

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 1886**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*Tuesday, 23 November, 1886.*

Motion for Adjournment—the members for Stanley.—Petition.—Formal Motion.—Liquor Bill—consideration of Legislative Council's amendment.—New Standing Orders.—Supply—resumption of committee.—Loan Estimates.—Messages from the Legislative Council.—Building Societies Bill.—Central Railway Extension.—Joint Committees.—Adjournment.

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

## MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

THE MEMBERS FOR STANLEY.

Mr. WHITE said: Mr. Speaker,—I have a very serious complaint to make against my hon. colleague. He telegraphed last week to the people of Laidley Creek telling them to call upon me to resign.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh! oh!

Mr. WHITE: Now, I consider—

The SPEAKER: Does the hon. member intend to conclude with a motion?

Mr. WHITE: I shall conclude with a motion for the adjournment of the House. The hon. member, my colleague, has cancelled any feeling of obligation that I had towards him, by his action. He has been so very proud of the tongue-thrashing he gave me when the Laidley Creek railway was before the House that he could not avoid alluding to it when the Land Bill was under consideration. Now, in regard to that tongue-thrashing, he said on a former occasion that he had carried me round the country in his buggy and that he did all the drinking and talking. Well, sir, it no doubt is very provoking, after doing all that, that the electors should make him play second fiddle to me and that I should have had to drag him into Parliament after me. That is what has riled the hon. gentleman; that is what set the hon. gentleman against me. I saw it at once. I felt that; I knew the hon. gentleman had a down upon me for that very thing, but I cannot help the action of the electors. They do not believe in "Kellett's bunkum," as they said. That is their expression wherever I hear them talk, and of course, as I had nothing to say, they preferred me to him, and they made him play second fiddle, and he does not like it at all. Well, the hon. gentleman went on to say that he had done me all those good turns, and that I had not the manliness to go to him and tell him what I was going to say or do. In other words, that I had not the manliness to go and ask him what I must say and do. I did not follow the hon. gentleman when he went to the other side of the House. Certainly not, sir; but he evidently wished that I should do so, from what he said. Then again, I am mean and selfish, according to the hon. gentleman. Now, if I voluntarily carried a man about in my buggy for a time I would not turn round upon him and tell all the world about it. I would not be mean enough for that. Certainly not. Then I recollect, he said—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. W. Miles) said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. gentleman in order in what he is saying?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Let him go on! He is quite in order.

Mr. WHITE: I recollect he said—

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is quite in order at present.

Mr. WHITE: I recollect, Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague saying that he could tell the House something more about me, but he would let me off. Now, I consider that a dastardly innuendo.

Mr. W. BROOKES: Mr. Speaker,—I do not think the hon. member is in order.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Let him go on!

Mr. WHITE: If there had been any manliness in the man he would have out with it.

Mr. W. BROOKES: I rise to a point of order. Is it in order for one member to accuse another of making a "dastardly innuendo"?

The SPEAKER: It is certainly out of order to charge a member with making a "dastardly innuendo." The hon. member has certainly exceeded, in my opinion, the license of debate.

Mr. WHITE: Mr. Speaker,—My hon. colleague made use of that term in this House against me, and that is why I use it now. Well, sir, that is nothing but the mental pabulum of his brain, which is impregnated with the poison of some green-eyed or other infernal monster. Any action he has taken towards me is caused by the position I hold towards him, and he evidently has been actuated by a very mean and contemptible spirit. I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

Mr. KELLETT said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not think it is necessary for me to say much on this matter, because it is very absurd. I did send a telegram. I sent it to one of my principal constituents to tell him of the course that was taken by the hon. member in voluntarily going before a committee of the other House in order to give evidence to damage in every way possible the Laidley branch railway. Now, I think I may simply say that, whatever I said in the House, the hon. member got up and said it was perfectly true. He acknowledged it immediately. I would have let him do pretty much as he liked; I am not vindictive; but when I heard that without being asked he came forward to give evidence before the committee, I thought it time to do something. We have it in evidence that Mr. White volunteered to come before the committee—"presented himself, and volunteered to give evidence on the subject under consideration"—and there is the evidence here, sir, quite enough to damn the line. Evidently the members of the committee thought that the members for the district would not make statements to damage the railway, and they thought the hon. member's statement was a very fair thing to go on. That is all I have to say now. I intend to visit Laidley very shortly after the session closes, and mean to settle this matter there. This is not the place to settle it.

Mr. WHITE, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker,—Mr. Holberton invited me to go and give evidence, and I did not think there was anything more required than a simple invitation from one of the members of the committee. I suppose, sir, there is nothing else to say at present. I will let my hon. colleague off, and say nothing more; but for the future I shall keep him well in hand. I am perfectly clear now of the restriction I was under.

Mr. KELLETT said: Mr. Speaker,—I may state that Mr. Holberton informed me the hon. member asked him if he could go to the committee.

Question put and negatived.

## PETITION.

Mr. DONALDSON presented a petition from certain miners and others on the Peak Downs Gold Field, praying for relief from the encroachments of Chinese aliens upon Queensland gold-fields; and moved that it be read.

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

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

## FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to:—

By the PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith)—

That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that the gentlemen constituting, respectively, the Buildings Committee, the Refreshment Rooms Committee, and the Library Committee, should continue to control during the recess the several matters committed to their management as such committees during the session.

That the foregoing resolution be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

## LIQUOR BILL.

## CONSIDERATION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL'S AMENDMENT.

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

The PREMIER said the Legislative Council had made only one amendment in the Bill, and that was in the clause relating to clubs. Hon. members would not have forgotten that when that clause was under discussion several hon. members were of opinion that the provision regarding the registration of clubs should not apply to existing clubs; but after full discussion it was deemed desirable that all clubs should be placed on the same footing. It was, however, desired by the Legislative Council that the provision should not extend to all of them. So far as giving existing clubs a vested right went, he saw no objection to accepting the amendment. But it was very necessary that they should be registered, because the principal Act provided that none of its provisions relative to the sale of liquor should extend to the sale of liquor in a *bond fide* club. One object of the clause under consideration was to define what was a *bond fide* club and what was not. If the amendment of the Legislative Council was accepted as it stood, it would be necessary, in any prosecution of a person for selling liquor unlawfully—if the defence was set up that it was sold in a club—for the prosecution to prove affirmatively that that club was not in existence in November 1885. That might be easily done during the present year or next year, but in a year or two it would be quite impossible to prove it, and the result would be that the provisions of the clause would be rendered nugatory. It was essential, he thought, that proof of that fact should be upon the club itself when it applied for registration. If the amendment was altered so as to provide that the provisions of the last paragraph of the clause—about cancelling the registration—should not apply to existing clubs if they proved to the court when they went for registration that they were in existence before the passing of the principal Act, it would meet the views of the Legislative Council in desiring not to interfere with the privileges of existing clubs; and would at the same time secure the registration of all clubs, so that no difficulty would arise as to proof when a case was brought involving the question as to whether there had been a breach of the principal Act or not. The Legislative Council's amendment was as follows:—

"Provided that this section shall not apply to any *bond fide* club in existence at the time of the passing of the principal Act."

He proposed to amend the amendment by making it read as follows:—

Provided that the provisions of the last preceding paragraph of this section shall not apply to any club which proves to the licensing justices, on the application for registration, that it was in existence at the time of the passing of the principal Act.

He moved that, after the word "that," the words "the provisions of the last preceding paragraph of" be inserted.

Mr. NORTON said that although he did not like the proposed interference with clubs at all, he thought the Legislative Council's amendment as amended by the Premier was an improvement to the clause. By "clubs" he, of course, meant *bond fide* clubs, and not mere drinking clubs, which ought most certainly to be interfered with. He did not propose to offer any objection to the proposed amendment.

Mr. SCOTT asked whether the clause, if amended as proposed, would prevent any existing clubs from employing a providore. The 2nd paragraph of the clause provided that—

"The accommodation must be provided and maintained from the joint funds of the club, and no persons must be entitled under its rules to derive any profit, benefit, or advantage from the club which is not shared equally by every member thereof."

Nearly every club employed a providore, and it seemed to him that that paragraph would interfere with them.

The PREMIER said that it would not affect them at all. According to the 1st paragraph of the clause a club must be established "for the purpose of providing accommodation and meat and drink for the members thereof." The 2nd paragraph said that the accommodation must be provided by the club, but did not prevent the meat and drink being supplied, in premises of which they were the *bond fide* occupiers, by a providore.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the words "*bond fide*" were omitted from the Legislative Council's amendment, and the following words were inserted after the word "club": "with respect to which it is proved to the licensing justices, on the application for registration, that it was."

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Legislative Council's amendment, as amended, was agreed to.

The PREMIER moved, as a consequential amendment, that the word "be," in line 34, be omitted with the view of inserting "have been."

Amendment agreed to.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair; reported to the House that the Committee had agreed to the Legislative Council's amendment with amendments and a consequential amendment; and the report was adopted.

The PREMIER moved that the Bill be returned to the Legislative Council with a message intimating that the Assembly had agreed to their amendment with amendments and a consequential amendment, and inviting the concurrence of the Legislative Council in the same.

Question put and passed.

## NEW STANDING ORDERS.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole for the consideration of new Standing Orders.

The PREMIER said, as the Bill providing for the payment of the expenses of members had come into operation, it was necessary that there should be some record of the daily attendance of members, and also of their usual place of residence, if not in Brisbane, so that the amounts to which they were entitled might be properly calculated. The Standing Orders Committee having had the matter under consideration proposed to make permanent the practice that had been in force during the two last sessions—namely, that it should be the duty of the officers of the House to

record the daily attendance of members—which had been found to work, so far, satisfactorily. But, in order to afford members an opportunity of correcting errors, it was proposed that the names of those who attended should be published day by day in the “Votes and Proceedings,” as had been the practice for many years in the Legislative Council. He did not think there could be any objection to that. With regard to a member's place of residence, it was proposed by the first new Standing Order—

27*a*. At the beginning of each session each member, whose usual place of residence is not in Brisbane shall leave with the Clerk a statement in writing under his hand, setting forth his usual place of residence in Queensland.

