in mystery.

Mr. PALMER said he did not think the Minister for Works should take the hon. member for Northern Downs to task for his statements and questions. The hon. member did not speak very often, and when he did he was most instructive, especially upon matters which were liable to be overlooked by hon. members. Now, the mysterious manner in which the accounts were mixed up was most confusing. The two items of "general construction" and "paid by construction" seemed to run together. He would like to ask the Minister for Works a plain question as to the amount expended in the workshops all over the colony—did it come out of revenue or out of loan?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said all new rolling-stock was constructed from loan, and all renewals from revenue.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. member for Burke had made a statement which should not go forth uncontradicted. The statement had been made that a great many items were charged to loan which ought to be charged to revenue, for the purpose of showing to the public a better paying balance in connection with their railways. It had been said that they were charging to loan a great many items which should fairly be charged to revenue, and his hon. colleague the Minister for Works had pointed out clearly that the principle the Government endeavoured to carry out was to charge all renewals and renovations to revenue. The hon. member for Burke had made a statement in connection with the report of the New South Wales Commissioner for Railways,

and said that several items were there charged to revenue which, in Queensland, were charged to loan. That statement should not go forth without being fully disproved. He would refer the hon. member and the Committee to the Queensland Commissioner's report for last year, which would clearly prove that that matter had received full consideration. The Commissioner in his last year's report said :—

"A diversity of opinion exists as to what should, and what should not, be charged to the 'working' and 'capital' accounts, but as in Appendix No. 1 to this report, all details of expenditure are given and the accounts to which such expenditure is charged are clearly shown, anyone can arrive at conclusions therefrom on the basis of his own views, if he differs from the principle on which this report is compiled."

"This Appendix (No. 1) contains information which is not generally published in railway reports, although, as far as I can ascertain from inquiry or judge from information published, the principle on which charges are apportioned is the same in all the Australian colonies."

He thought it only right that that should be stated, because there was no desire on the part of the Government to charge to loan matters which should fairly be charged to revenue for the purpose of making it appear to the public that their railways were better paying investments than they actually were. There was another subject to which he would refer. The hon. member for Northern Downs complained of a want of information in the detailed account of the loan expenditure as published in the Commissioner's report. He was informed that it was published for the present year in a somewhat more condensed and concise form than last year; but still any hon. member looking at the report would see that, if it was more extended than it appeared at the present time, it would really be more likely to confuse than to give the information desired. It was only right, on behalf of the Government, to say that no instructions had been given to condense the report; but it had been condensed by the Commissioner with a desire to place the information before the Committee in as succinct a form as possible and so as not to confuse hon. members in searching for information.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman had just read a portion of the Commissioner's report for 1884, in which the Commissioner said that a great diversity of opinion existed as to what should be charged to loan account and what to revenue account in railway expenditure. That was a very general assertion to make, and they did not know whether he meant by that assertion that the diversity of opinion existed in this colony or in Australia, or, in fact, whether the diversity of opinion existed in all the railway departments in the world. Which was it? There never had been any diversity of opinion in this colony as to the practice. There might have been a great diversity of opinion as to what was the correct theory. He believed there had been, and was still, on that point. The practice hitherto had been this—and the Colonial Treasurer knew it as well as he did—that all renewals on railways were charged to loan. If a maintenance man took out a rail which was damaged or unsafe, or unfit to be travelled on, the new rail put in was not charged to revenue, but was taken out of the stock of rails imported year after year by the Government out of loan. That was a renewal; there was no question about it. On the other hand, if a carriage got damaged it was sent to the depot at Ipswich to be repaired. That was also a renewal, but the cost came out of revenue. Why should not the new rail come out of revenue also? It was just as much a renewal as the repair of a carriage or engine. All their Governments—the present with their predecessors—were in the habit of charging a great

deal of what were properly called "renewals" to loan instead of to revenue. Take, for instance, a railway that had just been passed. All the expenditure upon the construction of that railway was properly charged to loan. The equipment of that railway in rolling-stock was also charged to loan; but everything done after that on that railway in the way of renewals, whether repairs or extensions, should be charged to revenue. That had never been done, and it was useless for the Minister for Works to try to leave the impression on the Committee, simply because something of that kind was done on a somewhat short section of the line he had mentioned, somewhere about Laidley, where his Government were carrying out that principle. If that system was to be carried out, especially now when their railways were paying less than at any time in the history of the colony, the Government, instead of showing 2½ per cent. or 3 per cent. of revenue, derived from the railways, would not be able to show 1 per cent. The Minister for Works and the Treasurer need not deceive themselves on that point. He did not for a moment say that their system was the right one. He believed, on the contrary, it was a wrong one, because under it they were deceiving themselves by making themselves believe that their railways were paying more than they really had been paying, from the vicious practice of charging to loan what was properly chargeable to revenue. He thought the member for Burke had done good service to the Committee and to the country in bringing the matter forward as he had done. Another matter to which the Colonial Treasurer had referred was the report of the Commissioner for the present year, as compared with his report for last year. He had no fault to find with it personally, but he thought it was perhaps too concise. It should give a great deal more information than it did, as a great many members were not as apt to understand it as an hon. member who had been an occupant of the Works Office. Members who had not spent a year or two in the Works Office could not so readily understand the Commissioner's report for the present year, concise as it was, as those who had spent some time in the office. There were matters upon which a great deal more information might be given than was given in the report last presented.

Mr. SALKELD said exception might be taken to one part of the remarks made by the hon. member for Townsville. The hon. member had said that when a railway was built and equipped, all renewals, repairs, and extensions should be charged to revenue. He thought extensions should not be charged to revenue; probably the hon. member had made a slip, and did not mean to include extensions. There was a very simple principle which could be followed—namely, to charge to revenue every expenditure incurred to replace something already charged to loan, and charge to loan everything that was a new creation. He believed there were several cases where that had been carried out, but it had not been carried out in all cases; and it was misleading to charge to loan things that simply replaced things that had already been charged to loan.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was obliged to the hon. member for pointing out the mistake he had made. He used the word "extension," but he meant the expansion arising from traffic, not "extension." For instance, on any line being built at the present there might be an extremely small station-house and goods shed erected at a particular station; and the expansion of traffic might necessitate the reconstruction of those buildings—the putting up of a

larger shed or an additional shed, or an extension to the station-house. That should be properly charged to revenue as an expansion from traffic.

Mr. PALMER said that explanation made the matter worse, for the railway expenditure from loan consisted largely of money expended on station works. The resumption of land was still puzzling. For land resumed on the line between Brisbane and Ipswich the amount of £1 was paid, and that was not a great sum; but there were very large items for some lines. It would not do any harm to the Railway Department or to the financial system of the colony if a proper and true system similar to the one just now discussed were carried out. It might reduce the percentage of returns from expenditure of loans, but that might spur the Department up to institute some fresh system that would bring the percentage up. On most lines the value of the money was in the lines. That was proved in New South Wales by the Minister there when he introduced a scheme for putting the railways under a commission. He said he had been offered a sum equal to the whole amount of the debt at the time—namely, £30,000,000—for the railways of the colony; their cost was about £24,000,000 or £25,000,000. The Queensland railways, he believed, were worth the money expended upon them; and though they might not be returning any interest at present, he thought they could be run profitably on commercial principles. That was shown by the difference between the rates charged in Queensland and those charged in other places.

Mr. NELSON said he should like the Minister for Works to give a definition of the term "general construction." Referring to the Central Railway it would be seen from Return D, page 161, which was a return showing the loan expenditure on account of maintenance, that sums were set down for maintenance, timber shed, Rockhampton; repairs to coal stage, Rockhampton; alterations, station-master's office, Rockhampton; fencing, office, school, and cottage, Langton; shade trees at stations. Things of that sort were all charged to loan, and it seemed to him that it was unjustifiable to do so. Would the Minister for Works give a definition of the term "general construction"? It was repeated eighty or ninety times in the report of the Commissioner, and surely it must be worth defining.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it would be a good thing if all those works could be paid for out of revenue, but unfortunately the railway revenue could not afford it, and they had to fall back on loan. Last session there was a strong expression of opinion that the railway tariff should be reduced. It had been reduced considerably—on heavy goods from 25 to 35 per cent.—and the consequence was that the receipts had fallen off considerably on that account as well as on account of the drought. If hon. members would insist on the tariff being reduced, and at the same time insist on all renewals being done out of revenue, it would be necessary to fall back on loan for money for other purposes.

Mr. NELSON said it had taken nearly an hour to drag that information out of the Minister for Works, who might as well have given it at first. He told the Committee that the reason why he was not honest was that he could not afford to be honest, and charged a lot of expenditure to loan that ought to be charged to revenue. It would be far better to show a deficit in the revenue than go on under the present system—increasing the debt charge every year. Unless another system were adopted the amount of interest would reach such dimensions that no possible tariff the railways could carry would

be able to meet the expenditure; and it would be far more honest to put the matter plainly before the people of the colony, whose trustees they were, and tell them that the railways were not paying, and that the department had to have recourse to the equivocal expedient of charging matters to the Loan Fund that were fairly chargeable to revenue. It would be far better to charge such expenditure directly to revenue, instead of throwing dust in the eyes of the people.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member must know very well that if the main lines had not been carried into the interior they would have been of no use at all. If they did not pay directly they paid indirectly. If it were possible to relay them and construct the additional buildings out of revenue, the Government would be very glad to do it; but they had not the means, and they had to fall back on loans.

Mr. NELSON said the hon. gentleman must not suppose that he was objecting to the construction of railways. What he was insisting upon was that the hon. gentleman should put a plain, unvarnished statement before his employers, the public of the colony, whom he was now trying to deceive by charging to Loan Fund expenditure which he could not afford to pay out of revenue. If the hon. gentleman had said that at first, the whole discussion would have been avoided.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Minister for Works was slightly in error in saying he could not afford to charge it to revenue. There was revenue enough to pay all charges; but then the net revenue would probably appear so small that the Government would be compelled to stop the extension of railways. All renewals of every kind could be charged to revenue, but then the earnings would be reduced to a very low percentage indeed. There were several other items which should properly be charged to revenue, but then, no doubt, the whole of the earnings would be swept away, and there would not be a farthing left. However, he was not going into that matter at present. He wanted to know from the Minister for Works what was the boundary line separating the Southern and Central division from the Northern division.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said there was no particular boundary line. The whole of the lines north of Rockhampton were under the supervision of Mr. Hannam. The Engineer for the Central Railway had no control over any railways to the north of the Central Railway and its branches.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said of course that was only a temporary provision, because they would very likely be making a railway between Mackay and Rockhampton in a short time—at any rate, within a reasonable time; and then the Minister for Works would have to define which engineer had charge of that line. If a line were made from Rockhampton to Broadsound, would that be under the charge of the Northern Engineer? Each gentleman must have the limits of his jurisdiction defined. There were surveys to precede the making of railways; and the hon. member for Normanby might get the Government to make a survey from Rockhampton to Broadsound, or the hon. member for Mackay might possibly get a survey from Mackay to Broadsound: would those railways be in charge of Mr. Stanley or Mr. Hannam? Those were questions that might crop up any day; and what he wanted to know was where the jurisdiction of Mr. Hannam ended and that of Mr. Stanley began.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Government had not decided upon any particular line of division; they simply placed certain railways under the charge of each of the engineers. No doubt when the time came the Government would know how to deal with the question.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said in that case the Government had not done their duty. When the Government took upon themselves to make three separate departments, the jurisdiction of each engineer was pretty well known, and if they had not determined it in the present case it was simply remissness on their part. The question might arise any day by a vote of Parliament authorising a survey, or by the Minister himself granting it, a thing which Ministers very frequently did. What was the reason that the Government had reverted to the system of two engineers? He remembered that he had strongly condemned the change when the Government appointed three engineers with three separate departments; he looked upon it as simply throwing away money; but at that time the Minister for Works and the Premier defended the system with all the ability they possessed. Now they had gone back to the old system again. He was very glad that his arguments had been so strong, but the Government might have acknowledged that there was some reason for going back. He thought also that the Government had made a mistake in apportioning the work, and had put too much on the shoulders of Mr. Stanley—he could not say too much actually, but too much in comparison with what was put on the shoulders of Mr. Hannam. They all knew that the number of railways under construction and extension in the Southern district as far as Rockhampton was much greater than the number in the northern portion from Mackay to the Gulf; so that Mr. Hannam's work was much less in proportion than Mr. Stanley's.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that most of the work in the Southern district was of a very easy character. There was no difficulty in the way of constructing any of the branches, or even extending the main lines. On the railway that passed last night, upwards of 60 miles was entirely a surface line. It was very different with a line such as that from Cairns to Herberton, which was very difficult work, requiring great supervision; and the same was the case with the line from Cooktown to Maytown—it was very rough country. Although Mr. Hannam had not the same length of lines under his supervision, he would very shortly have his hands full. The country was very difficult; and the hon. member knew the difference between building a surface railway and one through mountains.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said there was a good deal more than the extension of the main trunk line going on in the Central district; there were the Springsure line, the Emu Park line, and others, each of which would necessitate frequent journeys on the part of Mr. Stanley from Brisbane to Rockhampton and into the interior. Of course there were greater difficulties in making a line from Cairns to Herberton than from Barcaldine to the Thomson; still Mr. Stanley had a great deal more than that to supervise in the Central district, and then he had the whole of the Southern district as well. He was not forgetting those things; he was only insisting that Mr. Stanley had more work allotted to him than Mr. Hannam, whose salary was put down at the same amount. The Government had placed maintenance under the charge of a separate engineer, and as Mr. Stanley was solely employed on construction his salary should come out of the

same vote as construction—that was to say, from loan. The £900 which they were asked to pay from revenue ought to be taken from loan. The engineer in charge of maintenance should be paid from revenue. The system of course could not be altered at once, but he trusted the Government would take the matter into consideration before next session. The district engineers and all the officers employed in making railways were paid from loan, while the officers employed in maintaining the railways were paid from revenue. Mr. Stanley, who was employed solely on construction, should come under the former category, and his salary be paid from loan.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was hard to know what hon. members opposite wanted. One hon. member had found fault because they were paying too much out of loan, and now the hon. member for Townsville complained that they did not pay enough. The hon. member found fault with the Government for dividing the colony into three railway divisions under three chief engineers, and now he condemned them for giving the Southern engineer too much work. He should like to know what would please the hon. member.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that what he was condemning was paying Mr. Stanley's salary from revenue when it ought to be paid from loan. If the hon. gentleman could not understand that he was extremely sorry for him. He had drawn a logical conclusion, but he could not find the hon. gentleman brains to comprehend it. Mr. Stanley's work was entirely on construction; construction was paid from loan; therefore Mr. Stanley's salary should come from loan also. On the other hand the salary of Mr. Cross, who was employed on maintenance, should be paid from revenue.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he quite agreed that Mr. Stanley's salary should be paid from loan.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Why did you not say so at first?