It had occurred to him that there should be also some means of recording a change of residence by a member during the session, and he proposed to add words providing for that. As to the place of residence of members in Queensland, that was a matter upon which they must trust entirely to the honour of members—as to where their usual place of residence was. He would move formally that the first new Standing Order reported by the Standing Orders Committee be agreed to, and then propose an amendment.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not think it necessary to record a member's change of residence as long as he did not reside permanently in Brisbane. If a member changed his residence from Ipswich to Toowoomba and again to some other place, he would still be a country member.

The PREMIER moved that the Standing Order be amended by the addition of the following words: “and shall in like manner notify to the Clerk any change in his usual place of residence occurring during the session.”

Mr. SCOTT said the first part of the Standing Order provided that “at the beginning of each session each member, whose usual place of residence is not in Brisbane, shall leave,” etc.; and supposing a member's usual place of residence at the beginning of the session was in Brisbane, and he moved out to the Mitchell or some other place during the session, he would get no benefit from the amendment suggested, though a member whose usual place of residence was not in Brisbane would be benefited by it should he change his place of residence.

The PREMIER said the difficulty would be met by the insertion of the words “and from time to time as occasion may require” after the word “session.”

Mr. SCOTT: Would it not be better to omit the words “whose usual place of residence is not in Brisbane”?

The PREMIER said that would be better. Each member would then have to inform the Clerk of his usual place of residence. That would not be much trouble, and if it was not done it would be taken that the member neglecting to do it usually resided in Brisbane. He would withdraw his first amendment for the purpose of proposing the omission of the words “whose usual place of residence is not in Brisbane.”

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The PREMIER moved the omission of the words “whose usual place of residence is not in Brisbane.”

Amendment agreed to.

The PREMIER moved the addition of the words “and shall in like manner notify to the Clerk any change in his usual place of residence occurring during the session.”

Mr. NORTON said before the amendment was passed he would ask if it was necessary that the words “in writing” should be included in the Standing Order? He supposed there would be printed forms.

The PREMIER said that what was intended was that the statement should not be merely verbal. A printed form was writing, and the words “in writing” meant that the statement should not be merely an oral statement.

Amendment agreed to, and new Standing Order, as amended, put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that the following new Standing Order, as approved by the Committee, be agreed to:—

27*b*. The Clerk shall on each day on which the House is appointed to meet for the despatch of business record the names of all such members as are present at the time appointed for the meeting of the House or at any time during which the House is sitting on that day; and the names of the members so present shall be printed from day to day with the “Votes and Proceedings.”

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the proposed new Standing Orders as approved by the Standing Orders Committee, with amendments.

The PREMIER moved that the proposed new Standing Orders, as reported, be agreed to by the House.

Question put and passed.

The PREMIER moved that the proposed new Standing Orders, as agreed to by the House, be presented by the Speaker to His Excellency the Administrator of the Government for approval.

Question put and passed.

## SUPPLY.

### RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—LOAN ESTIMATES.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole, further to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

### AGENT-GENERAL FOR THE COLONY.

The PREMIER moved that there be granted for the service of the year 1886-7 the sum of £3,612, for the salaries of the General staff and Emigration staff at the London Office. The sum of £200, paid to the Emigration Agent for the Continent during six months of last year was not required for the present year; and the lecturer's salary was put down for twelve months instead of for nine months, as it appeared on the Estimates last year.

Mr. NORTON said he wished to know whether the Government proposed to take any steps in connection with the immigration now going on. There were many complaints on account of people being brought out when there was no work for those already in the colony; and it was said that a great many were induced to come out by false statements on the part of the agents at home.

The PREMIER said the matter had been a source of great anxiety to the Government for a considerable time. Since the Act was passed during the present session empowering the Government to limit the introduction of non-indented and indented passengers a great deal of care had been exercised, and all the nominations with respect to artisans had been submitted to himself before they were allowed to go forward. In nine cases out of ten the men nominated had been nominated by their relatives or very near friends

engaged in the same trade, and most of them had been nominated from the country districts. All the officers had instructions to satisfy themselves that the persons nominated were either relatives or *bond fide* old friends of those by whom they were nominated. It would be very hard to refuse a nomination by a person who was engaged in the same trade, of his brother, or brother-in-law, or son-in-law, or cousin, when the nominator was able to earn a living in the colony, and thought his relative could do so too. Such a man's interests were with his trade and also with his relatives, and that was about as good security as could be got for the *bond fide* nature of the nomination. The number of artisans nominated since the Act passed had been extremely limited, and the only class of immigrants that had been brought free were farm labourers. Great care had been exercised in selecting them, but notwithstanding all the care sometimes the agents were deceived, and he was afraid that some of them were only too willing to be deceived. Mr. Randall exercised the utmost supervision, as did the other officers of the Government, and there had been very few instances within the last few months where men had succeeded in passing themselves off as farm labourers when they were not. That there were some people in the colony who could not get work he did not doubt, but there was plenty of work for farm labourers. The manner in which the immigrants by the "Jumna" went off proved that. Out of the hundreds that came out last week, there were not more than ten or twelve now in the depôt; and so it always was with farm labourers. Under the circumstances the question was extremely embarrassing to the Government; because, though there were complaints as to the want of employment, every farm labourer who came out by immigrant ships was immediately engaged. Under those circumstances it would be a mistake to stop immigration. The unemployed had been almost entirely confined to the trades. The agitation of the unemployed had been rather a hollow affair all through. When they heard of a committee of the unemployed, when the unemployed from week to week were always the same persons, it began to a certain extent to look suspicious. And when a person engaged in the business of letting out work by contract posed as chairman of the unemployed committee, one was apt to discredit any remonstrance made by them. On the other hand, there were men—and very good men—who could not get work, and the Government would be only too glad to assist them. He was happy to say that since Mr. Okeden had been Immigration Agent he had done very good service. That gentleman had gone into his work heartily, and the department was now managed as a labour bureau. He had made recommendations, which were now being carried out, for securing continual weekly reliable information, at the head office, as to the requirements of the different parts of the colony, and also for distributing that information to the various places, so that if labour was wanted in Blackall, for instance, and there were labourers available at Muttaborra or Springsure, a communication could be sent at once. The scheme was perfectly complete for the purpose mentioned, and he (the Premier) had no doubt that it would prove a great success. The Government had during the recent agitation taken steps to distribute the applicants for work to those parts of the colony where it was to be found. The applications for employment had now practically ceased, there being very few men who had not succeeded in finding work. Before Mr. Okeden took charge of the office, that office had been in a somewhat disorganised state, but now he was happy to say it was in a satisfactory condition. The Government did not propose to stop immigration at present. He had

been watching it from month to month—he might say from day to day—with the greatest anxiety. But it was quite certain that it was only by an increase of population that they could expect to bear the increasing burden of public works.

Mr. NORTON said of course he did not expect that the Government were going to stop immigration. He had asked the question with the view of ascertaining whether the Government had arrived at any conclusion in regard to nominations. But the whole responsibility now rested on the Government, and whatever action they might take of that they must bear the consequences. So far as the unemployed were concerned, that was, to a large extent, a separate question. He had no doubt that a large number of men had been unable to find employment; but the agitation was carried on not merely by men who were unemployed. In all the colonies it was promoted and excited by men who had a political object in view; and he supposed the same thing took place here as elsewhere. But he had information that there were a number of artificers who could not get work, but who took other work whenever they could get it. A lady who was engaged in collecting for a charitable institution, and who went amongst working men's families a good deal, and heard what was going on, assured him that she had found cases where men had been four or five months out of employment. They did get odd jobs, but many were seriously hampered for want of regular work. In one case a very respectable woman informed her that they had been without milk for three or four months. Little matters like that showed that there had been a great deal of distress. In respect to the people who came out, of course it was almost impossible to prevent the introduction of tradesmen who represented themselves as farm labourers, but the Government should do all they could to check it. He saw from statements made in the papers—chiefly by the men who were connected with the unemployed agitation—that it was reported that a large number of mechanics came out here who represented themselves as agricultural labourers. He was very glad to hear that Mr. Okeden was doing his work satisfactorily. That gentleman's experience would assist him very largely in spreading the knowledge where employment was to be got throughout the colony. So far as he could learn, Mr. Okeden was a gentleman who would thoroughly go into anything of that kind; and he was glad to hear from the Chief Secretary that his scheme had been a success.

Question put and passed.

#### HARBOUR AND RIVER IMPROVEMENTS.

The COLONIAL TREASURER moved that there be granted to Her Majesty out of loan, for the year 1886-87, the sum of £5,336, to defray the expenses in connection with Harbour and River Improvements. The estimate was based on the same principle as that of last year.

Mr. STEVENS said he would like to ask the Colonial Treasurer if anything further had been done in regard to having a number of small dredges constructed either in the colony or in Great Britain, for the purpose of dredging rivers and harbours? The Government deserved the greatest credit for the good use they were making of the implements which they had; but those small dredges would be a very valuable adjunct to the means they at present had for dredging harbours and rivers. The work which they did would be very reproductive. The amount of traffic which would be increased in their rivers, bays, and along the coast, in a short time would

more than recoup the Government for the expense they would be put to in purchasing those dredges. He knew that a favourable answer would be regarded with satisfaction by a large number of residents along the coast.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he hoped two years ago, when he asked for the approval of the Loan Estimates, that a large addition would have been made to the number of small dredges required for harbours and creeks. At that time it was the intention of the Engineer for Harbours and Rivers to proceed with the construction of two clam-shell dredges. But on subsequent consideration he had not approved of the type of any of the dredges at present in the colonies; and one of the objects of his visit home was to make himself acquainted with an improved class of small dredges, either working on the Hudson River in America, or in some of the harbours at home. And he (the Colonial Treasurer) had no doubt that on the Engineer's return to the colony he would bring a considerable amount of information on the subject, so that they should be provided with the very best appliances. A considerable amount of power was lost in clam-shell dredges, and although they had done fair work in the rivers and creeks, they were not up to the type of a vessel which the Engineer considered suitable to the purpose. He had therefore to inform the hon. gentleman that the matter must lie in abeyance till Mr. Nisbet returned.

Mr. NORTON said that a sum of money had been put on the Estimates for dredging by shallow-water dredges the Narrows between Port Curtis and Keppel Bay. He understood from the Treasurer that he could find no machinery fit for that purpose, because he wanted to secure a dredge which would easily deepen the way before it. He would like to know whether Mr. Nisbet had come across any dredge which would answer that purpose. He knew Mr. Nisbet had some designs which he thought would answer the purpose.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the vote for deepening the Narrows was still intact, as the hon. gentleman knew, and the work would have been proceeded with had the appliances existed. The Government had not yet received information from Mr. Nisbet as to any particular class of dredge, but the latest advice stated that he was preparing to visit some of the harbours of Great Britain, and possibly he might have time to visit America.

Mr. NORTON said Mr. Nisbet could get all information he wanted without going to America. He would hear as much in England as he would if he went to America. He (Mr. Norton) would like to know whether, in the event of Mr. Nisbet recommending any dredge, orders would be given to secure it, and whether it would be used at the Narrows?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said Mr. Nisbet was instructed that if he saw any dredge of the type he thought suitable for such work as that at the Narrows to report to the Agent-General, and upon representations being made to the Government as to the probable cost, he would be authorised to order one as a model, or else he would send out specifications to have the work carried out here. Mr. Nisbet was well aware that the Government preferred that vessels of that kind should be constructed in the colony; but it might so happen that some special type of dredge might be purchased, already built in England, at a great saving of time and expense. Mr. Nisbet had *carte blanche*, after consulting with the Agent-General, to proceed with the construction of a dredge of any small class which might be suitable for the harbours of the colony.

Mr. NORTON: The work will be proceeded with as soon as the dredge arrives?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said yes, it was the intention of the department to have two smaller dredges constructed. One would be used in the Narrows and the other would be employed in the southern part of the colony.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was not going to oppose the vote, but it must have required a great deal of skill to manipulate it so as to make the figures the same as last year. Of course, by having no alteration, the Colonial Treasurer expected the vote to pass easily; but he must say it would require some skill to discover how the figures were brought about. He would like to know when the dredge "Platypus" would be sent to Townsville?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the "Platypus" had been doing good work at Cooktown, which he was glad to say had not been interrupted by any unforeseen accident. The work would be completed within a month, or earlier, and it was the intention of the Government to let the vessel resume her work at Townsville. With regard to Townsville, he might say that the eastern breakwater, the extension of which had been contracted for some time ago, was now approaching completion—the section under construction. The plans of the harbour of Townsville had been sent home for the consideration of Sir John Coode, with an inquiry as to whether another section might not be proceeded with before the receipt of his report. Mr. Nisbet had been instructed to cablegram out the result, so that if the reply was favourable another section of the breakwater would be proceeded with without delay.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he would like to know what about Port Douglas and Cairns. Were they not to receive any benefit from the "Platypus"? Shiploads of rails were now being put into lighters at Cairns, whereas, with a very little dredging of the port, the ship would be able to discharge at the wharf, and the expense of lightering would be saved to the Government. Dredging at Townsville was an endless job, and he thought Cairns and Port Douglas should have been first attended to. At Townsville it was like dredging out the bottom of the sea. The whole harbour had to be made at Townsville, whereas there was only a few months' work at Cairns.

Mr. BROWN said he had no intention of saying anything to prevent the dredge going to Cairns, but he would point out that large steamers like the "Barcoo" and "Victoria" could go right up to Swallow's wharf there, whilst the dredge was very much required in Townsville.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said there were very extensive harbour improvements at Townsville which could not be proceeded with until the dredge went there. The removal of the rocks could not be proceeded with except at great expense until a "face" had been dredged away and exposed. With regard to Cairns and Port Douglas, he could assure the hon. member for Cook that they had not been overlooked, but at the same time Cairns had meanwhile a very good harbour naturally—he only wished Townsville had as good—and it would take ten or twelve months to complete the work at Cairns.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Five.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the department said ten months' steady work. It was the intention of the Government when the Gulf dredge left Brisbane to let it call at Cairns and Port Douglas.

Mr. SCOTT said he hoped the Government had something else to depend upon than the report of Sir John Coode in regard to the

works at Townsville. That gentleman was by no means immaculate, and if they looked back at some of his works they would find that he led the English Government into a very serious mistake indeed. On his advice the English Government went to very great expense in making a harbour at Guernsey, in the Channel Islands. They had spent £300,000 on the work, and then by Sir John Coode's advice they gave the whole thing up, he himself having come to the conclusion at last that it was impracticable. He (Mr. Scott) thought, therefore, that the Government should have some other advice than Sir John Coode's before they expended large sums of money.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he would point out to the Government that such work as putting a face on the rocks at Ross Creek, Townsville, could be done more easily and economically by a small dredge like the "Bremer" than by the "Platypus."

Mr. HAMILTON asked how long it would take the "Platypus" to finish the operations at Townsville which required the presence of a dredge?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he could not say. It would depend upon the capacity of the basin; and that would depend upon the advice of Sir John Coode, as to the length the horns of the breakwater should be extended, and the area they were to include. It was impossible to say at the present time how long the dredge would take.

Mr. HAMILTON said he knew it was impossible to state the time accurately, but the hon. member must have some idea of the approximate time. Perhaps the hon. member thought he would frighten them if he mentioned the time he really believed the dredge would be kept at Townsville. Of course, the hon. member could not break his promise, and he had promised the Townsville people that the dredge should remain there till it was required no longer. Could the hon. member hold out any prospect of letting Cairns or Port Douglas have any of the other seven or eight dredges that were down on the list?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he could not hold out any prospect that any of those dredges would leave their stations, during the present financial year at any rate. A new dredge was being built, and it was intended when it was finished either to send it to Cairns or to send one of the other dredges.

Mr. HAMILTON said they could not by any possibility get the new dredge under a year from the present time, because it was not to be finished till April, 1887, and there was an arrangement with the contractors that it was to remain in Brisbane, as the contractors were to repair any damage which might arise within six months after it left their hands, provided it remained in the southern portion of Queensland during that time. The hon. gentleman had now told them that there was no possibility of their getting any of the other dredges, and he would like to ask if the Government had considered the desirability of sending home and importing some dredges. He had good authority for saying that there were many dredges perfectly fit for the work which could be obtained at a very low rate. As for the great natural advantages of the harbour at Cairns, that was an additional reason why they should have a dredge sent up, in order that they might get some benefit from those natural advantages. They were prevented from deriving any benefit from their magnificent harbour, simply because there was a small bar which it would take about five months to remove. It was a

mere matter of calculation that that amount of work would remove enough silt to enable the largest boats travelling on the coast to enter at any state of the tide.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the Government were not inclined to build any more dredges than were at present at work or under construction, and they had no intention whatever to send out of the colony for work that they would like to see done in the colony. The only justification for such a departure would be in the case of a special type of clam-shell dredge. It might be advantageous to buy a small dredge possessing certain capabilities of a type which had not been seen in the colonies; but as for the larger dredges, whose construction was well understood, and which had done their work so well, there was no reason why they should not continue to be built in the colony. However, there was no present necessity for building any more dredges. The department would possess quite sufficient when the new one was completed; and as a dredge would then be sent to the North, he did not think the hon. member's constituency would have to wait so long as he seemed to imagine. The hon. member, in the interests of his constituents, pressed the claims of Cairns, but he should remember that many ports in the colony had been suffering much longer than Cairns under very much heavier disabilities. Brisbane, Maryborough, and other large ports of the colony had only recently been given the special advantage of having good draught of water up to the wharves; and as Cairns was getting a railway and several other advantages, it could not complain of being without a fair share of public works.

Mr. BLACK asked if the new dredge was to be sent to Cairns and Port Douglas?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that what he stated was that when the new dredge was constructed one of the three which would then be in Brisbane would proceed north—either the new one or one of the other two—and would be set to work at Cairns.

Mr. BLACK said he regretted that the hon. member for Burke was not present, as that would be rather interesting news to him. That hon. member's constituents had always understood that the dredge was being specially built for Normanton—

The COLONIAL TREASURER: For the Gulf.

Mr. BLACK: And that no delay would take place in sending them to commence operations in the Gulf. It now appeared that nearly twelve months would elapse before she would be able to leave Brisbane, and that she would then proceed to Cairns, where, if no unforeseen delay occurred—and it always did occur—she would be at work for ten months; indeed, they might safely say twelve months. After that she was to proceed to Port Douglas. The Colonial Treasurer had given them no information as to the length of time she would be employed there, but it would certainly be not less than six months; so that at least two and a-half years would elapse before the dredge could reach the Gulf. But before that time, as the leader of the Opposition had just reminded him, she would have to be brought back to Brisbane or Maryborough to be overhauled, thus involving a further great loss of time. It would create a great deal of dissatisfaction amongst the people of the Gulf when they heard that they would have to wait some three years before they could get their dredge. He hoped the Colonial Treasurer would not act upon the suggestion of the hon. member for Leichhardt and get other advice than that of Sir John Coode. If that

hon. member knew as well as himself how ready the department was to jump at any suggestion that was likely to defer harbour works, he would hardly have made it. He hoped the Government would go on without consulting anyone except their own engineer. He hoped nothing would interfere with the dredge "Lytton," and he should like to hear the hon. gentleman repeat his assurance that it was intended to send her up as a sort of new year's gift to the people of Mackay.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the "Lytton" would be placed on the slip at Maryborough about Christmas, in order to render her fit to proceed north.