Mr. NELSON said that in the loan account rendered by the Commissioner for Railways there were a number of items, amounting roughly to about £25,000, paid for supervision in the Southern and Central divisions. Could the hon. gentleman inform the Committee how that money was expended?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied that the items for supervision were for the officers who carried out the work and the clerks employed in the office in connection with construction. They were employed by the engineer.

Mr. NELSON said that was all he wanted to know.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said there were certain reasons why the Chief Engineer's salary, or at least a portion of it, should be paid out of revenue. That officer was not wholly relieved of the charge of maintenance—the maintenance of the Central and Bundaberg lines were still under his charge; and for that reason alone a portion of his salary should be charged to revenue. But a further reason was that officers of long standing in the service had certain rights and privileges accruing from salary paid out of revenue, which would not accrue if their salaries were paid out of loan. They held a certain position in the Civil Service which did not pertain to salaries paid out of loan.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the fact that an officer had certain rights accruing to him did not affect the question at all. With regard to the Central line, the man in charge was a very old officer in the service, and he might to some extent be under the control of the Chief

Engineer. He (Mr. Macrossan) did not dispute that. That officer might not be so free from control as Mr. Cross was on the Southern and Western line. But the amount on the Estimates, £900, was the sum that they were in the habit of voting continually for the Engineer of the Southern and Western Railway at the time when he was in charge of maintenance, but since he had been relieved of maintenance there was no reason why the Estimates should be still charged with that £900. He was sure the Treasurer would agree with that.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I would like to see the whole paid out of revenue.

Mr. NORTON: Then you will have to alter your policy.

Question put and passed.

SOUTHERN AND WESTERN RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving that £259,857 be granted for the Southern and Western Railway, said hon. members would observe that there was an increase of £10,000 in the item of maintenance of permanent way. That was necessitated by the additional lines opened. There was also a slight increase in the salaries of two inspectors, and the other additions to the vote of last year were for additional men. He wished to point out that the department had exercised very great economy in framing the Estimates. They had endeavoured to keep down the expenditure as much as possible, as he thought hon. members would admit, when they considered the additional length of line open and the small increase in the vote.

Mr. NORTON said since the Committee had commenced that department they had had to consider, first, that the Under Secretary for Railways, who was appointed by the Government simply to get out of a difficulty in which they had placed themselves, was not required; they had also had to consider that the Government, having divided the colony into three divisions, under three chief engineers, had, within twelve months, altered that decision, and placed it again under two chief engineers; and now, in the vote before them, they had an item of £800 for "Engineer of Existing Lines." That recalled to mind another peculiar act on the part of the Government. At the time they came into office Mr. Thorneloe Smith was, under a different title, doing exactly the same work that the new officer was doing now, and was receiving the same salary. Shortly after entering office the Government gave notice to Mr. Smith that they intended to abolish his office. They did so, and abolished him with it, and having got rid of him they created a similar office under a different name, with the same salary that was voted before. Of course, people would put their own construction on acts of that kind. It simply looked as if the Government had made up their minds to get rid of Mr. Smith with the intention of putting someone else in his place. He thought that if they had that intention it would have been far better to have said so at once, and not have abolished the office in order to get rid of him in that way. They should have told him fairly that they wanted to get rid of him, and then he might have retired or have been dismissed, as the case might be. There could then have been no charge of unfair or unopen dealing. Mr. Smith had occupied his appointment under the Government for a very long time, and had done good service; and when the present Government came into office they got rid of him and filled his place by appointing someone else. That was the whole history of the matter.

1886—5 F

Mr. PALMER said he had already referred to the increase of 22 men in that vote, and he found that in the whole transactions of last year there were 226 extra men appointed for 228 additional miles of line opened. But it was on looking into the particulars of that increase that the strangeness arose. He found that on the Northern line and branches, for 32 miles opened there were 61 extra men employed; on the Central line and branches there were 55 miles opened and 80 extra men taken on; on the Bundaberg line, where there had been no increase at all in mileage, 17 men had been added; and on the Maryborough line and branches, where there was again no increase in mileage, 6 additional men had been put on. It was peculiar how the men were apportioned on the different lines. In the case of the Bundaberg line, which was stationary, 17 additional men had been put on, thus increasing the loss of £852, which that line already brought to the country, and which had to be made up somehow. He thought that if the actual loss of percentage was shown it might have nerved the department to institute some striking reform in the working of it. If 32 men were sufficient for that line in 1884 he did not see why the same number could not have carried it on in 1885, instead of 49.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said there had been no increase in the number of men employed on the Bundaberg line. On the contrary, there was a reduction of two; instead of 46 employed last year, there were now only 44 put down.

Mr. MACFARLANE said that the vote for the present year was for 923 men compared with 901 last year—an increase of 22 altogether. That increase was not great at all—in fact, he did not know how the Minister for Works was going to manage. But what he would like to draw the attention of the Minister for Works to was the item of station-masters. There was an increase of only one station-master. He found that the station-master at Ipswich was paid £240; the station-master at Toowoomba, £400; and the station-master at Brisbane was only paid £350. Now, he could not make out how the station-master at Brisbane, which was considered the first station on the line, should be paid £50 less than that at Toowoomba. He was not finding fault with the amount paid to the Toowoomba station-master, but he thought the Brisbane station-master was placed in an invidious position altogether, to be paid less than what was paid to the Toowoomba station-master. The hon. gentleman would find the salaries at page 41 of the schedule. The station-master at Ipswich, which was a far more important station than Toowoomba, was paid £240, or £160 less than Toowoomba. He thought that station-masters should be paid according to the work they did and the position they held. That was the argument used that afternoon in reference to the Chief Engineer, and it should hold good in reference to station-masters; and the station-master at Ipswich ought to be placed in a very different position from what he was. He hoped the Minister for Works would give some explanation of the discrepancies between £240 for Ipswich, £350 for Brisbane, and £400 for Toowoomba.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member for Ipswich appeared to want more information than he could give. The amounts for the station-masters were put down in a lump sum, and he had no information as to the salaries paid to each of the station-masters.

Mr. MACFARLANE: You have it in the schedule,

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said there were 80 station-masters, £11,000; and 15 assistants, £1,930. That was a matter which was entirely in the hands of the Commissioner for Railways and the traffic manager.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: You have it all in the schedule.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he knew it might be in the schedule. He was sure he did not know how there should be such a difference between the salaries of the station-masters at Ipswich and Toowoomba. It appeared to him that there was as much work at Ipswich as at Toowoomba; and taking the suburban traffic and otherwise there must be more traffic at Brisbane than at Toowoomba, and the station-master was entitled to as high a salary.

Mr. FOOTE said the Minister for Works should supply the information, which was such as the Committee ought to have. The heads of the department were not far away, and the Minister for Works could consult with them and explain the anomaly. They wanted to know how it was that big salaries were paid to certain station-masters, and how those who bore the burden should not have as high pay as those who did not. The information was quite necessary.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that the salary of the station-master at Brisbane was £300; at Ipswich, £200; and at Toowoomba, £300. From the information he had, the station-master at Ipswich had only recently been appointed, and his salary would be increased after he had been some time in the position.

Mr. BLACK said that the Minister for Works took credit for the comparatively small increase in the vote considering the additional extent of mileage which the department had to work. Certainly at the first glance it did appear that there was a large additional extent of mileage to be provided for, and it was somewhat strange that the increase should be only apparently £5,300 over the vote of last year. But when they came to look at what was actually spent, compared with the amount actually voted, a very strange anomaly occurred. For instance, last year there was voted for the whole department—of which the vote now under discussion was about one-half—£516,609, but the department only spent £467,338, showing that last year there was over-voted £49,271 for that one department. So that in comparing the Estimates of the present year they should not take so much the amount voted, but the amount actually spent by the department last year. The department was asking £31,612 more than was voted last year, but if they added the amount over-voted they found that the actual increase in the department for the year was £80,883. That was putting the working of the department in a less favourable light than if they assumed that the amount voted last year was the amount actually required. Now, it was clearly shown that they voted £49,000 too much for the department last year, and he thought it was fair to ask the Minister for Works where that saving was effected. They had a vote before them which embraced half of the railway vote—namely, £259,857; the total amount the department required being £548,221. In that vote there was one item alone of £68,700—a huge sum of money which was expended in the locomotive department upon cleaners, engineers, firemen, fitters, turners, moulders, smiths, and a number of others. What he wished to ascertain was that those men were actually wanted. That was the only item in the vote where he could see that the Committee were being misled into voting far more money than was required, and he expected the Minister for Works to explain in which particular item the saving was effected.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it would be utterly impossible for him to give the different items. All that he could say was that the saving was in maintenance, and of course a great deal depended upon the state of the weather. The line was much more easy to maintain in dry weather than in flood-time, and not only that but there had been a falling-off in the traffic, and consequently there was not so much wear and tear. There had been a large reduction in the amount required for maintenance, and of course the money returned to the Treasury when the vote lapsed.

Mr. NELSON said in a return which had been furnished on the motion of the hon. member for Ipswich, Mr. Salkeld, they found a statement of the expenditure of the department for the nine months ending 30th September, and an estimate of the money required for the remaining three months, and the whole sum put down amounted to £229,000. That was £30,000 less than the Minister for Works had asked for. He thought the hon. gentleman admitted when the Financial Statement was before the House that he liked plenty of money, and no doubt that was true, but he did not think it was right to grant more money than was actually required.

Mr. SALKELD said the hon. member for Northern Downs had referred to a return which he had called for, and his object in calling for it was that he had been struck with the difference between the amounts expended in the three departments—the locomotive, traffic, and maintenance departments—and the amounts spent in the other colonies in similar departments. He found that out of every £100 spent on the Southern and Western Railway, 34½ per cent. was spent in the locomotive department, 24 per cent. in the traffic department, and 41½ per cent. in the maintenance department, and on comparing those figures with the amounts spent in the other colonies, he found a great difference. In New South Wales for 1884, the maintenance department cost 29½ per cent.; traffic department, 30½ per cent.; locomotive department, 40½ per cent. In 1885 he found the maintenance was somewhat higher—maintenance, 32½ per cent.; traffic, 30½ per cent.; and locomotive department, 30½ per cent. But the greatest difference was in Victoria. In 1885-6, maintenance cost, 23 per cent.; traffic, 37½ per cent.; locomotive department, 40 per cent. In 1884-5 the proportions were almost the same. In South Australia the returns were somewhat similar to those in this colony, and he found that in 1884 the traffic and maintenance departments cost about the same—namely, 29½ per cent., and the locomotive department, 40½ per cent. In 1885 there was nearly the same proportion between traffic and maintenance—28½ per cent. for traffic, and 28½ per cent. for maintenance, while the locomotive department cost 43½ per cent. In Natal the figures were—for traffic, 26½ per cent.; maintenance, 29½ per cent.; and locomotive department 44½ per cent. He directed the attention of the Committee to the matter because he thought some explanation might be given. One explanation might be that the gauge of our lines was narrower than that of some of the other colonies, but he would point out that both in South Australia and Natal the gauge was 3 feet 6 inches. Another reason might be that there were more bridges to maintain in this colony, but then they found that all wooden bridges were renewed out of loan money, and that could not, therefore, be urged as a reason for the high rate of maintenance. Of course, he believed the principal cause of the high percentages was that the mileage in this colony was greater than in some of the other colonies, but that did not apply to South Australia. The

mileage in that colony was very little less than in Queensland, and yet they saw that there, in 1884-5, the maintenance cost no more than the traffic department, and a great deal less than the locomotive department.