Mr. BLACK asked whether the calculation he had made as to the time which would elapse before the new dredge would reach the Gulf was correct?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I am not in a position to answer that question.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN asked whether, in the event of the calculation made by the hon. member for Mackay being correct, it would be possible to send one of the Southern dredges to the Gulf?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that, with regard to the dredge for the Gulf ports, it was always understood that it might be required to do work on the eastern seaboard as it proceeded north. If hon. members would refer to an answer to a question asked in an earlier part of the session, they would see that that statement was distinctly made. It was certain that none of the other dredges could be spared to proceed to the Gulf. The "Octopus" and the "Groper" could not be spared from Moreton Bay and the Brisbane River, nor the "Saurian" from the Fitzroy; the "Maryborough" would be engaged for years in Wide Bay and the Mary River, and the "Platypus" had her work before her at Townsville, and the "Lytton" at Mackay. Not only could they not be spared, but it would be a very great waste of time and power to send them to the Gulf. The insurance was heavy, the risk great, and the work they could accomplish in any short time infinitesimal. The work to be done in the Gulf would be a work of years. At the Norman Bar alone there were seven miles of cutting to be done. With regard to the overhauling of the dredges, it was hoped that in a short time arrangements would be made by which that could be done at Townsville and in the Fitzroy. Much loss of time and considerable expenditure was incurred in bringing the dredges down to Brisbane for repairs, and it would be very desirable to make some provision by which they could be overhauled at their respective ports, and thereby save time and expense.

Mr. HAMILTON said he was glad to hear that the dredge in course of construction was to be finished in December instead of April which was the contract time. Would it be sent to Cairns immediately after the six months during which it would be in the hands of the contractors at Brisbane had expired?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. member must have misunderstood him. He was referring to the "Lytton," which was going on the slip in December. There was very little probability of the new dredge being finished much within the contract time.

Mr. HAMILTON asked whether Sir John Coode's recommendation as to the site for the bridge over Ross Creek was accepted?

The COLONIAL TREASURER replied that Sir John Coode was not instructed by the Treas-

ury to select any site for a bridge at Ross Creek. That was in the department of the Minister for Works, who would act independently of Sir John Coode.

Mr. NORTON said he understood that Sir John Coode had made some recommendation to the Government on the subject—at whose request he did not know—and that he had expressed his opinion as to where the bridge ought not to be, although he might not have expressed it as to where it ought to be. He understood that Sir John Coode had been asked by someone to report on the desirability of placing a bridge at some particular spot on Ross Creek. The Colonial Treasurer must know something about that.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said Sir John Coode had expressed an opinion about the bridge, but not at the request of either of the departments. It was expressed in connection with the question of a swing bridge to be formed in the future. But Sir John Coode was not asked to report on the position of the bridge, nor had the department recognised his opinion about it.

Mr. NORTON: Let the Minister for Works give his own information.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he would ask the Colonial Treasurer if it was his intention to continue the cutting of the Boat Passage towards Cleveland and Southport? He would remind the hon. gentleman that some three years ago a promise was made to a deputation by the then Acting Colonial Treasurer, the hon. member for Maryborough, that when that channel was cut through, a passage should be made into Wynnum Creek. He hoped that while the dredge was there that work would be carried out.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the dredge would proceed with the removal of the obstructions in the Boat Passage, but he could not make any promise as to Wynnum Creek. The promise concerning that creek was made on the supposition that a new clam-shell dredge could be spared for the work; but when the "Bremer" had finished the cutting of the Boat Passage she would be required further down the Bay to remove obstructions existing on the route to Southport. That was her primary duty, and it was much more important than the other. As soon as a small dredge could be spared the promise made regarding Wynnum Creek would be recognised.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not agree with the hon. member for Leichhardt with respect to the value of Sir John Coode's advice. Even if that gentleman had made a mistake in England, he had had very large experience, and his advice was always of value. At the same time, however, he (Mr. Macrossan) thought their own experience and engineering skill were quite sufficient to enable them to form the harbour of Townsville, and he supposed Sir John Coode's advice had been asked simply to see if it agreed with the opinion of their own engineers. He did not see any great difficulty in making a harbour at Townsville; it was simply a matter of expense. As to the recommendation that had been spoken of concerning the bridge over Ross Creek, he would ask if a recommendation from Sir John Coode had ever reached the Government? If it had, why had they not considered it? His recommendation should have been considered. Whether it arrived bound round with red tape or with ordinary grocer's twine, it was equally valuable. He was not aware whether that gentleman had made a recommendation or not, but he had heard that he had made a recommendation not



to build the bridge in a particular place, as it would interfere with the future navigation of the creek; and if the rocks at the entrance were removed, as he (Mr. Macrossan) hoped they would be, and sufficient water was made at the mouth of the creek to allow vessels to go up, the further they went up the better. Therefore it was quite possible that Sir John Coode's recommendation, if such recommendation was made, was the right one.

The PREMIER said he remembered Sir John Coode's report on the site for the bridge at Townsville being considered very fully by the Cabinet. It was necessary to accept tenders at the time—at any rate the question was under consideration, and the site of the bridge had to be fixed. Sir John Coode recommended that the bridge should be constructed at a street called, he thought, Blackwood street, and certainly, if the only object was to construct a bridge across Ross Creek, irrespective of who was to go over it, that was an admirable place to put a bridge. But a bridge there would be of very little use to the public. The object of the Government was to give convenient access from Townsville to Ross Island, and they considered that the proper place to put the bridge was where it would serve that purpose. If they had placed it at the site recommended, very few people could have used it without making a detour of about three-quarters of a mile, and it would have necessitated the construction of a causeway about three-quarters of a mile long through a mangrove swamp. He remembered very well Sir John Coode's recommendation, and that some newspaper asserted as a positive fact that it was made at his suggestion with the idea that he (the Premier) would personally derive some advantage from it. Whether he would or not have done so he did not know, but, having in view the convenience of the people on both sides of the creek, the Government were bound to adopt the present site.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not dispute the hon. gentleman's opinion, or the decision the Cabinet had come to; but he had a very distinct recollection of a bridge being built by orders of a Cabinet composed to the extent of one-half of the members of the present Cabinet, and afterwards that bridge had to be removed.

The PREMIER: I am still disposed to think it was a very good site.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said it was a good site simply because the hon. gentleman was in favour of the bridge being put there, but from his (Mr. Macrossan's) knowledge of the creek he knew it was the wrong site. It was impossible to keep vessels from bumping against the piers, and for that and other reasons it had to be removed. The machinery was unworkable.

The PREMIER: Very likely.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that bridge was put in the wrong place; he hoped the Government had not put the one in question in the wrong place.

The PREMIER said there was another thing to be taken into consideration in erecting the bridge to Ross Island; and that was, that a quantity of Government land had been sold there in town lots, and the streets were all laid out so as to converge to the present site of the bridge. In fact it was a main thoroughfare, and the Government having sold the property in that way, would have been guilty of a gross breach of faith if they had placed the bridge anywhere else.

Question put and passed.

#### WATERWORKS AND WATER SUPPLY.

The COLONIAL TREASURER, in moving that £19,727 be granted from loan for Waterworks and Water Supply, said the estimate was slightly in excess of the amount voted last year on account of provision being made for four district engineers at £250 each. Another reason why it had been enlarged was because it was hoped that during the present season the department would be able to push on with works which were impeded by the recent drought. Last year was a very unfortunate one for anything like active operations in the department. Contractors threw up their contracts, and several works had to remain in abeyance until rain fell; but now that the colony was favoured with a genial season, he hoped that the present year would witness very great activity in the department, which would conduce to the permanent benefit of the country.

Mr. NORTON said a good deal of information had been supplied to hon. members by the report of the Hydraulic Engineer, but that extended only up to the 30th June last. Could the hon. the Treasurer give any further information with regard to the progress of boring operations now going on, especially at Blackall, where the American machine was at work?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said by the date of the latest advices the Blackall bore was down 970 feet.

Mr. NORTON: How long ago is that?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: By telegram last week. The bore was then down 970 feet; the diameter was 10 inches for about 800 feet, 9 inches beyond that; and the cost had been 23s. 8d. per foot bored. There was no indication of water yet. That, of course, was inclusive of the cost of new tools, ropes, and repairs, but was not inclusive of the cost of the original plant.

Mr. NORTON: Does it include the removal of the plant to the place?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the cost of the plant in Brisbane was £936, and about £1,062 landed in Blackall. The cost of the 10-inch casing was 12s. 2d.; 9-inch, 10s. 10d.; and 8-inch, 8s. 6d. The total cost of boring, including Mr. Arnold's salary but excluding original cost of plant and tubing, is about 33s. 11d. per foot.

Mr. NORTON: Have the Government any intention of taking the borer to some other place?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the Government were desirous of seeing some more satisfactory result from the operations of the Pennsylvania borer, as conducted by Mr. Arnold. From reports obtained from England it was found that similar borers were being employed there, and the sinking was done much more rapidly than it had been done here. In fact, the department was disappointed at the slow progress made, as it was expected that the sinking to a depth of 900 feet would have been accomplished within six months, instead of the long time that had now elapsed since the operations were commenced.

Mr. BLACK asked if the wages supplied to the men employed under the department included rations, or did they provide for themselves?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The men find themselves.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN asked where were the four district engineers mentioned in the estimate employed?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said they were employed at Hughenden, Winton, Boulia, and Tambo, and the engineer at Boulia had also charge of the work being done with scoops on the Boulia road.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he noticed a new item and a new appointment—"Engineer for municipalities and divisional boards." What was the object of the appointment?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said that when municipalities or divisional boards applied for loans for waterworks the Hydraulic Engineer visited the country and made a preliminary report, and the officer referred to was employed to complete the work initiated by Mr. Henderson.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN asked if the district engineers were possessed of the scientific skill which civil engineers usually had? The salary set down for them was only £250 a year, and that was certainly a very low salary for a scientific engineer.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said one of them was a member of the Institute of Civil Engineers, and another was a highly trained professional man, while the other two had passed the examination for engineers. They were young men who had yet to make a reputation in their profession.