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. SALKELD said he would like the Minister for Works to give some more explanation of the expenditure than he had done. He hoped the hon. gentleman would cause some inquiry to be made as to why the working of the Railway Department cost so much more than the railway systems he had mentioned in the other colonies.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the only answer he could give to the hon. member for Ipswich was that the most rigid economy was exercised in the Railway Department to keep down the expenditure. It was impossible to carry on the business of the Railway Department on a more economical principle than it was now. Hon. members would see for themselves that, notwithstanding the increase in the total length of lines to be worked, the increase upon the Estimates was very little above the amount voted last year. He should be very glad to fortify himself with the information asked for by the hon. member; but he must confess he could not see his way to reduce the expenditure more than he had done.

Mr. NORTON said he was very glad to hear that the most rigid economy was being practised in the Railway Department. Last year, as had already been shown, they had voted a sum of nearly £50,000 more than was wanted, and certainly there was economy so far that the money not wanted was not spent. Now, when an hon. member on the Minister for Works' own side of the Committee had asked him a short time ago a question with regard to station-masters, he found the hon. gentleman could not tell him as he knew nothing about them; and although in this colony they had responsible government, a responsible member of the Ministry got up and told a member of the Committee that that was all arranged between the Commissioner and the traffic manager, and he did not know anything about it. He (Mr. Norton) thought that was going a little too far. Members of the Committee had a right to know everything they chose to ask in connection with the department, and he did not think the Minister for Works should get up and say that the Commissioner and traffic manager arranged anything. He was bound to answer whatever any hon. member asked him, but at the same time he (Mr. Norton) did not see how the Minister could get up and say the most rigid economy was being exercised when, in answer to a question about station-masters, he said that it was arranged between the Commissioner for Railways and the traffic manager. Of course, the Minister for Works was himself responsible, and surely he must have some understanding about it to be able to know that the work was being done economically.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that, with the number of men employed in the Railway Department throughout the colony, to ask him on the spur of the moment to say exactly what salary each of them received was to ask him to do what was impossible. He could only repeat that the most rigid economy was exercised in the Railway Department. The hon. member had said that so many pounds were voted last year and had not been expended, but that was the best proof that economy was exercised and that no more money was expended than was absolutely necessary.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. member for Mackay had gone into figures on the subject, and had shown that instead of the small increase shown on the Estimates the department actually asked for something like £80,000 more than was spent last year—not more than was voted last year, but more than was spent. £80,000 was a large increase to make in one department. He had not gone into the figures himself, but the hon. member for Mackay, who had made the calculation, was generally pretty correct in anything of the kind he went into, and that was the actual increase asked for by the Government; and under the circumstances he could not see how the Minister for Works could say the most rigid economy was practised. It was quite possible that in the case of some of the items other than salaries, the Minister for Works was asking, as he had done last year, for a larger sum than would actually be required.

Mr. SALKELD said he was not in a position to say where the economy should be practised, and it would be rather an invidious task to move a reduction upon the vote. A good reason might be given for the expenditure by saying that it was necessary for the safety of the public, but he only pointed out those matters in order that the Minister for Works should make inquiries to enable him to explain the differences he had pointed out. If it could not be accounted for, they were either paying too much for their department or the departments of the other colonies were costing too little. In the Commissioner's report for 1885, at page 19, there was a table showing the detailed revenue expenditure on the different railways as compared with the expenditure for 1884; and for the Southern and Western Railway and its branches the amounts for the traffic department for 1884 was £49,000, and for 1885 £76,000; and for the locomotive department, £63,000 and £82,000. The note upon the table showed that the total increase for the Engineer's department was 9·91 per cent.; for the traffic department, 46·08 per cent.; and for the locomotive department, 28·34 per cent. He was thunderstruck when he first saw that, but, on searching the report, he found an explanation for the increase on a previous page in the fact that the amount for 1885 included a sum of £20,363 paid for compensation in connection with two accidents that had occurred in a previous year. He believed the bulk of that was charged to the traffic department. A footnote should have been added to the table giving that explanation, as, without it, the table was misleading, and would lead a person to think that the locomotive and traffic departments must have been going in heavy to show an increase on the previous year's expenditure of 46 per cent. for the traffic and 28 per cent. for the locomotive department. He hoped the Minister would make inquiries into the matter. Probably when the Estimates came on next year they might find some way of economising and bringing the estimates of the three departments more into harmony.

Mr. BLACK said he was under the impression that they were voting a great deal more than the department required. The Minister had pointed out that the amount asked for was a sufficient increase on the amount voted last year to provide for the additional length of lines; but there had been nearly £50,000 over-voted last year, and there had been no satisfactory explanation why it should be wanted for the present year. The Treasurer ought to take notice of that, because he had shown at the beginning of the Estimates an estimated excess of expenditure over revenue of £69,135 in the whole of the departments, and that had necessitated additional taxation. Now, if it could be shown that £50,000 was going

to be saved again in the Railway Department, the Treasurer need not have imposed taxation to the extent he had done. He would like some assurance from the Treasurer that he had taken the matter into consideration, and that the amount asked for by the Minister for Works was really necessary. They had voted the hon. gentleman too much last year, and he had failed to show them in what branch of the department the saving had been effected.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the amount put down was absolutely necessary to keep the line in proper order and secure the safety of the travelling public. It was impossible to cut down a single item on that estimate.

Mr. NORTON said no member of the Committee objected to the lines being kept in order, and they wanted as far as possible to see the maintenance provided out of revenue. But the hon. member last year had told them the same thing—that every item was necessary, and yet at the end of the year there was an unexpended balance of nearly £50,000. They were, therefore, quite justified in asking whether the Minister was not now asking for a larger sum than was really required. Some time ago the hon. member explained the large balance by saying that there had been less expenditure on maintenance because the season had been a dry one, and there had been no floods to carry away parts of the line. Of course that would account for some of the balance, but not for such a large amount as £50,000. What they wanted to know was in what particular items that saving was effected.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was effected entirely by economy. He supposed that if he had expended it all there would not have been a word said about it. The Government ought to be commended for not having squandered all the money that was voted last year; over £40,000 had lapsed and come back into the Treasury. Why, then, need hon. members be afraid to vote the money? If it was not required, it would not be expended; but it was necessary that the department should have sufficient funds to keep the roads in good order. One accident from bad roads would cost double the amount of money that was put down.

Mr. NORTON: We all know that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Very well, then what did the hon. member want? Did he want to cut down the expenditure so that the roads would be in bad order, and have trains running off the track—injuring and perhaps killing people? If that was what the hon. member wanted, he could understand it.

Mr. NORTON said he really began to wonder what hon. members were there for at all. Why should not they vote one lump sum for the Railway Department if it was only to be expended as it was required? What was the use of talking about those trivial matters, and asking what was the cost of this and that? The reason was that they were bound to inquire about every particular item if the information was wanted. The Minister should be able to get from the officers of his department full information about every item which was important enough to be inquired into. Of course, the Minister could not be expected to carry it all in his head, but the department ought to be able to supply it. If the Committee were not to get any information they might just as well vote one lump sum for all the departments, and leave it to the Ministers to spend what they liked and save what they liked during the year. The Minister for Works must understand that he (Mr. Norton) did not want to cut down anything that should not be cut down;

but if the hon. gentleman were sitting on that side he would ask for the same information as the Opposition now wanted about such a matter as the saving of that £50,000. The Treasurer ought to be able to explain that matter. It was his duty to see that a larger sum was not voted for any department than was required; and when it was found that a much larger sum than was required had been voted, the Treasurer ought to give some information about it. He did not blame the Minister for Works for saving it; he was very glad the hon. gentleman had been able to save it. He (Mr. Norton) was one of those last year who thought a very large sum was being asked for by the department, and said so at the time; and he was glad that the whole sum had not been required. At the same time they ought to know how the saving had been effected; and, between the Minister for Works and the Treasurer, they surely could find out something more definite.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he did not know that he could throw any more light on the way the saving was effected, beyond saying that the expenditure had not been incurred. That was the satisfactory result the Treasurer had to deal with, and he would be very glad to see the other departments use their appropriations with equal economy, and keep as well within the lines. He could throw no light on the question; all that had come within his knowledge was that the whole of the money voted had not been expended. He rose chiefly to reply to the hon. member for Mackay, who seemed to be under the apprehension that because there was a larger appropriation last year than was necessary the appropriation for the current year must also be too large, thus necessitating the imposition of additional taxation. The hon. member might relieve his mind of any such apprehension. The large saving of last year was not, unfortunately, likely to occur during the present year. In 1884-5 the amount voted for the Southern and Western Railway was £222,490; in 1885-6, £254,517, an increase of £32,000; while the amount now asked for was £259,857, or an increase of only £5,340 over what was asked for last year.

Mr. NORTON: But £50,000 of that was not spent.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said there had been a large addition to the number of miles of railway open for traffic, and the cost of maintenance would of course be very largely increased during 1886-7.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said it was of no use for the hon. gentleman to get up to tell them that he was unable to throw any further light on the subject of how the economy was brought about last year, or how so much had been saved from the amount voted by Parliament. It was the hon. gentleman's duty to give that information, if the Minister for Works could not. It could be very easily found out. There were in the gallery the Commissioner for Railways, the Railway Accountant, the Under Secretary to the Treasury, and the Chief Engineer of the Southern and Western Railway; and those officers, if asked, would be able to give the information at once. The conduct of the hon. gentleman was shameful, because the information which that side of the Committee wanted, and intended to have, was at hand if he only chose to ask for it. According to the hon. member for Mackay, the department obtained last year £80,000 more than they spent on one single vote—the vote for the Southern and Western Railway.

Mr. BLACK: No; on the whole of the railway vote.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that in any case £80,000 represented the maintenance of an immense number of miles of new road—at least twice as many as had been opened during the year. Even if they reckoned the cost of maintenance at £200 a mile, which was not the case, it represented 400 miles of new road; and nothing like that number had been thrown open during the year.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that if it was any satisfaction to the hon. gentleman he could give him the heads of the items on which the saving had been effected; but he could not give him the reasons. In the Department the amount lapsed from last year's appropriation was £1,359; Southern and Western Railway, £16,782; Maryborough and Gympie Railway, £5,326; Bundaberg and Mount Perry Railway, £3,181; Central Railway, £17,209; Mackay Railway, £1,906; Northern Railway, £843; and Cooktown Railway, £5,099; making a total of £51,346. The principal items in which the saving was effected were maintenance of permanent way, station-masters' salaries, and extra labour and contingencies. Hon. members would find in the Auditor-General's report every item set down, and the amount which had lapsed from the unexpended vote.

Mr. NORTON: We shall get that next session.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that was all the information he could give. All he knew as Treasurer was that the money had not been expended.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that upwards of 200 miles of additional line were opened last year over the whole of the colony—a larger number than had been opened in any one previous year. The estimate had been framed with strict regard to economy, and it was utterly impossible that 200 miles of line could be maintained without an increase in the vote.

Mr. BLACK said there was no intention on that side of the Committee to blame the hon. gentleman for exercising the strictest economy. The hon. gentleman took credit to himself for having done so, but he would point out that it was very easy for any Minister to take credit for excessive economy, as evidenced by the saving of money when he got such an enormous amount voted more than there was any necessity for. There was really no credit for it due to the hon. gentleman. He wished to have the Minister's assurance, that in the vote now asked for he was not asking the Committee to grant him so very much more than the department really required.

Mr. SALKELD said that if that question was disposed of he would call attention to another matter. In September last he called for papers connected with the dismissal of three fitters; and in looking over those papers he could not avoid coming to the conclusion that they disclosed a case of great hardship. In cases of that kind it was necessary, in the first place, that the blame should fall on the right parties; and in the second place, that the punishment should be proportionate to the offence. In that case he believed someone was to blame, but he did not think the punishment inflicted was in any way proportionate to the offence, or that it was put on the right parties. It appeared from the papers, which agreed with the information he had received, that the leading hand, Hellawell, put on two fitters and an apprentice to do certain work to an engine. When the work was partly finished, Hellawell went away to another shed to do certain work to another engine, which a leading hand was always required to do. He left one fitter, Watson, to go on lifting the engine, and gave him instructions

how to lift it. By-and-by he sent fitter Woods to assist Watson in lifting the engine, and it appeared that Woods remonstrated with Watson for going to work the wrong way, and he got snubbed and did not say any more. It appeared also that Hellawell afterwards went to see how the work was getting on, and, although his instructions had not been followed, he thought that, as they had got the engine lifted, it was no use lowering it again—that they might as well go on and finish the job instead of putting it back and going at it the other way. He went away to attend to the engine in another shed, and while he was away the others went on with the work. Woods was at the crane, and the other two, Watson and the apprentice, were looking after the packing. Woods asked if the engine was plumb, and Watson said, "Lower away; I know what I am about." Woods lowered away, but the engine was not plumb, and that was how the accident arose. The packing gave way and broke part of the engine, which the locomotive foreman said it would cost £40 to repair; but he (Mr. Salkeld) had been told it would cost only about £20. An inquiry was held, evidence was taken, and the three men were dismissed. A man who was not present at all was dismissed, and singularly enough the apprentice was not dismissed. Woods, who was acting under the orders of Watson, was dismissed, and the locomotive foreman put the blame on Hellawell, because he said he ought not to have gone away; that he ought to have looked after the work, and all the rest of it. He (Mr. Salkeld) had been informed, and believed it could not be denied, that fitters other than leading hands lifted engines frequently in the workshops, and the locomotive foreman in his report said:—

"Watson and Woods are journeymen fitters, and should be quite able to lift an engine in safety without any special instructions. These two men are equally responsible for the accident." Hellawell said he left Watson in charge of the work; Woods considered that he was acting under Watson's instructions, and when he pointed out that Watson was not going the right way to work he got a not very pleasant answer. No doubt, if he had not done what he was told he would very soon have been hauled over the coals. He (Mr. Salkeld) thought that when anyone was acting under the orders of another person he ought not to be held liable—he should not be responsible, except so far as he himself was concerned. He considered that Woods was really in no way answerable, any more than the apprentice who was not dismissed; and he did not think Hellawell was to blame. He was away doing other work, setting valves in another engine, which was required to be done by a leading hand; and if he had kept men standing idle waiting for that work to be done no doubt he would have been hauled over the coals very soon. If hon. members would look through the papers laid upon the table, they would see that all he had stated was borne out by them. He could not see any reason or justice at all in dismissing those men. It could not be said that there was gross negligence; but there was certainly an error in judgment somewhere, and anyone accustomed to the lifting of engines would know that sometimes very little would cause an accident. Even in the case of Watson, he thought dismissal was too severe a punishment. If he had been made to pay for the damage done it would have been more reasonable. He (Mr. Salkeld) had been informed that the repairs would cost about £20; but the locomotive foreman said £40. When he (Mr. Salkeld) mentioned the matter to the Minister, he said there had been so many accidents that the department must

be severe—that somebody must be made an example of. In plain English, that meant that if a number of burglaries or murders had been committed, they must get hold of somebody and hang them. They must make an example of someone, and if they could not get hold of the right parties they must get hold of someone else, and make an example of them. He (Mr. Salkeld) did not think that was a proper thing at all. They should put the blame on the right parties, and the punishment should be proportionate to the offence. Dismissal was the highest punishment that could be inflicted; it was damaging to the character of the men. He did not see that Hellowell could be blamed for what happened when he was away attending to his duties to the best of his judgment. The locomotive foreman said Hellowell was to blame because he misled him into thinking that he was looking after the lifting of the engine, but he (Mr. Salkeld) believed it was a fact that the locomotive foreman walked through the shop not once or twice, but half-a-dozen times while the men were lifting the engine. Therefore, if they dismissed Hellowell, they should dismiss the locomotive foreman also, and if they dismissed Woods they should also dismiss the apprentice. He hoped the Minister for Works would consider the case, deal out justice, and put the punishment on the right parties.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the case referred to was investigated by the locomotive superintendent and the Commissioner for Railways, but previous to that it had been reported to him that Government property was frequently damaged through neglect and carelessness. Slight fines were inflicted and every means adopted to endeavour to make the men responsible for their work, and it was found utterly impossible to do so unless an example was made of some of them. Those men were engaged in lifting a locomotive when, owing to a defect in the packing, it gave way and the locomotive was damaged to the extent of about £40 or £50. The case was investigated, and it was proved clearly that the accident occurred through negligence, and the men were discharged. It was utterly impossible that any other step could be taken. Had those men been employed by private individuals they would not only have been dismissed, but would have been made responsible for the damage they had done. It was necessary, owing to the carelessness with which the business had been conducted, that some example should be made.

Mr. NELSON said he thought it would help them to get on very much faster if the Minister for Works would tell them whether he was going to propose any reduction in that vote. It was perfectly clear that some reduction must be made. The case, as he understood it, stood thus: Last year the department had voted altogether £516,000. They did not spend that by £51,100. The requirements were over-estimated by £51,100 besides £8,300 which was carried forward and devoted to relaying of the line at Laidley—which was right enough. The Minister for Works now asked for £32,000 more than was appropriated last year, or for £83,000 more than the requirements of last year. Surely £83,000 was more than the extension of the railway would require. They did not know the particular items that should be reduced. It should be left to the Minister to say on which particular items he would exercise economy. At the same time it was always understood that there was no surer sign of incompetency or incapacity in a department than to over-estimate the requirements. He noticed that the Committee of the House of Commons was much more severe

in their criticisms of a department that over-estimated than on a department that spent a little more than was asked for; and that was perfectly right, as voting a larger sum than was really required was only a temptation to the department to spend more than was needful. For instance, in the item of maintenance, the Engineer of Existing Lines in his report told them that the cost for 1885 was £80,638, whilst the Commissioner in his report estimated for this year £20,000 more. £80,000, according to the Engineer for Existing Lines, was sufficient to maintain 574½ miles, but they were now asking for a rise of 25 per cent. on that. Surely they were not going to have 25 per cent. additional lines during the present year. On the whole estimate last year, for every £100 really wanted, they asked and had appropriated £110.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had already stated over and over again that there was not a single item on the estimate that could be reduced. He had also explained that there were 200 miles more railway opened than what was opened this time last year. Not only that, but they had to provide for another section of the Western Railway which would be opened at the end of the year. The department must make provision for all that. It was utterly impossible that the lines could be extended without the cost of maintenance increasing. There was not a single item on which there could be any reduction made.

Mr. PALMER said that the Minister for Works stated that the lines were carried out on principles of the most rigid economy. But it was not rigid economy to ask for more than what was going to be spent. The department ought to confine itself to what they really did want. The Minister for Works said that a sum of money which he had saved had been expended in some other way—for renewals.

The PREMIER said hon. members were not reasonable in the matter. The Minister for Works could not know personally what would be required for renewal of rails or maintenance; he could only rely on the information given to him by the officers of the department. Fortunately, during last year, in consequence of the unusually good weather for the maintenance of railways, but bad weather for other purposes, the expenditure for maintenance had been much less than usual. They could not rely on that during the current year. That would account for a great deal of the saving. Last year was the only year in which the amount put down for general expenditure on railways had not been exceeded. It had been the practice to under-estimate the expenditure, and every year supplementary estimates had to be introduced to meet the deficiency. Of course whether the money was voted or not the Government were bound to spend the money to keep the lines in a state of repair and to prevent accidents. Last year they were determined not to under-estimate the expenditure, and fortunately they did not exceed their estimate. By the rigid economy introduced, they had been able to keep the expenditure below the average, so that instead of coming for a supplementary estimate they had made a saving. The ordinary increase for the year was much more than £4,000 or £5,000, which was all the increase now asked; but having regard to the probable future, the probable wear and tear, the probable weather, and to extensions, the officers of the department had made a calculation that that amount would be required. It might be a little less. He did not think the criticism of hon. members opposite was very reasonable. Hon. members invariably objected to supplementary estimates and said

that the amount put down in the Estimates-in-Chief was put at too little, in order to deceive the country. And now they had just as long a discussion, in which they talked of the monstrous conduct of the Government in putting down more than they required. Of course, it was very easy to get up discussions of that kind. Anybody could do it. He knew that the Minister for Works had taken extraordinary care in preparing the Estimates. He had investigated all the details of expenditure, and the apparently small increase had been very carefully scrutinised by Ministers generally. The Government were agreeably surprised when they found there was a reasonable prospect of being able to keep down the expenditure to so great an extent.

Mr. NORTON said the Premier told them that the Minister for Works had taken extraordinary care to keep down expenditure, and yet the Minister for Works only a short time ago said he did not know anything about the station-masters, and that the Commissioner and traffic manager regulated those matters. Now, if he had investigated those details so carefully, would he not know something about them? Of course he would; he could not have forgotten all about them. The Premier's argument was all very well so far as it went, but the contention of the Opposition was very reasonable indeed. It had been shown that the expenditure last year was less by nearly £50,000 than the amount asked for—£49,271 was the exact amount—and no explanation had been given as to how the money was saved. They were now asked to vote an increase of £80,883 upon the amount spent last year. That was a very large increase, and the Minister for Works, who had gone so carefully into details, ought to be able to give some explanation. The explanation was that last year a large sum was not required for maintenance, and that more was required for the present year. They admitted that, but the expenditure on maintenance did not make up the difference. The Treasurer must know what was saved on that item.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : £3,000.

Mr. NORTON said yes, somewhere about £3,000 less than the amount voted. Now that did not account for much. Then they were told that 200 miles more line were opened, and money was required for drivers, station-masters, firemen, and others, in addition to maintenance. Of course that was right enough, but £40,000 ought to cover that. The outside cost of maintenance was £140 a mile, and for 200 miles that would amount to £28,000—that was supposing the new lines cost the extreme price to maintain—and the extraordinary expense in respect of station-masters, engine drivers, firemen, and guards, would not amount to £12,000. It would not make up the £40,000, and still there was another £40,000 to account for. Of course it would be false economy not to properly maintain and equip the railways, but he could not help thinking that as there was an over-estimate last year, too much money was now asked for.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had explained over and over again to hon. members opposite that provision was made in the estimate for the additional length of lines that would be opened. The second section of the Highfields Railway would be completed in a month or two, and it would have to be provided for. The extension from Stanthorpe to the border was all but completed, and would be opened very shortly; provision had to be made for it. The Western line would soon be completed from Dulbydilla to Melton, and that would have to be provided for. The hon. member must know very well that station-masters, engine-drivers, and guards had to be provided for

as well as extra maintenance, and how was it possible to open new lines without extra expenditure? If the Government brought down Supplementary Estimates hon. members said the Estimates-in-Chief should have been properly prepared; and if provision was made in the Estimates-in-Chief for what was required the Government were also blamed. It was clear that there was no pleasing hon. members opposite. Now, he thought the Government ought to avoid bringing down Supplementary Estimates as much as possible, and it was far better to vote too large a sum than put down a low estimate, and have to bring in a supplementary estimate.

Mr. SALKELD said he had heard the explanation given by the Minister for Works in reference to the case he had brought forward, and he must say that it was very lame and very unfair. He believed there had been some cases where a great deal of damage had been done to Government property, and no punishment was inflicted, while there were other cases in which small fines had been inflicted; but now the department had taken the most extreme course, and had dismissed two men for what was nothing more than an accident. He would inform the Committee of the real cause of the dismissals. There was in Ipswich a co-operative store in which Hellawell was a shareholder, and Woods an unpaid director. Some twelve months ago Woods was informed that he must resign his directorship or else be dismissed from the Government service, but he declined to resign. He (Mr. Salkeld) brought the matter before the Minister for Works, who would not at first listen to him. On applying to him again the Minister said it was contrary to the rules of the service for Civil servants to hold directorships, but he (Mr. Salkeld) said he could name several persons who held those offices. Then the Minister said it was contrary to the rules of his department, but he (Mr. Salkeld) said he could name a person in his own department who held such an office. But the fact of the matter was that the persons he could name were high up in the Government service, whereas the man Watson was merely a mechanic. Well, the Minister promised to reconsider the matter and then said he would not interfere. That was the last he heard about it, and that was twelve months ago. He was quite sure that if those two men had not been connected with the co-operative company neither of them would have been dismissed. The one of the three who was really to blame, if there were any blame—and he thought there was—was Watson. He had been informed—and, he believed, correctly informed—that if he had not given notice for the production of those papers Watson would have been reinstated in the Government service, although he was really the one to blame. He thought he had good grounds for saying that Watson would have been reinstated before now, if he (Mr. Salkeld) had not called for the papers. He had no idea of stopping anyone being reinstated, but he would ask for some equitable punishment to be inflicted. He thought it was really a very severe sentence to pass on three men, one of whom was not present when the accident took place, but who was dismissed. The bread was not taken out of that man's mouth it was true, as he was a very prudent and respectable man, and had saved something. The three men were really good mechanics. Hellawell was a clever man and a good mechanic, but yet he was dismissed, and, if he had not previously made provision for his wife and family he would have been turned away penniless. He was, however, turned off with a slur upon his character as a workman that really ought not to be put upon him. He wondered what the Minister for Works would think if he, or any one connected with him, were treated in the

same way. There were not the slightest grounds for such a punishment being inflicted upon those two men; and if everyone in the Government service were treated in the same way it would be denuded, and none would remain. If two of them had not been connected with the co-operative store, not even Watson would have been dismissed, and that was the plain truth.