Mr. BLACK said there was a large sum—£9,300—voted last year for "blacksmiths, labourers, horse-drivers, chainmen, and cooks," and £9,000 was to be voted for the same service for the present year. Could the Colonial Treasurer give the Committee any information as to the number of men employed by the department?

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the estimate for last year was framed on the expectation that the work would be speedily carried out, but the whole of the amount voted for last year was not expended on account, as he had mentioned, of the drought preventing the department from proceeding with several of their works. The vote was to provide for the men employed in connection with the work being done by the steam scoops—about fifty altogether—at an average wage of about 10s. 4d. a day, which included rations.

Mr. BLACK said he understood from the hon. gentleman that there were fifty men working under the department, but there appeared to be no less than thirteen overseers to look after the fifty men. He did not know whether the thirteen overseers were included in the fifty men mentioned by the hon. gentleman, but if not, thirteen overseers seemed an excessive number to look after fifty men.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the overseers were not employed solely in superintending those fifty men, but where there were contracts let they were employed to see that the contractors carried out their work properly. If hon. gentlemen would look at the Engineer's report they would see that there were several works under construction on the Hughenden to Winton and Winton to Boulia roads, and the overseers were employed to look after those works.

Mr. BLACK asked from what fund the money for those contracts came? There appeared to be no provision for them in the vote now under consideration.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he must remind the hon. member that only salaries were voted under "Loan" on the Estimates. The cost of the contracts was defrayed out of loan, but did not appear on the Estimates any more than the expenditure on railways. There were several works under contract, some of which were the following:—Aramac and Muttaborra road—Talburra tank and dam, 25 miles east from Muttaborra; Muttaborra tank and dam; Muttaborra and Winton road—Kensington

tanks and dam, 23 miles west from Muttaborra; Bradley's Creek shaft and adit; Winton and Cloncurry road—Cockatoo Creek tank and dam, 20 miles from Winton; Winton and Hughenden road—Whitewood ridge tank and dam, 79 miles from Winton; Bourke's tank and dam, 100 miles from Winton; Sheep Creek tank and dam, 17 miles from Hughenden; Hughenden and Muttaborra road—Horseshoe Bend tank and dam, 24 miles from Hughenden; Landsborough Creek tank and dam, 45 miles from Hughenden; Rockwood tank and dam; Richmond and Woolgar road—Burnt-yards Creek tank and dam, 29 miles from Richmond; Winton and Boulia road—Min Min Creek tank and dam, 167 miles from Winton.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said it would be much better, in the interests of the colony and in the interests of the different districts, if matters of water conservation were left in the hands of the local authorities instead of the Hydraulic Engineer in Brisbane, who had sufficient to do to attend to the towns along the coast, and who had no special knowledge enabling him to deal with the conditions of water conservation in the Western interior. That question was really very little known and understood by men of twenty years' practical experience in the interior; and that being so, how could it be understood by a scientific engineer, however well up he might be in the ordinary laws and rules of hydraulics? If the money spent on water conservation on the Western roads were handed over to the local authorities they would get fully 100 per cent. better value for the money.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is not my experience.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said that was his experience, at any rate. He was perfectly satisfied that the money spent had been absolutely squandered to a great extent, and that not 50 per cent. value had been obtained. He had seen some of the work himself, and he had seen the sort of armies of under-strappers and overseers that were employed looking after them, and he was certain that if the works up there were conducted under local supervision an immense saving would be effected. He did not for a moment mean to complain of the Hydraulic Engineer. He dared say he was a very competent and able man, but how on earth could he, whilst in Brisbane, supervise works several hundreds of miles away besides do all the work of his department? It was utterly impossible for him to do it. He (Mr. Hill) only wanted to relieve him of the duty so far as the Western country was concerned, and he ought to be very thankful to him for it. The Treasurer would find that the work would be much more economically carried out and full value obtained for the money expended. He did not mean to say that too much money could be expended in opening the roads out west. It was very difficult to say what was the amount that might be expended; but what he did say was that the control of the expenditure could in no way be carried on satisfactorily and effectually from a centre like Brisbane. He might as well try to do it himself. Any efforts in that direction in a country which had been only occupied during twenty-five years required a certain amount of special knowledge. Men who had been studying the contour of the country and the formation for twenty or twenty-five years had not arrived at any really certain and satisfactory knowledge of the best places for water conservation; and how could a man go out and in a flying survey pick out the best sites for dams and reservoirs? It was beyond the genius of any mortal man to do it. He would as soon

entrust any blackfellow to pick a site for a dam or reservoir as he would the Government Hydraulic Engineer when going out on a flying trip. The local authorities were thoroughly trustworthy, and well able to diagnose the work so far as it was possible to diagnose it, and were perfectly capable of carrying it out. He was sure the money entrusted to their hands would produce far better results than could possibly be achieved with all the departmental regulations and red tape combined.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said there was a good deal in what the hon. gentleman stated, but before the money could be entrusted for expenditure away from the department there must be some constituted authority authorised to receive and deal with it. He had no doubt that when the Water Bill came on for further consideration there would be properly constituted authorities who would deal with water conservation in their own special districts, and thereby relieve the central department of a considerable amount of labour and blame. For if the Hydraulic Engineer was not successful in tapping water on the first experiment, there was invariably a certain amount of unjustifiable blame attached to the department for not having a better knowledge of the conditions. No doubt in furnishing a water supply for extensive districts out west there were conditions which time alone could enable a man fully to understand and compete with. But, taking all things into consideration and all the difficulties to be met with, the provision made for water on some of the main stock roads at the present time were very creditable to the department. He believed that notwithstanding that the work was of a tentative character in the majority of cases, it was as economically performed as could be done. His hon. friend informed him that on several stations they could sink bores and make dams at a much less cost than the department; but the hon. gentleman must bear in mind that station-owners gave greater facilities to their contractors than the Government contractors received. They could supply their men with beef and provisions, their horses with paddocks, and with many conveniences which naturally reduced the contract price. The Government, on the other hand, had to bind contractors to a hard-and-fast line of action, and to a certain rate, and there were no counterbalancing considerations which would induce contractors to contract at a lower price. He inclined to the opinion that men who had been a long time settled in the interior of the country would naturally possess superior information to that of an officer of a Government department, who made an excursion occasionally and reported on the eligibility of sites for water conservation. Therefore, when the Water Bill passed, he would view with satisfaction the handing over of water conservation to local authorities. In the meantime, the department had done all that possibly could be done, and he did not believe the money had either been squandered or wasted, although the expectations of some had not been realised. No doubt the bores put down had not in all cases been successful, but hon. gentlemen would find from the reports laid on the table that the number of failures had not been so great as in the other colonies. He knew himself from hearing prices quoted that the work of the department had been more economically done than in some of the other colonies for bores and sinking. That was something to say when they considered the cost of labour and supervision here, especially in the Western districts.

Mr. STEVENSON said he thought it was hardly fair for the hon. member for Cook to bring forward general charges against any officer

of the Government without some facts to prove what he said. He quite agreed with the hon. member for Cook that local boards properly constituted would do the work far cheaper than the Government. In fact, they knew well that all Government work was done at a much higher rate than private work. At the same time, he should not like to see any local board get the management of the water conservation business without a professional man properly overseeing them. He had managed stations for a long time, and he knew that he could do work much cheaper than could be done by a Government department; but while he had done it on a cheap scale, and spent £2,000 or £3,000 on a dam, when a good flood came he saw it all go down the creek or river. Notwithstanding that it would be well to have the work done by some local authority, they should be bound to have proper professional men at the head of it. Some of the work might not have been a success, although, not being a practical man, he could not say; but he thought that general charges should not be brought unless backed up with some information. The member for Cook, Mr. Hill, had brought up general charges before against the Hydraulic Engineer, and he (Mr. Stevenson) did not think he then quite proved that his statements were correct. A anyrate, he did not wish to see the Colonial Treasurer hand money over to divisional boards unless it was expended under proper supervision.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said all that was wanted in the way of supervision was a competent surveyor to take the levels.

Mr. STEVENSON: How often have you and I thought we had the proper level?

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he was not proper surveyor, and he never trusted himself to take levels. It was always easy enough to get a competent surveyor who could take levels properly, and that was the only thing wanted to insure the safety of a dam or reservoir. He knew plenty had been carried away and lost, but that was because the work was skimpy and economically carried out. As to contractors for pastoral tenants having special facilities in the way of water and feed for their horses and beef for the men, he was aware of no such thing, but he knew that the Hydraulic Engineer was always accommodated with paddock-room for his horses and those of his men, because the pastoral tenants were only too delighted to see any attempt at water conservancy; but no one wanted to see money wasted. He saw with his own eyes a couple of years ago some work which was being carried out under the superintendence of the Hydraulic Engineer, and it seemed to him that everything cost nearly double its worth. The money was wasted, and the work was not of that character that it ought to be. He did not want, at the close of the session, to make a long indictment against the Hydraulic Engineer, but he had plenty of information to prove that by the people in general in the districts where that gentleman had been his services were not appreciated in the way that they might be. He was perfectly certain that in the Western districts they had very intelligent divisional boards who could be entrusted with funds, and who were anxious and ready to expend money on water conservation. It was to their advantage to get full benefit and value for their money, and he thought they would have as much intelligence in the matter as any water conservancy board that might be appointed under the projected Bill. He could give an illustration of the way in which divisional boards spent money in water conservation when it was entrusted to them. Take the instance of the JC Waterhole. £500 was expended there on an important road, which kept

up communication between Cooper's Creek and the Diamantina. It was entrusted to the local authorities six or seven years ago, and the money was spent most effectively. He was the representative of the Gregory district at the time, and he had a great deal of trouble in getting the money allowed by the department, but it was handed over eventually. The board got more work done for £500 than was done in these days for £1,500. If the Government thought they had got the money to squander and throw away they could do it, but he would point out where they might make effective savings and get full value for their money.