Mr. ALAND said he was very glad he was not a member for Ipswich, and he was also glad that he had not the huge establishment of the Ipswich workshops at Toowoomba to look after, as he was afraid he would every now and then be called upon to complain as the hon. members for Ipswich were. He had read the papers referred to, and had come to the conclusion that those men were very justly dismissed, although he might be wrong; and he thought that, if they had been in any private establishment, no inquiry would have been held in the matter at all, but they would have got their "sack" there and then. He thought it was too bad that every man discharged from the Government service should get hold of some member to ventilate his grievance in the Committee; and he thought it too bad for the hon. member for Ipswich, in the face of the report which was sent by the Commissioner for Railways and the other gentleman who adjudicated in the case, to say that the men were discharged because they had some connection with a co-operative store at Ipswich. So far as a co-operative store was concerned, he thought the railway employes were quite right in having a co-operative store among themselves; but, at the same time, he did not think they should enter into competition with other storekeepers. They might supply themselves with necessaries—no objection could be raised to that—but he did not think that either that store, or the Civil Service store in Brisbane, had any right to go outside that. The Government paid them, and if they chose to trade amongst themselves well and good; but they should not try to take the bread out of the mouths of the people who furnished them with their wages. He thought it would be a very good thing if the influence of those Ipswich workshops was lessened. It had been a bad influence in the country, and in the House, for a number of years past; and he was quite sure that the hon. members for Ipswich were beginning to be tired of the influence which those workshops tried to exercise over and upon them. He did not think there was any economy about the Ipswich workshops; and he was quite sure if a committee of inquiry were appointed to go into the working of those shops, they would find they were a very great loss to the country, and that the work could be done outside of them a great deal cheaper than in them. He did not consider it any compliment to the country, when travelling by rail to and fro, to see a beautiful enamelled plate affixed to a carriage: "This was made at the Ipswich workshops." That had struck him as very funny when he saw that pompously placarded upon their railway carriages. He was very glad to say that, though "this was made at the Ipswich workshops," work done at Nundah and elsewhere bore very fair comparison with them. There was just one point which he wished to point out to the Committee—that the vote they were then considering showed only an increase of something under £3,000 upon last year, so that if more money was being asked for than was required, it certainly was not being asked for the Southern and Western vote; and, therefore, they might pass that sum, and when they got to the other lines they could make the reduction.

Mr. NORTON: What was spent last year on the line?

Mr. ALAND said he could not state from memory what was spent on the Southern and Western line, but he thought it was something like £16,000 less than was voted. When they considered that out of the 200 miles extra to be opened a great part was in the Southern and Western division, he did not think they could say that too much was really being asked for as an increase on the last year's vote.

Mr. NORTON: It is £80,000 more.

Mr. ALAND said the £80,000 was on the whole vote, and a very large proportion of that was not for the Southern and Western line, as hon. members would allow. The Ministry were only asking for an additional £2,100—he took the figures from last year's vote—and even taking £16,000 over last year, it was only an addition of £18,000 upon the vote for last year. He thought that, seeing the number of lines that were opened and that were to be opened, that amount would really be required. He considered something should be done to popularise the railways a little more. They had a holiday the other day—the Prince of Wales's Birthday—and he noticed that all the facilities for travelling were given down about Brisbane. Now, he knew as a fact that had a special train been put on to run at a proper hour between Toowoomba and Murphy's Creek, or between Toowoomba and Gowrie Junction—

Mr. SMYTH: And Warwick!

Mr. ALAND said Warwick was rather too far. There was a train run to Warwick, but not a special train, and Warwick was too far for picnickers, as they would need to set out early and would not get home till too late. There were a good many families in Toowoomba who would like to go to Highfields or Murphy's Creek on a public holiday, but when they looked at the time-table and saw that they and their little ones would have to get up to catch the half-past 6 train and would not get home till a quarter past 10 at night they could not do so. A train would be well patronised running at excursion fares; and, seeing the railways were in the hands of the Government, it was their bounden duty to do that. If the railways were in the hands of private individuals it would be done, and the Government ought to do the same. The Government seemed to him to be afraid to risk anything, but hon. members knew no profit was made anywhere unless they really risked something for it, and he thought the Government should really try to popularise the railways a little more, and it would be a good thing for the revenue if they did so. There was one statement he was in hopes the Minister for Works would make, and that was what they really lost on the railways through the decrease in the tariff. They had heard so much about the falling-off in connection with the railways, and the Minister for Works had ascribed it more to the reduction of the fares than to the drought and the little stock and goods that appeared to have been carried on the line. They should have that information. He was not sure that they followed out the right direction in reducing the fares. It was a grand mistake for the Government to reduce the tariff upon goods to places where there was no real necessity for the reduction. What they should have done was to lower the tariff considerably where they would have to compete with New South Wales. What course had they adopted between Brisbane and Ipswich, and what course were they now adopting there? The Commissioner told them that they carried coal at a lower rate than in any other part of the world, and it was his (Mr. Aland's) opinion that they were afraid to raise the rate.

It was on parts of the line where they came into competition with New South Wales that the tariff should be reduced to as low a rate as possible if they wished to preserve the trade for themselves.

Mr. ANNEAR said he did not agree with the remark that the Ipswich people, when they built a carriage, should not publish the place where it was made. The firm at Maryborough and firms at Brisbane and other places were accustomed to put their names on a brass plate on the floor or sides of rolling-stock they built, and where the work was good there was no reason why they should be ashamed of it, and he was rather pleased to see the names put on the work. He would like the Minister for Works to say how many carriages were built in the workshops at Ipswich during the year, and whether they were built by contract or by day labour.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was not in a position to give the exact number built in the Ipswich shop, but all built there were built by contract. There was no work done there with the exception of repairs that was not done by contract; even to the turning of the tires of the wheels, it was all done by contract; and the repairs only were done by day labour. With reference to what the hon. member for Toowoomba had asked about the traffic, there was an increase in the traffic for the month of January, 1886, of 4,547 tons, and the earnings decreased by £6,320.

Mr. ALAND asked what was the quantity of the coal traffic for that time and for the previous twelve months?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had only taken the month of January.

Mr. ALAND asked if the Minister for Works could give the increased number of tons of coal trucked from Bundamba as compared with the same time the previous year?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: And how much more was received for the coal traffic?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had not got that information, but there was an increase of traffic for January of 4,547 tons, and a falling-off in the earnings of £6,320.

Mr. FOOTE asked if the freight for coal was lower this year than it was last year or the previous year?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the freight for coal had not been altered.

Mr. HAMILTON said the Minister for Works had stated that the carriages built in the Ipswich shops were built by contract, and he would like to know if tenders were invited for the contracts, and if so where they were advertised?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that the tenders for the construction of carriages built in the Ipswich workshops were invited amongst the men there employed, but the great proportion of the rolling-stock was built by private firms, and tenders were invited in the usual way.

Mr. FOOTE said he understood the hon. member for Toowoomba to infer that the freight on the line from Brisbane to Ipswich was very much reduced. He knew that the contrary was the fact. The hon. member suggested that where the lines came into competition with the neighbouring colony or with other carrying companies the freight should be reduced. That had been done on the line between Brisbane and Ipswich, and it had run the steamboats off the river, and now people were compelled to use the railway only. But now the freight

was 2s. 6d. a ton higher than had ever been charged on the steamboats. The hon. member no doubt wished to see Ipswich saddled with every charge, and to see every reduction made in the case of Toowoomba. He would like to know whether it was a fact that produce was carried at the same price from Toowoomba to Brisbane as from Laidley to Brisbane?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said there was a small difference between the rates; but it depended a good deal upon the amount carried. If a truck-load was carried, the rate was about the same; but if small quantities were carried, there was a slight difference.

Mr. FOOTE: If a truck-load is taken, it is less from Toowoomba to Brisbane?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No; the same rate.

Mr. FOOTE said that meant that the rate from Toowoomba to Brisbane was about half that from Laidley to Brisbane, because the distance was about double. The hon. member for Townsville ought to be satisfied with that. The Minister for Works professed to run Toowoomba down in one way, but he patted them on the back with the other hand. It was quite time that the management of the railways should be in the hands of a commission; they could then be worked very much better. He regretted the hon. member did not ask the Minister for Works what was the cost of construction of the carriages made in the Ipswich workshops, and of the same class of carriages made elsewhere *pro rata*—that was, according to the work which had been taken out. The hon. member seemed to think that the workshops must be very troublesome to people living in Ipswich, but he could assure the hon. member that they did not feel the burden at all.

Mr. HAMILTON said that if the Government let work by contract they should give every one a chance of doing it who was capable of doing it, and Ipswich was not the only place where they could make railway carriages. It appeared that the only persons who had the privilege of tendering were those employed in the Ipswich workshops.

Mr. ALAND said he would defy the Minister for Works, the locomotive engineer, or anyone in the Government service, to tell the cost of the carriages made in the Ipswich workshops. They might make the calculation as nicely as they liked; but he would not believe the figures. No doubt the figures would be honest enough, but there were a lot of things that had to be taken into account. In the matter of railway freight, he would point out that though Toowoomba had some advantage in the carriage of produce down the line, they had no advantage in carriage up the line. The carriage on first-class goods—salt, flour, bar-iron, galvanised iron, and so on—was 5s. a ton to Ipswich, but to Toowoomba they had to pay 50s. a ton. In second-class goods there was the same difference. Of course, the Government were bound to get traffic between Brisbane and Ipswich, and he did not blame them for charging a differential rate.

Mr. FOOTE: They do not charge a differential rate.

Mr. ALAND said that if the charge was 50s. for 100 miles, the hon. member could not say that 5s. was the proper proportion for 22 or 23 miles on the same line. He did not blame the Government; they must use the railway, and if the steamboats began to travel on the line again, he supposed the Government would bring down the fares.

Mr. FOOTE said the Government would not be able to run them off the line again.

Mr. ALAND said that, after what they had done lately, the Government could do any mortal thing.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the differential rates were changed for the purpose of running the boats off the river; and when that was done the rates were increased.

Mr. MACFARLANE said the hon. member for Toowoomba defied the Minister for Works, the engineer, and all those concerned in the workshops, to tell the cost of carriages produced in the Ipswich workshops. Did the hon. member give less credit to the men at the head of the department than to other business men? In any factory in the country they could tell what any article cost when they paid the men by piecework, and the whole work was done by piecework in the railway workshops.

Mr. NORTON: There is more than that.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he had called for the papers a year or two ago, and had showed that everything was done by piecework, and that the cost of everything could be arrived at to the value of a nail. The whole of the labour was paid by the man who took the contract, and where did the other items come in? He did not see why the Commissioner for Railways, the locomotive foreman, and all the rest of them, should be less qualified to tell the value of an article made than any private company. Besides, if they made inquiries from the heads of the departments they would find that not only were the carriages made at the Ipswich workshops cheaper, but they were also better than any others made in the colony, and it was only reasonable to suppose that they would be. The appliances were better than those in any private workshop; and the larger the workshop the cheaper they could work. The foreman over 200 or 300 men could superintend them just as well as 20 or 30 in a private workshop. It stood to reason, then, that the carriages could be made better and cheaper; and it was also a well-known fact that the carriages made there did not return half so frequently for repairs as those made in other workshops. He did not want to bring Ipswich before the Committee unnecessarily; but they must have the workshops somewhere; they must have the work done in one shop or else the cost of superintendence and working would be increased. Then as they had to have them somewhere, why not in Ipswich as well as any other place? They had all the appliances; they had water, and they had coal superior to any other in the colony; so that everything was in favour of having the shops there. Besides that, it was in a central position; and carriages could be sent from one end of the line to the other, either south or west. He did not want to take up the time of the Committee in discussing the matter. It was his duty as a representative to defend his constituency, but he did not want to bring it prominently forward unnecessarily.

Mr. NORTON said no one wished to depreciate the work done at the Ipswich workshops, which was really first-class; but the hon. member for Toowoomba was quite right when he said it was impossible for the Minister to obtain the actual cost of the carriages turned out there. In getting carriages from private builders, the Government knew exactly what they were paying for them. Private contractors had a considerable sum invested in plant, and in sending in tenders they had to look for interest on the money so invested as a portion of their profits. It was impossible to make a calculation of that kind in estimating the cost of carriages turned out from the Ipswich workshops. There was a vast amount invested there in plant, and the greater portion, if not the whole of it, was loan

money on which the country was paying interest year by year. Then, again, there was the question of timber. Timber was purchased for the Ipswich workshops and allowed to lie there for two or three years. The interest on the money lying idle in that shape should also be taken into consideration in estimating the actual cost of the carriages turned out, and there were many other items of the same kind which it was utterly impossible to work out.

Mr. LALOR asked when it was intended to put sleeping carriages on the line between Roma and Dulbydilla?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied that passenger traffic between Roma and the end of the line had fallen off to such an extent that it would not be judicious to put sleeping carriages on the line at present.

Mr. LALOR: But putting sleeping carriages on the line would be the means of increasing the passenger traffic.

Mr. GRIMES said he wished to call attention to a proceeding on the part of the traffic manager which required explanation. Station-masters at small stations on the line were receiving salaries ranging between £80 and £100, with £20 for quarters. Besides acting as station-masters they performed the duty of postmasters, for which they received some £12 from the Postal Department. Letters had been sent to a number of those station-masters, requesting them to remit the amount sent by the Postal Department to the Traffic Department. Some of them demurred to the request, when further letters were sent to the effect that unless the money was sent in it would be deducted from their salaries. It might be necessary to economise, now that the railways were not paying so well as in previous years, but that was certainly economising in the wrong direction. They should begin at the top and go down to the bottom. He could not understand the principle on which that money was demanded from the station-masters, seeing that it was received for services in no way connected with the railway. He should like to hear an explanation from the Minister for Works.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that at one time station-masters received a salary as station-masters and some £12 or £20 a year from the Postal Department. That dual system was not found to work well, and the Railway Department now paid the entire sum, and charged the difference to the Postal Department.

Mr. GRIMES said he gathered from the information which had reached him that the station-masters had actually lost the £12 which they formerly received from the Postal Department, their salaries remaining as before.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that whoever told the hon. member so had misinformed him. The station-masters had not been deprived of any of their earnings, but they received the whole of the sum now through the Railway Department.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN asked if that rule applied to every station-master on the Southern and Western line?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It applies to the whole of them.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would next ask if the schedule placed in their hands was correct? It professed to show the total remuneration, during 1885-6, of every public servant holding more than one office. Every station-master, therefore, holding more than one office should be shown in that document. As to the question raised by the hon. member for Oxley, he had reason to know that the Minister

for Works had been misinformed. He told the hon. gentleman the facts of the case two years ago, and the hon. gentleman promised to see into the matter and set it right; but he had not done so. The hon. gentleman had been misinformed. The rule did not apply to all station-masters on the Southern and Western line. He would select one station—a station which he believed was in the hon. member for Oxley's electorate—the South Coast Junction station. The station-master there was put down at a salary of £98, "quarters and fuel valued at £20, post office, £12, telegraph office, £10." The total was £140, but leaving out the quarters and fuel, which were not cash, did that officer receive £120 per annum in cash, according to the schedule? Let the Minister ask his subordinates in the gallery if he did.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the porter in charge at South Coast Junction had a salary of £98, quarters and fuel valued at £20, post office £12, and telegraph office £10.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Does he receive that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I suppose so.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Perhaps the hon. gentleman would ask the traffic manager if letters had not been written to that man and others in the same position demanding the money paid by the Post and Telegraph Offices to be returned?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the traffic manager informed him that he had not written to that station-master.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would like to hear what information the hon. member for Oxley had on the subject?

Mr. GRIMES said he had this information: that within twenty-five miles of Brisbane he could obtain no less than six such letters, if they would allow him to cut out the names of the persons to whom they were written.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he thought the Minister for Works had better attend to the promise he made to him (Mr. Macrossan) two years ago on that very subject. Those men had been suffering for a long time from what he might call a very mean kind of economy. If they were going to economise they should not begin with men who were receiving less than £2 a week. They should begin at the top of the tree, and not at the bottom and work upwards. The information the Minister for Works had got he believed to be untrue.

Mr. HAMILTON said that he also could corroborate the statement of the hon. member for Oxley. He had information from more than one of those station-masters that they had received letters requesting them to refund the allowances referred to. He was aware of one instance where a person who was voted a salary of £100 a year, in addition to which he was in receipt of certain money from the Post Office, after a certain time was requested by the station-master to return that money, and he did so under protest. Subsequently, when the hon. member for Townsville took exception to that action about two years ago, the Minister promised that he would look into it, but since then—not very long since—the officer he referred to was again asked to return the money which he received from the Post Office Department, although the amount of his salary was not in any way increased; he was receiving the same all along. He stated that he was unable to do so; and the traffic manager, so that person informed him (Mr. Hamilton), then applied to the Post Office for the money

that was due to the man for the work he had performed. The Post Office Department refused to give it, and what action did he then take? He reduced the salary which that House had voted for that officer by the amount which the Post Office paid him. That was the complaint that officer made to him, and he concluded by saying, "For Heaven's sake do not mention my name or I shall be dismissed!" He was satisfied that that officer would not have made that statement unless it was true. The hon. member for Oxley had made a similar statement, and the hon. member for Townsville had corroborated it by testimony in his possession.

Mr. MACFARLANE said when that matter was before the Committee two years ago a number of cases similar to those now mentioned were brought forward, and he had been given to understand by one of the heads of the department within the last twelve months that those persons were now paid that money. He was under the impression until that night that those small station masters and mistresses were receiving fees from the Post and Telegraph Offices; but there must be some misunderstanding. It was quite evident from the statements that had been made that they were not; yet the department was under the impression that they were; so that he thought the matter only required inquiring into and putting on a proper footing. He noticed on page 44 of the schedule that Mrs. Cantwell, gatekeeper, Cooper's Plains, was put down as receiving £45; but if she did not receive the amounts put down from the Post and Telegraph Offices, she would only get £13.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: They are not all paid alike.

Mr. MACFARLANE: That makes it all the worse.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he would investigate the matter and see that it was put right. He was not aware that the salaries had been reduced in any way; he believed that the officers were receiving the full amount they were entitled to.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the best way for the hon. gentleman to make an inquiry was to send for the men of whom the hon. member for Oxley would give him the names. He believed that hon. member had the names of all the men who were suffering in that way on the South Coast line. Let him give those names to the Minister, let the Minister send for those men, and then he would ascertain the truth—that was, supposing the men would not be afraid of being dismissed.

Mr. BLACK said that was a most extraordinary revelation. After what had been stated by the hon. members for Oxley and Too-woomba, there could be no doubt whatever that someone was perpetrating a most deliberate fraud on those poor men. At the same time they had the statement from the Minister that the traffic manager denied knowing anything at all about it. Who, then, was obtaining money under false pretences from those men? He could believe that there was undoubted truth in the statement that in several cases the money had been sent back to the department. What had become of the money? The traffic manager said he knew nothing about

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The station-master has got it.

Mr. BLACK said he hoped the Minister for Works would make full inquiry into the matter. He thought the hon. gentleman had been humbugged by someone in his department. The member for Townsville had pointed out, two years

ago, the great grievance from which those men suffered. He could understand that those men who had been defrauded—he could use no milder term than that—of a portion of their small salaries, had been subjected to blackmail by someone in the Railway Department, and he could well understand that they were almost afraid to be too loud in their complaints lest they should be rendered liable to dismissal. He would accept the assurance of the Minister for Works that he would inquire into the matter. It was a most discreditable and extraordinary thing that it should have been allowed to go on for the length of time it appeared to have gone on, and that the Minister for Works should know nothing about it.

Mr. JESSOP asked if it was the intention of the Minister for Works to make a refreshment room at the Brisbane station? People from Woollongabba, Kangaroo Point, and South Brisbane, going by the first train in the morning, could not get even a cup of tea or coffee.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that the Railway Department had had an offer from a private individual to conduct a refreshment room for the accommodation of the public, and it was very possible that the Railway Department would erect a building for that purpose.

Question put and passed.

MARYBOROUGH AND GYMPIE RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1886-87, a sum not exceeding £37,927, to defray the cost of salaries and maintenance of the Maryborough and Gympie Railway. There was an increase in the vote of only £167 over last year.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he had heard complaints from several people, and had also seen it ventilated in the Press, that there were no refreshment rooms at some of the principal stations. Even at Brisbane late at night they could get nothing to refresh the inner man. It would be well to have a refreshment room—not to compete with the public-houses by selling intoxicating drink—where fruit and something of that sort could be procured. It was well worthy of being thought over.

Mr. NORTON said that gentlemen travelling in trains had complained to him, at different times, of the difficulty of getting water at the stations where the train pulled up. At some stations water could be got, but it was sometimes so hot as to be undrinkable. The Minister for Works might arrange to have some provision for water in the train itself when it travelled long distances—in the guard's van for instance.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he saw no difficulty in having a water-bag hung up in the guard's van for the accommodation of the public, and he would endeavour to see it was attended to.

Mr. NORTON: Not Gold Creek water, though!

Question put and passed.

BUNDABERG AND MOUNT PERRY RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that there be granted a sum not exceeding £13,450 for the service of the Bundaberg and Mount Perry Railway. There was a reduction in the vote of about £500 from last year.

Mr. NORTON said there was a reduction in the amount for station-masters, guards, porters, etc., of £100, and the number of men employed was the same as last year—twenty-eight.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that there were forty-six last year and forty-four now.

Mr. NORTON said that in the traffic department twenty-eight were employed last year and only twenty-eight now, while there was a reduction of £100. Could the hon. gentleman explain that reduction?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that some of the men had been promoted to other lines, and juniors had been employed in their places.

Mr. NORTON said there was one other matter. He noticed that the locomotive foreman was dispensed with. Who did the work now?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the locomotive foreman was dismissed for irregularities, and a fitter had taken his place.

Mr. NORTON: I hope he is fitter than the locomotive foreman.

Question put and passed.

CENTRAL RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that £129,420 be granted for the Central Railway. There was an increase of £8,000, which was required for maintenance in consequence of two additional sections having been opened since last year.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the vote they were discussing a few minutes ago passed rather quickly.

Mr. NORTON: The Minister hurried it up.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did so in rather an unconstitutional way. There was room for more discussion as to the amount of money the Minister asked for railways. Of course, they had the assurance that every penny was required, and they had had a statement from the Colonial Treasurer showing the amounts that were saved during last year. Then the Premier came to the rescue and said the amount saved out of maintenance accounted for £49,000 saved. Now, that could hardly be so. On the item just passed, the officer charged with maintenance stated that the saving was £16 17s. a mile last year, so that it was a matter of simple calculation to discover how much was saved on the Southern and Western Railway. Now, on the line they were discussing at present the maintenance was £139 3s. 9d.—say £140 per mile in round figures.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: £147 per mile.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Well, the Commissioner said £139, or rather the return which was attached to the Commissioner's report said £139 3s. 9d. He would refer the Minister to page 119 of the report of the Commissioner for Railways, and there it would be seen from the Engineer's report on maintenance—

“Taking the Central Railway, therefore, at an average for 1884 of £118 11s. 6d. per mile, and for 1885, as shown by Return B, at an average of £139 3s. 9d., the average cost of maintaining the Central Railway per mile for the two years was £128 17s. 8d.”

That was for last year, so that if the Minister had got any other return it was in contradiction of the one he had quoted.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have another return here.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said, according to the return laid before Parliament, the cost of maintaining the Central line was £139 3s. 9d., and the average for two years was £128 17s. 8d.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the return he had gave the cost of maintaining the Central line for 1885 as £140 18s. 11d.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: What page is that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: And in the Commissioner's report it was put down at £140 15s. 5d. There was not much difference.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: They should be the same. What page in the Commissioner's report did the hon. gentleman refer to?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Page 17.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he found at page 17 exactly what he found at page 119. He found the Central Railway cost for maintenance £132 3s. 9d.

Mr. BLACK: The hon. the Minister is quoting from the Northern Railway.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said they would not dispute about a few shillings, but the hon. gentleman had been grouping the whole of the Northern railways, while he had been taking the Central Railway alone. Could not the Minister make a reduction upon the total cost of that Central line? Could he tell them what was the saving upon it for last year?—because it was a fact that that line cost less for maintenance than the Southern and Western line, though it had also cost less for construction.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he must ask hon. members to take into consideration the additional length of line that had to be provided for. There was 65 miles additional length of line to be maintained.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: On the Central line?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes; there was a section of the branch line to Springsure to be maintained, and there was a section of the line opened to Barcaldine on the 8th of the month, which made in all an additional length of 65 miles to provide for.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not suppose there was any use in their trying to reduce the estimate if the Minister for Works would not consent to the reduction. They knew that it was invariably trying to lead a forlorn hope to attempt to reduce an estimate where the Minister in charge of it did not consent to the reduction. Allowing that the 65 miles would take as much as the part of the line which had been opened for years—though it would hardly do that, seeing that both the extension to Barcaldine and the Springsure branch section were both more or less surface lines, and there would consequently be little cost upon them during the remainder of the year, unless they had very bad weather—but taking it at £140, it would not then amount to £10,000, and the Minister for Works was asking for a good deal more.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was satisfied it would take the whole of the money asked for to keep the line in order, and he would take good care it was kept in order. The safety of the public required it, and he would be no party to allowing the line to get into bad order by any cheese-paring and cutting down of expenses. That was the last department in which they should attempt a reduction, and the hon. member must know very well that it was dangerous to let the lines get out of order.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that no one on his side wished that the line should not be kept in good order, and the Minister for Works would not be justified in allowing it to get out of order. They were, however, simply judging from the experience of last year. They had additional lengths of line to provide for every year, and last year as well as this year. Some years they had more to provide for than in

others, but he thought the average now was from 160 to 180 miles a year. Last year there was an additional length as well as this year, and then the Minister for Works thought that the whole of the money voted would be wanted. It was not wanted, and they were only judging by the experience of last year in thinking the whole of the money asked for the present year would not be wanted. If the Minister for Works insisted that it would be wanted, it was no use their saying any more. There was another question he would like to ask in connection with the Central Railway. They had a petition presented yesterday asking that the railway should be made to Winton, and that petition was the outcome of the survey ordered by the Minister for Works to be made to Winton. He hardly thought the Minister for Works intended to comply with the prayer of that petition, but he would like to have his assurance that he did not intend to comply with it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he believed it would have been right to have diverted the line towards Winton; but, as the plans to the Thomson had been sent down and approved of by the House, he did not intend to interfere with them in any way.