Mr. HAMILTON said any impartial person would admit that such an important department as the Water Supply Department should have competent supervision, and the engineer was not only a scientific man, but had given satisfaction throughout the country. It might be perfectly true, as his hon. colleague said, that the Hydraulic Engineer's services had not been appreciated, but then the people who did not appreciate them might not have the capacity to do so. As to the information which his hon. colleague said he had in his possession, it might possibly prove as reliable as the information he gave last year in regard to the Hydraulic Engineer.

Question put and passed.

#### RAILWAYS—SOUTHERN AND CENTRAL DIVISIONS.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that a sum not exceeding £7,640 be granted out of Loan for Railways, Southern and Central Divisions.

Mr. NORTON said that when they were dealing with the Estimates last week he referred to some rails which had been supplied by a German firm, and he then said he would ask the Minister for Works all about them when the Railway estimates were continued—whether they were supplied by contract by a German firm, and how it happened that German rails were being supplied to Queensland?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Government some time ago, when contemplating the extensive construction of railways, came to the conclusion that it would be desirable to send a large indent home for railway material—that was, for rails, fish-plates, and dog-spikes. They got the Chief Engineer to send in a requisition for what would be required for three years, and he estimated the amount at 43,000 tons. Then a cablegram was sent home to the Agent-General, saying that he might operate upon the indent whenever he could get an opportunity of taking advantage of the market. That plan had proved very satisfactory indeed. The first contract that was let was for 10,697 tons of 41½-lb. rails. They were tendered for by two English firms—one at £5 5s. 6d. a ton, and the other at £5 4s. 6d., which were accepted, half being supplied by each. The next contract entered into was for 2,500 tons 41½-lb. steel rails, which was also given to two English firms for the sum of £3 19s. 6d. per ton, f.o.b. The next contract was for the supply of 1,000 tons 41½-lb. steel rails, which an English firm got at £5 15s. per ton. The next was for 4,000 tons 41½-lb. rails, and that contract was taken up by two German firms—half at £4 2s. per ton f.o.b. in London, and the other half at £4 0s. 6d. The next contract entered into was for 6,000 tons 60-lb. rails, and also given to two German firms for £4 2s., f.o.b. There were also 6,048 tons 41½-lb. rails not operated on yet. Altogether, out of 43,000 tons of rails, indents for which were sent home to carry on the department for three years, the contracts were let with the exception of 13,000 tons. He thought hon. members would agree that those prices were

extremely low. He had the assurance of the Chief Engineer, Mr. Stanley, that the rails supplied by the German firms were of superior quality. There were three contracts entered into for fish-plates at a price of £5 9s. 6d. per ton; three for fish-bolts—one at £15 per ton, one at £14 10s., and one at £14 12s. 6d. For dog-plates the contract prices were £14 7s. 6d., £14, and £14 2s. 6d. They had thus found great advantage in the plan of putting the matter into the Agent-General's hands to seize a favourable state of the market. He did not think that during the history of railway-building in Queensland rails had ever been secured at such a low price.

Mr. NORTON said he thought the country was quite justified in expecting that the rails should be procured at a low price, considering the low price of iron and the great depression in the iron trade, both in England and on the Continent, and, he might add, in the United States. Everybody who took up a paper and read any article on the subject, would know that the iron trade had not been so depressed for many years; so that they might have expected the prices paid for the rails to be exceptionally low. There was one thing he would like to know in regard to those rails. Were they got in the ordinary way by contract, or were they purchased as the opportunity arose? So far as his knowledge went, where rails had been purchased, contracts had always been made, and there was an officer of the Government whose business it was to see them tested as they were rolled at the works. If those rails had not been turned out under supervision in that way, he did not know what guarantee the Government had that they were as good as they ought to be. The Government were quite right in sending home a large indent in order that it might be made out as opportunity arose, but no care ought to be neglected to see that they were supplied in the proper way. If they were merely purchased because they were offered, then he thought sufficient care had not been displayed.

The PREMIER said he had the report of the proceedings of the Board of Advice to the Agent-General, narrating how the contracts were let. He would only refer to the more important ones. With respect to the 6,000 tons of 60-lb. rails, in which case Krupp and Company's tender was accepted—for £4 2s., painted, free on board in London—there were sixteen tenders, and three firms which were invited to tender did not tender. Krupp and Company's tender was the lowest, and it really surprised him—to supply the rails unpainted, free on board in Antwerp, at £3 16s.; or £4 2s. in London, painted. Then there was a tender accepted from the Société John Cockerill and Company—a joint-stock company carrying on business in Belgium—for 2,000 tons. Then another, Krupp and Company, 2,000 tons—in that case there were eighteen tenderers, and a Scotch firm which was invited did not tender. Then there was the contract for 2,500 tons let to the Tredegar Iron Company; in that case there were thirteen tenders, including one from the Gesellschaft Stahl Industrie, another German company. In all cases there seemed to be from fifteen to twenty tenderers. As far as the conditions were concerned, he knew that there was a regular specification used in the London Office providing for inspection. The rails were rolled to order under the supervision of an officer of the department. There was nothing to suggest that that condition had been departed from.

Mr. NORTON said he imagined the Cockerill Company was an English firm.

The PREMIER: It is an English name, but a Belgian company.

Mr. NORTON said he had an impression that it was an English company established on the Continent. Although the price was no doubt satisfactory, yet one hardly liked to see the work taken out of Great Britain and given to a firm on the Continent. At the same time, he could hardly blame the Government if they had been supplied equally well. About the fish-plates and bolts, could the hon. gentleman give any information regarding them?

The PREMIER said all the details were in the papers before him, but he could not lay his finger upon them at once. As to dealing with their own people, he must confess that he should very much prefer it; at the same time their own people—meaning their kinsmen in Great Britain—ought to show an inclination to deal with them. Their dealings should be reciprocal. He was not going to originate a debate on the question of Imperial federation, or anything of that kind, but if the Imperial Government were to recognise the principle that their own people all over the world should be in a better position, commercially, than foreigners, it would tend a great deal to bring about the union of the Empire, about which so much was said at the present time.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said it was not a question of the Imperial Government at all. When they talked about their own people they meant the people of Great Britain, not the British Government. It was not a question of federation, or New Guinea, or a bonus on sugar. He believed a mistake had been made in going to the Continent for their railway material. Whatever the Minister for Works had been told, he might rest assured that steel rails in Germany were not equal to steel rails made in the North of England. Whoever told him to the contrary told him what was not quite correct. The material from which rails were made was better in the North of England than in Germany. The Spanish material was good; the German was not.

The PREMIER: But they do not make rails in Spain.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was aware of that, but the material of which rails were made was exported from Spain to countries where they were made. The best hematite iron in the world came from Spain, and it was imported into the north of England to mix with the ores found there. Even if the North of England rails were a few shillings a ton higher than the German, they ought to have been preferred, not only on account of the colony, but because they would have been purchased from the people whose money the colony was borrowing. They did not go to Germany for their loans, but to England, and where they got their money that portion should be spent which came out of loan. They were actually paying German manufacturers to compete with English manufacturers, with money borrowed in England, and taking an inferior article.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he could only inform the hon. member that the Chief Engineer had reported to him that the Belgian rails were of a superior description.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: You are as good a judge of that as he is.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said every hon. member would, no doubt, prefer to purchase their railway material in England if they could get it at as low a price as elsewhere; but surely they were not going to give £2 or £3 a ton more to an English firm, just because it was English! On the 43,000 tons of rails they had saved between £80,000 and £100,000. Was not that a matter of great importance to the country? The Chief

Engineer was not influenced in his opinions one way or the other; it did not matter to him where the rails came from; and he had given his opinion that the rails in question were of superior quality. Perhaps they were not better than the English rails, but they were equally as good.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said they were not talking about the whole of the 43,000 tons of rails, but of the 10,000 tons which were let to German firms. Did the hon. gentleman mean to tell the Committee that the country had saved from £80,000 to £100,000 on that particular transaction? If he would tell them the amount of the tender next to the one accepted, they could easily ascertain for themselves what had been saved. No one was blaming the hon. gentleman for getting rails at the lowest possible price, but for going out of England for them. With regard to the Chief Engineer's opinion, he knew very little more about the quality of rails than the Minister for Works himself. The business of the Chief Engineer was not to make rails, but railways; and unless he had actually tested the rails in question, he could know no more about them than the Minister for Works himself.

Mr. W. BROOKES said he could not quite understand what the hon. member for Townsville was driving at. He did not hear him talking in that way about the locomotives; he did not remember hearing him complain that the locomotives were not made in England.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: We have not got any from Germany.

Mr. W. BROOKES: But we have from America.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: America is a very different country from Germany.

Mr. W. BROOKES said the hon. member for Townsville must know quite well what was the actual value of Government inspection; he must know that the ultimate responsibility rested on the character of the firm, and that Government inspection was notorious all the world over as being utterly worthless. How could a man inspect 2,000 or 3,000 tons of rails while they were being made? He could only take one out of a bundle. It struck him that when the hon. member came to know it he would find that he was straining at a gnat and letting the camel slip through.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that if the hon. member would read an account of the way in which rails were made, and the manner of the inspection, he would know what the value of Government inspection was. From the way the hon. member talked, he must think that all Government inspectors were rogues.