Mr. NORTON said that he had had the honour of presenting the petition referred to, which had been sent to him by the hon. member for Gregory with the request that he would present it on his behalf. The hon. member for Gregory did not agree with the prayer of the petition, as his idea was that the line should go as far as the Thomson, and it might be taken from there to Winton afterwards. He would point out that the hon. gentleman had only himself to blame for having the petition sent down; and it struck him yesterday that no one seemed more surprised than the Minister for Works that anyone in the colony could be found to agree with him in the opinion that the line should be made to Winton instead of going to the Thomson.

Mr. STEVENSON said the Minister for Works had told them some time ago, as a reason why he did not bring forward the plans for the extension of the Central Railway when he brought forward the plans for railways submitted to the House, that he had a surveyor reporting upon the route from Barcaldine to Winton. He would like to know now whether the hon. gentleman had received any report from that surveyor since.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had received a very favourable report from the surveyor, who had been over the line, and who agreed exactly with his own opinion, that it was the proper direction to take. The surveyor reported that the line should branch off about 8 miles from Barcaldine, and go direct to Winton; but as the plans had passed through the House, he had no desire to tamper with them in any way.

Mr. STEVENSON: Will the hon. gentleman be good enough to lay the report of that surveyor on the table?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think I will keep that myself.

Mr. NORTON: Oh no; let us have it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You can have it if you like.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that he would give the Minister for Works a little information. He was a little out of order, but he hoped he would be excused. There was a very long discussion on the previous day on the subsidies given to gold-mines, and the hon. gentleman stated that he was informed

by the officers of the Mines Department that the Dan O'Connell mine was subsidised. He (Mr. Macrossan) had just had a telegram put into his hands which said the Dan O'Connell mine was not subsidised, and that the shareholders refused any subsidy. He hoped that information was conclusive.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that what he stated was that the Dan O'Connell mine was one selected by the geological surveyor and the mining surveyor as being suitable for deep sinking.

Mr. NORTON said that was what the hon. gentleman might have intended to say, but at any rate the hon. gentleman had misled him in the matter. He thought the hon. gentleman said it was one of the mines that had received assistance from the Government, because the hon. gentleman did not mention all that had been recommended. Some that he (Mr. Norton) knew were recommended for assistance were not mentioned by the hon. gentleman, and he thought the list of mines the hon. gentleman read were those which had received assistance from the Government.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member had misunderstood him. What he said was that the mine was recommended as one suitable for deep sinking—to be put down from 500 feet to 800 feet at £4 a foot, and so on. No application had been received from the owners of the mine—they applied for nothing and received nothing.

Mr. HAMILTON said it appeared to him to be a farce to select a mine to expend money on—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order.

Mr. HAMILTON: Other hon. members have spoken on the subject.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Townsville asked permission to refer to it. He has done so, and the Minister has replied, so that this discussion is out of order.

Mr. HAMILTON: Very well; I will take up a little time to-morrow.

Mr. STEVENSON said that as the hon. member for Leichhardt, Mr. Scott, was not present, he would like to ask the Minister for Works when the Springsure line was likely to be opened?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said a section of the line was opened to Fernlees on the 8th of this month.

Mr. STEVENSON: When is the remaining part likely to be finished?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the contractor had thrown up the contract, as he was unable to pay his men. He wrote requesting the Government to take the line over; there was a proper agreement signed; and they would complete it at his risk. It would be pushed forward with all possible speed.

Mr. STEVENSON: How much of the line remains to be completed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: From 18 to 19 miles.

Mr. STEVENSON: Can the hon. gentleman give any idea when it will be completed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In about eight or nine months.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he saw there was a subdivision of the locomotive department, the same as in the Southern and Western vote, for the workshops at Rockhampton—coach and waggon builders, carpenters, and so on. Were carriages and rolling-stock made at Rockhampton the same as at Ipswich?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Only goods and timber waggons—no carriages.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN asked if they were made by day-work or piece-work?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he found on inquiry that the making of rolling-stock had been abandoned, and the shops were used only for repairs. Whatever rolling-stock was required was done by contract.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was very glad to hear it, and he would be very glad to hear of the same thing being done in Ipswich. However good the rolling-stock made in Ipswich might be, it would give more satisfaction to the general public and the members of the House if it were made outside. There would be more confidence then in the cost than there was now. He did not think the Government should make any more stock, so long as they could get it made by contractors outside; they should confine themselves to repairing the stock they had in hand.

Question put and passed.

NORTHERN AND CARPENTARIA DIVISION.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that a sum not exceeding £1,200 be granted for the Engineer's Department, Northern and Carpentaria Division.

Mr. HAMILTON said that when some time ago the hon. member for Musgrave asked the Minister for Works when tenders would be called for the second section of the Cairns to Herberton Railway, the Minister for Works said he expected to be able to invite them next October. He would like to know whether tenders had been invited for the second section, and if not when the hon. gentleman expected to be able to invite them?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied that tenders had been invited for the second section of the Cairns and Herberton Railway, and would be opened on the 2nd January.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he observed that the salary provided on the estimate for the Chief Engineer was £900. Did that officer receive anything from loan?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Does he receive the same total salary as the Chief Engineer for the Southern and Central divisions?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They are each paid £900 from revenue and £500 from loan, making a total in each case of £1,400.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN asked where Mr. Hannam was located, or likely to be located?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied that no offices had yet been erected. Mr. Hannam had been occupying a tent, occasionally at Cairns and occasionally at Cooktown. As he had mentioned earlier in the evening, Mr. Hannam had suggested that his headquarters should be at Cairns, but, in his (Mr. Miles's) opinion, Townsville was the proper place for the railway offices of the North.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he quite agreed with the hon. gentleman that Townsville was the proper place, and Cairns a very improper place, for the Chief Engineer of the division, seeing that he would have to take charge of the Cloncurry line, which could be much more easily reached from Townsville than from Cairns.

Mr. HAMILTON said he could hardly agree with the hon. member for Townsville on that point, seeing that the Cairns railway—which,

according to the Minister for Works, was the greatest engineering work ever attempted in Queensland—would require the Chief Engineer's immediate supervision. What he wanted to ask now was, when would the Minister for Works be in a position to invite tenders for the third section of the Cooktown Railway?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not until the permanent survey is completed.

MR. HAMILTON said he was aware of that, but the residents of Cooktown were very anxious to know when that was likely to be.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was impossible to say exactly when tenders would be invited for that section. He could not say when the permanent survey would be completed, but the work was being gone on with.

Question put and passed.

NORTHERN RAILWAY.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that £72,202 be granted for the Northern Railway. The increase in the vote was mainly due to the increased cost of maintenance owing to the length of line that had been opened during the year, £29,545 being required during the present year, as against £24,102 last year. That was the only increase, with the exception of a sum required for additional men.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said there was an increase, not only in the item of maintenance, but over the entire vote. But he had nothing to say against the increase, beyond what had been said about the increases on the other lines, and it was no use in attempting to decrease it in any way. He noticed a sudden jump in the salary of the clerk and paymaster from £120 to £300. No doubt some reason would be assigned for it, but it seemed a very great jump; he hardly knew how a competent man could have been obtained before for £120. The storekeeper who had been there from the opening of the line was receiving the same salary—£200—which he had been receiving all along. He mentioned the case two years ago to the Minister for Works, who promised to inquire into the merits of that officer and the amount of work he had to do; but no increase had resulted yet from that inquiry. The storekeeper on the Northern line was receiving £100 less than the storekeeper on the Central line, and £125 less than the storekeeper on the Southern and Western line, and when the line was opened to Hughenden he would have to attend to the stores for 260 miles of railway. That officer was deserving of an increase.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had no doubt the storekeeper's salary ought to be increased, but in consequence of the bad times that had prevailed, the Government, in framing the Estimates, came to the conclusion not to make any increases, excepting in a very few cases where a distinct promise had been made. When the Estimates were under consideration next year he would take care that that officer was put down for an increase.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he accepted the promise, and he could assure the hon. gentleman that he knew the officer in question to be a good officer, and thoroughly deserving of an increase.

Question put and passed.

MACKAY RAILWAY.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that £12,605 be granted for the Mackay Railway. There was an increase in the item of "maintenance of the permanent way"; the amount down for last year being for six months only, and there were five additional hands employed.

MR. BLACK said he would like to ascertain from the Minister whether the department proposed doing anything to develop the traffic upon that line to a greater extent than had been done hitherto. He might mention that at the present time the bullock-teams were running the railway off. In the case of the line between Brisbane and Ipswich, the Government being determined to run the steamers off, had made certain concessions. But then, of course, Ipswich was nearer the seat of government, and if anything required attention it was taken in hand at once. It was anticipated that the Mackay Railway would give a considerable return in the way of traffic, and he maintained that even with a very small amount of intelligence the line would still give a good return upon the investment. The Minister for Works had been there and had stated what he considered ought to be done to divert the traffic. He knew the head of the department (**MR. CURNOW**) visited the place and came to the conclusion that with a little intelligence a very large amount of traffic could be carried upon the railway. At present they saw the trains running backwards and forwards every day, and alongside the line teams were taking in hundreds of tons of sugar. No facilities were given for loading sugar on the trucks, and he thought it was a great pity. He should be making a great mistake if he allowed the vote to pass silently, because hon. members would be under the impression that the line was paying well when, instead of that, there was an actual loss upon it, which there was no necessity there should be. He wished to know if the Minister would look into the matter, and do something to get the traffic which was undoubtedly there. There were 10,000 or 12,000 tons of sugar from the south side of the river alone, which could be carried under intelligent management, and then there would be the back loading, which would be considerable. There were also several thousand tons of cord-wood, which might be carried, as well as huge quantities of sugar-cane. If any facilities were given to those requiring to send cord-wood or sugar it would be one of the best paying lines in the colony.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Railway Department were endeavouring to do all in their power to accommodate the sugar-planters, and get them to send their produce by rail. The mills were a considerable distance from the line, and several of them were not a long distance from Mackay, and it would not pay them to cart their sugar to the railway and load and unload it, unless branch lines were made. Even if the railway were taken right into the mills, the planters would want to bargain about the price the sugar should be carried at. He had tried all he possibly could to meet their views, but he could not treat people in the North one way and those in the South in another way. What the sugar-planters at Mackay wanted was that everything should be done at the cost of the country, and that was rather too much. The Government would be glad to meet them in any way possible. Even if they ran branch lines right into the mills the planters would say "We will not give you more than so and so for carrying our produce." The hon. gentleman knew very well that the Railway Department had done all it was possible to do, because that was a line that required nursing, and should receive all reasonable assistance. The Government could hardly make such a distinction between the people of Mackay and the people of the South as to build railways into the mills.

MR. BLACK said he could not allow the remarks of the hon. gentleman to pass without some explanation. The hon. gentleman said the

planters of Mackay wanted the Government to take the lines right into the mills, and then, he thought, they would have the Government at their mercy so far as freights were concerned. They knew what had been done in two cases. The Government did run a branch line into the Marion mill, and another into the Victoria mill, and had there been any case of repudiation? In the case of the Marion mill, the owners agreed to pay the Government 6s. per ton extra upon every ton they sent down until the cost of the line was paid.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: You are quite right.