Mr. W. BROOKES: Most of them are.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not think so. The Government inspector was there to see that everything was done properly. The iron had to be mixed in his presence, and he witnessed the whole process until the rails were actually rolled out, and after that he tested them. So that unless the Government inspector was a rogue—and they were not to suppose that all Government inspectors were rogues—the rail should be made properly. As to the locomotives, they sent to America to buy a certain type of locomotive which was not made in England. They did not send to Belgium or to Germany, but to America, which was a country somewhat similar to Queensland, and where they were in the habit of making pliable rolling-stock. They required rolling-stock of that description here, and were quite justified in sending for it to the country where they were in the habit of making it. Of course, if there was any preference it should be

given to England, because it was there we borrowed our money; but they were not in the habit of making pliable rolling-stock there the same as was used in America.

Mr. W. BROOKES said he was continuing the conversation more for his own amusement than for the edification of the Committee, probably. He had been given to understand by the hon. member for Townsville that in England they could not make the kind of locomotive required here.

Mr. NORTON: He did not say that.

Mr. W. BROOKES said he understood the hon. member to say that the railroads in America were superior to those in England?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: No.

Mr. W. BROOKES: Then he understood the hon. gentleman to say that the railways of America were inferior to those in England?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Yes.

Mr. W. BROOKES: And they used inferior rolling-stock?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: No; more pliable rolling-stock.

Mr. W. BROOKES: Did that mean more fragile?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: No; go round sharp curves.

Mr. W. BROOKES said he was sure the Committee would not be easily persuaded that they could build locomotives in America that could not be made in England.

Mr. NELSON: That is not the question.

Mr. W. BROOKES said rolling-stock could be made in England to suit all parts of English possessions. There were curves as sharp in England as in any of the colonies. Therefore, he did not see the force of the hon. gentleman's argument with reference to those rails. He only wished the hon. gentleman had spoken that way with regard to locomotives, because there was a disposition to import trumpery American machinery. They had seen that in connection with the tramcars in the city, but now they had sense enough to get them built here. He thought they should, within some reasonable degree, try and be consistent with themselves.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the engines he referred to were used chiefly in the northern parts of the colony, and they were the best engines for going over lines where the curves were sharp and the grades steep. They had not the sharp curves in England that they had in America, where they tried to build railways cheaply, as they did here. English people could, no doubt, make as good locomotives as any in the world; but they were not in the habit of making the particular type of engine that he referred to. They were made by one firm in Philadelphia, which turned out as many as 500 or 600 of them every year, and therefore they must have arrived at something like excellence in the making of them. He would like the Minister for Works to answer his question as to the price of the next tender to that which was accepted from the two German firms for 6,000 tons of 60-lb. rails and 4,000 tons of 4½-lb. rails.

The PREMIER said the 4,000 tons were let in two lots to two foreign firms—Krupp, £4 2s., and John Cockerill and Company, £4 0s. 6d. As to the price, it depended on where the rails were to be placed on board. Perhaps the prices for rails put on board at London would be the best for purposes of comparison. The tender accepted for the 6,000 tons 60-lb. rails were Krupp and Company, £4 2s. The tender of Cammell and Company was the next lowest—

£4 6s. 9d.; Krupp and Company's was for £3 19s., at Antwerp. The two next lowest English tenders appeared to have been the Moss Bay Company for £4 15s. 6d., and the Darlington Company for £4 9s.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said then the saving between the two tenders amounted to £2,800. That was very different from the statement of the Minister for Works, who said that a saving of from £80,000 to £100,000 had been effected. The hon. gentleman made reckless statements.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was alluding to the whole of the contracts, not to those taken up by German firms. He had simply pointed out that owing to a large indent having been sent home, the Agent-General was enabled to take advantage of the market, and a considerable saving had been made in the tenders that had been accepted. The iron market was extremely low, and therefore it was good judgment to place a large indent in the hands of the Agent-General. He was perfectly satisfied taking the whole of the contracts, and comparing them with prices previously paid, that a saving of from £80,000 to £100,000 had been effected.

Mr. NORTON said there was not the slightest justification for the hon. gentleman's statement, though, if he could give the Committee any figures in support of it, they might listen to him. There was nothing to support it beyond the fact that the iron market was much depressed and rails were selling at a very low price. There was every prospect of the depression coming to an end in a short time, and the Government naturally forwarded a large indent to be operated upon as the market suited. The saving, as had been pointed out by the hon. member for Townsville, was really not very large at all. With respect to what had fallen from the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, about American engines, the hon. member need not say much about that, because very few of them were introduced by the late Government. A committee was appointed by the House in 1879 to inquire into the working of the railway workshops, and they recommended that engines of the Baldwin type, not American engines, should be introduced. The late Government were generally guided by that report in sending orders for engines, and they sent very few orders to America. After the hon. member for Townsville left office they were short of engines, and it was proposed then to introduce some of those Baldwin engines, because they could get them more quickly than the engines that had already been ordered from England. The question as to whether those engines should be introduced or not was considered by the Cabinet, and they preferred that the work should be done by the department as well as they could for a little longer, rather than send another order to America, when they had already a large number of locomotives ordered from England. So that the hon. member, Mr. Brookes, would see that the late Government were not too anxious to deal with America in regard to engines. It was suggested that six of those engines should be introduced, and he believed those engines were ordered by the present Government when they came into office.

Mr. W. BROOKES said he was very glad to be able to accord the late Government some little praise, though he would not have thought about them had not the leader of the Opposition mentioned them. There was not very much for which he could thank them.

Mr. NORTON: We don't expect it.

Mr. BROOKES said he could give them just the few grains of praise that appeared to have been asked from him by the leader of the

Opposition. The question arose more out of the remark about the impolicy of buying from Germany rather than from their own country. He might take the opportunity of observing that their actions in that respect had been commented upon in the English papers, and the English way of putting it was this:—"If we lend you money we expect you to buy your goods from us." That was pretty stiff talk, because when the colony borrowed money he supposed it could do what it liked with it, and all the people who lent it had to do was to see that they got paid.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that might be so if they could go anywhere and borrow their money, but let them try and borrow in the German market, and see what would be the result. He had another question to ask, as the subject of buying in foreign markets and manufacturing in the colony had been introduced. He would like to know from the Minister for Works if he had sent to England for a large number of railway lamps? There were 1,800 lamps called for by tender last July, and a good many tenders were sent in, probably eight or nine. He believed they were all rejected, and he was told the indent for those lamps was sent to England, though they could have been made in the colony. He would like to know what was the lowest tender of those sent in in the colony, and what was likely to be the cost of the article when supplied from England.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said tenders were called for a number of lamps, and when they were received they were found to be from 60 to 70 per cent. over the English price for them. That was rather too much to give for them even though they bought them from their friends.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked whether the hon. gentleman would tell them what was the amount of the lowest tender sent in for the 1,800 lamps, and what was the English price for them?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was impossible for him to carry in his head what was the amount of the lowest tender, but he would try and find out. He had found, on inquiry, that the Commissioner was something like himself, and was unable to carry the figures in his head.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: He should have them in his box.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he could tell the hon. member for Townsville that he (Mr. Macrossan) had his box too full.

Mr. NORTON said he hoped the hon. gentleman's head was not too full. There seemed to be either an overflow or a leakage. The hon. gentleman sometimes could not carry a question from his seat to the Under Secretary's gallery, and he thought his head must be either too full or there was a leak in it. The question asked by the hon. member for Townsville was one which the hon. gentleman should have been able to answer, and he had thought there would have been no difficulty in getting the information asked for. Could the hon. gentleman give the Committee some more information with regard to the contracts for fish-plates, bolts, and dog-spikes? Were those contracts let in England?

The PREMIER said that in the case of the 37 tons of fish-plates, there were thirteen tenders sent in, and that of the Darlington Steel and Iron Company was accepted at £5 9s. 6d. Theirs was the lowest tender sent in. The contract for 8½ tons of fish-bolts was let to the Patent Nut and Bolt Company at £15. That was also the lowest tender, and there were nine tenders sent in. The 3½ tons of dog-spikes were let at £14 7s. 6d.; there were eight tenders in that case, and the lowest was accepted.

Mr. NORTON: Then the Minister for Work has given us some figures which are not correct.

The PREMIER: There were 171 tons of dog-spikes from the Phoenix Bolt and Nut Company, at £13 5s. and 136 tons and 86 tons of dog-spikes from the Patent Nut and Bolt Company, at £14 5s. In every case the lowest tender was accepted, and in every case there was a large number of tenderers.

Mr. W. BROOKES said he agreed with the hon. member for Townsville in regard to the lamps. There were a good many tin-plate workers in the colony—there were some in almost every town—and he thought the Government, whenever they had an order for lamps, might keep them in mind. It went without saying, that no one in Queensland could make lamps as cheaply as they could be made in Birmingham. The tinworkers ought to be encouraged, but he would not do it at the expense of 60 or 70 per cent. more than the English price. All he would ask any Government to do was to put the lamp business before the tinworkers in the colony, so that they might be induced—for it would come in time—to send in tenders that were not so very much higher than the English price. There must be a beginning; and with colonial manufacturers that was the great difficulty—to get a foothold. They must have long notice from the department that tenders would be invited, because they might require certain machinery; but, unless they began to make them, they never would make any—that was a self-evident proposition. The tin trade was a very important branch of business, and he would like to see it receive its fair share of protection and encouragement.

Mr. S. W. BROOKS said the result of the tendering for the railway lamps was made known soon after the debate on the motion of the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear; and, as he took a stand against that, he thought the lamp tenders would be a fair test of the practical working of such a matter. He went to the office of Mr. Horniblow, and looked at the tabulated statement of the tenders; and the line on which there was the greatest difference between a home and a local tender was about 80 per cent.—

Mr. NORTON: Was there a home tender?