Mr. BLACK said there had been no attempt at repudiation, and other planters were willing to do the same thing. What was the state of affairs at present? They knew sugar-mills had a great deal of produce, such as cord-wood and sugar, and they were not at a great distance from the railway line, as the hon. gentleman knew. They varied from 200 yards to 300 yards, and not one of them was more than half a-mile away; but there was not even a siding for a train to stop and take in ten tons or fifteen tons of sugar. There were mills alongside of the line, and yet if they wanted five tons of goods the train would not stop to discharge them, because there were no facilities offered—nothing like those that were offered down south. He travelled up to Gympie the other day from Maryborough, and was pleased to see the facilities that were given to the people along the line there. There were sidings every few miles. Anyone having log-timber, sawn stuff, or anything else, had the convenience of a siding; and quite right too. But there was nothing of the sort on the Mackay line. One case had happened which he thought justified to some extent the harsh remarks of the Minister for Works. On one of the estates there an understanding was come to that if the Government put in a siding the owners of the plantation would, at their own expense, carry a branch line down to the mill. The Government carried out their part of the contract; but financial difficulties prevented the owners of the plantation from carrying out their part. They were not able to construct the branch line, and he thought that the Committee would be rather astonished to hear the result. After the Government had expended £200 or £300 in putting up an expensive siding, instead of regretting that the owners of the plantation were unable to construct the branch, what did they do? They pulled up the siding, and stacked the rails and sleepers alongside the line; in fact, they destroyed the Government property. That was a most extraordinary thing to do. It happened that heavy wet weather set in, and the planters would have been very glad to have made use of the line, but there was no siding, and they were unable to do so. He did not think there was a similar case on record, where a Government considered themselves justified in acting in what he considered a most unnecessarily vindictive manner, and in destroying their own property. It did no particular harm to the planter, but he could assure the Committee that that was very much the policy the Government seemed to adopt in connection with that line. There was no doubt the traffic was there. They had heard it explained that afternoon that it had been considered necessary to nurse the coal traffic of Ipswich, and very rightly too; but there was not the least attempt made to do anything of the sort at Mackay. If the people there would not do exactly what the Government suggested, they were told they were trying to take advantage of the Government—that if the Government ran

branches into their mills they would take advantage of the Government. It stood to reason that if a planter had a line going to his mill to take away his sugar and bring in cane from a number of farms in that neighbourhood, that he would make use of it. The Government had not attempted to do anything of that kind. The time would come when that line would, with intelligent management, develop into one of the best paying lines in the colony. He admitted that it was a different style of traffic to anything the Government had on existing lines. In no other place were there such huge quantities of produce of different kinds that could be carried on the railway line, but only for a short distance. Of course, that was the difficulty. The planter naturally said, "If I have to cart my sugar half-a-mile, I might just as well take it three or four miles further into town." That was the position. But if branch lines could be taken into the mill-yards, not at the expense of the Government, but at the expense of the planters, on the terms the Government had already adopted, and which had worked very satisfactorily, the line would undoubtedly become one of the best paying lines in the colony. The experiment that had been made in that direction had proved very satisfactory; but for some unexplained reason the Government had declined to go further, and the consequence was that the line, which had cost about £130,000—at all events, a considerable sum of money—was lying comparatively useless—not used to one-tenth the extent it might be used. He thought that the Minister for Works was not at all studying the interests of the whole colony in that matter by allowing that railway to remain unremunerative when it might be developed into a very useful and profitable line.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said there was no satisfying the people about Mackay, because not only did they expect the Government to build branch lines to their mills, but also to supply them with cheap labour. With reference to the two mills the hon. gentleman had spoken about, it suited their purpose to send their produce by rail, because they were at the head of the line, and it would not pay them to send in their sugar by ordinary carriage. They simply used the line because it suited their purpose. If the Government were to carry out what was proposed by the hon. member for Mackay, and build branch lines into the mills there, they would have to refund the whole of the money that had been paid by private individuals for carrying branches into sawmills and to coal-pits in other parts of the colony. Those people had just as much right to have branches constructed to suit them as the sugar-planters had. What, in the name of goodness, had the sugar-planters done that the Government should build branch lines into all their mills? With reference to the siding which the hon. member mentioned as having been pulled up, the facts of the case were that the gentleman referred to entered into an arrangement with the Railway Department, that if they would put in a siding he would lay down a line into his mill to take the traffic to the railway. As soon as the department put up the siding, he turned round to the carriers and said, "Now, if you do not take my sugar at a certain price, I shall send it all by rail," and, of course, he beat the carriers down. The hon. member for Mackay knew perfectly well that the moment the department put in that siding the gentleman referred to beat down the carriers to a price that suited his own purpose, and the Railway Department was not going to allow him to maintain that kind of intimidation over the carriers. That was the reason why the siding was pulled up.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said they were now asked to vote £12,605 for the Mackay Railway. That was a positive fact, and he presumed the Minister would tell the Committee that that money would be all spent. He (Mr. Macrossan) would assume that it would be spent. At the same time they would have to expend in interest upon the construction of the line nearly £7,000, so that there would be close upon £20,000 to be spent in one year on the Mackay Railway. Now, what were the receipts from it? He thought he was leaving a very good margin when he said about £100 a week, say £5,000 a year. That would leave a deficiency of £15,000 to be made up by the general taxpayers of the colony. That was the question they had to consider. He was extremely sorry to hear the Minister for Works talk as if he had some dislike to the Mackay planters. It was not a question of the Mackay planters at all; it was a question of trying to make that railway, which ought to be a profitable one, pay its working expenses and interest on the cost of construction. He (Mr. Macrossan) had no doubt, when he proposed the construction of that line, that it would pay. He believed that with different management it could be made to pay. He quite believed what the hon. member for Mackay said about the large amount of produce there was to be carried short distances from plantations at different parts of the line, and he did not think the Minister for Works was quite justified in saying that he could not do one thing for the North and another thing for the South, because the rule laid down as to the cost of putting in sidings was not a rule laid down by Act of Parliament. It was a rule laid down by the Minister himself. He did not think it was one that should not be departed from. It had been departed from in some cases already, and it was a question whether it should not be departed from again, if by doing so they could make that a profitable railway instead of being unprofitable to the tune of £15,000 a year. The Minister for Works should consider that very seriously. It was not a question of accommodating the Mackay sugar-planters at all. It was a question of trying to get back the money they were obliged to pay in working expenses and in interest on what the line had cost. If the Minister for Works could see his way by breaking the rule which he or some former Minister had imposed on himself to get that traffic he would be perfectly justified in doing so. He (Mr. Macrossan) hoped he would consider the matter very seriously, and try if he could not make that railway pay. He was quite certain it would pay with different management.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he must confess he had some difficulty in running branch railways into the sugar-planters' mills, while he refused to put branch lines into timber-yards and saw-mills. He did not see why sugar-planters should have any preference over any other persons in the community. He had tried to meet them in every possible way, because he believed that was a railway which required nursing to get traffic to it. He had made a proposition to the owners of mills that if they would give a title to the land of the branch lines he would feel inclined to put them in, because the Government would then have them as their own property. But there was no approaching them; they would do nothing. He had not the slightest doubt that if the Railway Department put branch lines into the mills they would say, "If you don't carry our produce at our prices you won't get the traffic." He had no trouble in dealing with other people, but it was not easy to deal with those gentlemen. There were two mills at the head of the line, where it suited their purpose to agree to the department's rules, because they could not get their produce

carried by carriers at the same rate. If the other planters would act in the same way there would be no difficulty.

Mr. BLACK said the hon. gentleman, probably unintentionally, made a slight mistake when he spoke of those two mills being at the head of the line. The Victoria mill was near the head of the line, but the Valley mill did not make use of the line, for they sent all their sugar to Mackay in drays. The hon. gentleman said it would not suit to establish a different system at Mackay in respect to putting in branch lines from other parts of the colony. Therein he differed from him. He had always maintained that it was necessary to modify conditions in accordance with the different requirements of different parts of the colony. However, the hon. gentleman had actually done what he said he would not do. He had done it in two cases in which it had proved entirely successful. In those two cases he put in branch lines to be repaid by an agreement to pay 6s. per ton extra on the sugar until the cost of the line was paid for. There had been no attempt at repudiation in either of those cases. The other mill-owners said, "If you do the same with us we will be only too glad to avail ourselves of the line." The hon. gentleman said if the planters would give the land the branch lines would be made. The planters would be only too glad to accept that offer, but it had not been made to them. The offer made was this: If the planters would give the land the Government would find the rails and sleepers, and the planters were to be at the expense of laying them down, while the line was to belong to the Government. That was a very different offer to what the hon. gentleman now said he was prepared to make. He had no hesitation in saying that if the Government would accept the land which the planters would probably be most willing to give, there would be no further difficulty. He could assure the hon. gentleman he had done all he could with the department to arrive at a solution satisfactory to the Government and the planters. He was certain that the line could be developed into one of the best paying lines in the colony. If the hon. gentleman would repeat in correspondence with the planters the offer he had made that evening there would be an end to it. He believed the planters would gladly accept the proposal instead of having the line almost the ridicule of the district, with bullock-teams going alongside on the road taking thousands of tons of sugar in the course of three or four months. It was not very creditable to the department that such a state of things should exist when, by a little mutual conciliation, the line could be made a most successful one.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said if the hon. member when he returned home would endeavour to bring the planters together and make some proposition he would be very glad indeed to entertain it, and endeavour to come to some arrangement with them. He had tried to do so in all shapes and forms and had not been successful, because nothing would please them but to build a railway into their mills. He did not think it fair to the rest of the community to do so. If the hon. member would promise to consult with those who wanted branch lines into their mills and convey a proposition to him, he would be glad to entertain it, and come to some conclusion.

Mr. NORTON said he thought, if the planters were prepared to pay the cost of constructing the lines, the Minister for Works might consider their offer. He understood that in the two cases where lines had been laid down to the mills the planters had paid the cost—not in a lump sum,

but in an extra price per ton for the carriage of their goods. Of course, it was rather a difficult thing to apply a new principle that had not been applied everywhere; and he thought the Minister for Works was right in declining, without great consideration, to make a different arrangement in one locality to that which was made in other localities. As it was shown that the line as it at present stood was a dead loss to the country, the hon. gentleman might well consider whether he could not extend the principle of constructing branch lines to the mills, on the understanding that the planters paid in instalments as it were. He took it that in that way the hon. gentleman would get some security for the repayment of the money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The guarantee is worth nothing.

Mr. NORTON said that in the two cases in which the experiment had been tried it seemed to answer very well on the hon. gentleman's own showing, and it was well worth running some risk in order to make the line remunerative. That was, of course, an exceptional line. The member for Mackay had always said it would be an exceptional line, and that the traffic would require to be dealt with in an exceptional way. The hon. gentleman had always informed him that if facilities were given for the carriage of sugar on the line it would be largely used, and that statement was entirely in accordance with what the hon. member had said that evening. At any rate, it was well worth while to consider whether in the present case some concession might not be made, which was not generally made, to secure trade and make the line remunerative.

Mr. BLACK said he would like to refer to what one company said, which would give an idea of the possible traffic on the line. The Melbourne-Mackay Company said that they were ready to supply 3,000 tons of sugar, 800 hogsheads of rum, besides maize, coal, etc. For every ton of sugar produced they required half-a-ton of coal, or one cord of firewood, which weighed about two tons; so that 3,000 tons of sugar would require 6,000 tons of wood. That would give hon. gentlemen an idea of the magnitude of the traffic which could be found if sidings were constructed. From two mills the total would be 6,000 tons in sugar and rum alone, which, at current rates, would produce £1,500 per annum. The Government had offered to put down sidings, with branch lines necessary, if the planters would build the lines, but they replied that, with the present prices, they could lay out no more capital. If the Government laid out £2,000 they would get a revenue of £1,500 per annum from two mills. If the Government would construct those sidings, not only would an enormous revenue be produced, but they would be an inestimable benefit to the selectors living away up the line, whose wealth was merely in their selections covered with timber, for which they had no sale. If there were no sidings they had no means of getting hundreds of cords of wood on to the trucks. The selectors were being impoverished for the want of reasonable facilities for getting cord-wood to the mills, and surely that was worthy of consideration.

Question put and passed.

COOKTOWN RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that £8,300 be granted for the Cooktown Railway.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN asked if the Minister could give any idea of the traffic on the line, and whether it was paying? Did it consist entirely of the material carried for the contractor?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said there was very little traffic besides the material carried for the contractor, and he did not anticipate that there would be much traffic until the line was completed.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that last year there was a storekeeper on the line, but his services apparently had been dispensed with. He supposed where there were Government stores someone was in charge. The same thing had occurred on the Mackay line. Surely a storekeeper was required, as there must be Government stores at those places.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was informed that on the small lines each department kept its own stores, and therefore the storekeepers had been dispensed with.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Mr. NORTON said he would like to get some information when the loan vote came on with regard to some German rails which had been supplied to the Government. He only gave notice now in order that the Minister who took the matter in hand might have all the information ready.

Question put and passed.

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

MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

NORTH COAST RAILWAY EXTENSION.

The SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have received a message from the Legislative Council intimating that they approve of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the North Coast Railway, section 5, from 98 miles, near Martin's Half-way House, Noosa road, to 115 miles 28 chains 72 links at end of rails at Gympie station, in length 17 miles 28 chains 72 links, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on 26th October.

LIQUOR BILL.

The SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have received the following message from the Legislative Council:—

"MR. SPEAKER,

"The Legislative Council have this day agreed to a Bill entitled 'A Bill to amend the laws relating to the sale of intoxicating liquor and to amend the Licensing Act of 1885,' with the amendments indicated by the accompanying schedule, in which amendments they request the concurrence of the Legislative Assembly.

"JNO. F. McDUGALL,

"Presiding Chairman.

"Legislative Council Chamber,

"18th November, 1886."

On the motion of the PREMIER, the amendments of the Legislative Council were ordered to be taken into consideration in committee tomorrow.

TRADE UNIONS BILL.

The SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have received the following message from the Legislative Council:—

"MR. SPEAKER,

"The Legislative Council have this day agreed to a Bill entitled 'A Bill to amend the laws relating to trade unions,' and return the same to the Legislative Assembly without amendment.

"JNO. F. McDUGALL,

"Presiding Chairman.

"Legislative Council Chamber,

"18th November, 1886."

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said : I move that this House do now adjourn. After private business tomorrow, it is proposed to proceed with Committee of Supply.

Question put and passed.

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