Mr. BROOKS: Not a home tender. He would say a tender received from outside Queensland. The difference was something like 80 per cent. with regard to the line in which there was the greatest difference. The differences ranged from 20 per cent. to 80 per cent. The tenders were for two distinct kinds of lamps, such as wall lamps with simple tin frames to admit glasses, and carriage roof lamps. It was with respect to the latter kind that the greatest difference existed in the tenders, that sort of lamp being more difficult to make. After pulling the thing pretty fairly to pieces, he found that, making an allowance of 20 per cent. for duty, freight, risk of breakage, and sundry other points, there was from 45 per cent. to 50 per cent. difference against the local producer.

Mr. W. BROOKES said the hon. member who had just spoken had not had as much experience of importing as he and some hon. members, or he would not talk of 20 per cent. for breakage, and freight, and duty. Why, on those lamps placed in front of engines, the freight alone, leaving out the duty, would be more than 30 per cent., and it might run up to 40 per cent. Taking that into consideration the difference was not so very great.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was glad to be able to say that he agreed with the hon. member for North Brisbane that time. He thought that when the conditions of the tender



were also taken into consideration, as well as the question of freight, the difference in price between the English-made article and the colonial would not be so great as it appeared from the statement of the Minister for Works. He did not think it possible for the Minister for Works to get a tender for the supply of lamps from an English firm on the same conditions as those under which he asked the colonial manufacturers to tender. It was left very much to the option of the Commissioner for Railways when he would take the lamps; and in regard to the wall lamps—platform lamps—it was left to the option of the railway storekeeper to order one of three kinds; so that the manufacturer might make a certain number of three kinds, and have two kinds left in hands. He would ask the Minister for Works whether he would get a tender from an English firm on conditions of that kind? He thought if he asked the Commissioner for Railways, or the railway storekeeper, or anyone else who dealt in those articles, that the answer would be "No." Then again, the tenderer was allowed six months before the lamps would be demanded from him, to give him time to import reflectors, lenses, etc.; but after that six months no more might be taken from him for three years. The tender was to extend for three years, but at any time during those three years, upon receipt of a telegram from the railway storekeeper at Ipswich marked "urgent," he was to deliver the lamps, so that he was manifestly to keep a stock of lamps, whether required or not, and all that time he was to be lying out of his capital. Would that be done by any English firm? Would the hon. member, Mr. S. W. Brooks, who was a great freetrader, just calculate what percentage that would amount to in making lamps? He would find that an English firm would tender 25 per cent. higher than one who was bound by no such conditions. So that, all things taken into consideration, he believed that the local tenderers did not get that amount of consideration which many in the House thought that local tenderers should get.

Mr. S. W. BROOKS said that, in making the estimate he had not lost sight of the point referring to the method of supply. Perhaps, from what the hon. member for North Brisbane had said, he had been a little out, but as to allowance for freight he was not quite sure whether that could be taken as an all-round statement. It might apply to certain portions of the lamps. He much questioned whether more than 25 per cent. should be allowed as a margin on the point he had suggested.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would be glad if the Minister for Works could supply them with information as to prices. He did not ask him to do it just then as the Minister did not carry the figures in his head. They did not ask him or the Commissioner for Railways to carry figures in their head, but they expected them to carry the figures in their pockets or their boxes so as to supply hon. members with information when asked for it in that Committee. He would like the hon. member to say if he would supply them with the cost of the imported articles, which were tendered for in July last, and the tenders for the same articles sent in by the local manufacturers. Then they themselves would know the difference between the two articles. As they had some experts in the Committee who understood such things, they would be able to find out what really was the difference between English and colonial articles, and they would see whether they could afford to give colonial prices or not.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had not got the specifications for the lamps. He presumed that whatever number was included in

the contract a certain time would be fixed to complete the contract, but the Government would be bound to take the whole quantity. He did not understand the hon. member when he said that a certain quantity would be taken and the balance thrown on the tenderer's hands. If such was the case, it would be very unfair. The Government should be bound to call for tenders for a certain number, and to take the whole of them within the contract time.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not ask for specifications; he asked for prices. He had the specifications in his hand, and it was very strange that the Minister for Works had not got them.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: If you have got them, why do you ask me for them?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had not asked for the specifications but the prices. Would the hon. gentleman undertake to supply the Committee with the prices so that they might know the difference between the English and colonial manufactures; and whether the colonial manufacturer got that consideration he deserved? As to the specifications, there they were. He could not have given the Committee the information he had given had he not had them.

Mr. W. BROOKES said the hon. member for Townsville was perfectly right in another matter connected with the difference between the English and colonial traders. If they wanted lamps from an English manufacturer they must give him the number; they must not tell him he might make twenty, but probably fifty would be required within the next year. He would not tender on such conditions. In that way the colonial tenderer was unduly handicapped, and that was a thing he had complained of often. The colonial tenderers were weighted with very unfair conditions, whereas the English tenderers supplied their articles straight. He had always thought it was unfair to make that invidious difference between colonial tenders and English tenders.

Mr. NORTON said that the specifications and the conditions required to be fulfilled by tenderers should be furnished to hon. members. It was advisable, as the matter had been so largely discussed, that all the details of that nature should be supplied so that hon. members might form a fair judgment. It appeared to him that if those harsh conditions had been imposed there was every reason to know why the local tenders were so much larger than the home ones. He did not want to see any more German contracts. He presumed the tender from home had been accepted. The hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, said that comments had been made in the English Press that this Government had sent contracts on to the Continent.

Mr. W. BROOKES: They were against the Australian Governments generally.

Mr. NORTON said that there was very good ground for the Press of England complaining that contracts were being given on the Continent when the money was borrowed in England. The reason was that during the time of the great depression in Great Britain, the greatest depression of all was in ship-building and iron works generally. Those were the trades that suffered most, and it was only natural that complaint should be made that the money borrowed in England by the colonies should be spent elsewhere. He did not suppose that the few contracts going from here on the Continent would make much difference, but if contracts to a large extent were given, the effect would be that they would have to pay much more for their money in England than they did now.



Mr. ANNEAR said he saw that by the "Junna" a large number of locomotives were being brought to the colony, and he would like to know how many locomotives were under order by the Queensland Government. Were there any more to come?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said there were still ten more engines to arrive.

Mr. HAMILTON said the hon. member for Townsville had asked the Minister for Works for the amounts of the tenders for lamps, both in the colony and from home. That question had not been answered. Would the Minister for Works give that information?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: All right; I will supply it.

Question put and passed.

#### CONSTRUCTION STAFF.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that a sum not exceeding £11,965 be granted out of loan for Construction staff. The amount was exactly the same as last year.

Mr. NORTON said a few nights ago they were discussing the fact of part of the salary of the engineer of the Southern district being paid from loan and part from revenue. There was in that item an inspector of permanent way, and he did not know how many inspectors, who were put down as being paid from loan, although apparently they ought to be paid from revenue.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the officers whose salaries were put down there were on the construction staff, and were consequently paid from loan.

Question put and passed.

#### EXTENSION SURVEYS.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that a sum not exceeding £9,025 be granted out of loan for Extension Surveys. He would point out that the amount of £9,150 which was put down was a printer's error. The assistant engineer in charge was put down at £550 instead of £500, and the inspecting surveyor at £500 instead of £475. That brought the total down to £9,025. The assistant engineer, he might also point out, was in charge of the office work, as there was a large number of draftsmen employed. The work had consequently been divided between Mr. Depree and Mr. North. Mr. North had been appointed inspecting surveyor, and was constantly in the field, and Mr. Depree supervised the office work, and occasionally outside work as well.

Mr. NORTON said if there was a printer's error he did not see where it was. The item as added up was £9,125.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had pointed out that there was a printer's error.

Mr. NORTON: It is not a printer's error.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said, then it was a mistake. The assistant engineer should have £500 instead of £550, and the inspecting surveyor £475 instead of £500.

Mr. NORTON said it was not a printer's error. It was an error made in the Works Office, and the items had better be reduced.

The PREMIER said it was usual to propose the items in their reduced form. They could always propose less than was asked for.

Mr. NORTON: But as the items were placed down there they added up £9,125, so there could be no printer's error.

The PREMIER: It is a mistake.

Mr. NORTON: A mistake in the "office."

Mr. WHITE said the professional ability of the Chief Engineer was of far too high an order to allow the colony to go on and prosper. A few months ago a sensible young engineer was sent up the Laidley Valley to lay down a trial survey, and the line he laid down was, in the opinion of a number of intelligent farmers on the creek, the very best that could be chosen, both as regarded efficiency and economy. It met with the approbation of everyone, but finally the permanent survey was laid down along a route which was altogether unsuitable and which would be very costly. Therefore he considered they wanted some change of engineer. They wanted a man with common sense. Large sums of money had to be spent on the main lines, and they might well have their branch lines laid down in a cheaper manner.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that, with regard to the hon. member for Stanley, the trial survey terminated at 7 miles from Laidley station. That was some short distance from the residence of the hon. member for Stanley, and he did not want it to go any further than that. That explained the whole of the facts about that intelligent surveyor. The hon. member did not care about anyone but himself, and so long as he had the railway surveyed to suit himself he did not want anybody else to have the accommodation. It was no hardship at all for the farmers to carry their produce 5 or 7 miles; but it would be a very great hardship for the men 15 or 18 miles up above to have to carry their produce. The hon. member for Stanley came to the conclusion that he wanted the railway for himself—in fact, the hon. gentleman had called on him (Mr. Miles) and told him that, so far as he was concerned, he did not want the line to go beyond that particular point, and he (Mr. Miles) had taken a good deal of trouble to explain to the hon. member that the Government could not entertain the project of building such a short line; and, as he was within a reasonable distance of the railway station, it was not for him, but for the men beyond, that the Government wished to provide accommodation. He thought that explained the whole matter of the intelligent surveyor.

Mr. WHITE said the Minister for Works was somewhat misled in his ideas, and was taking the course pointed out by his hon. colleague, Mr. Kellett. He (Mr. White) approved of the line that he had alluded to, which was beyond 7 miles. The trial survey for that line was satisfactory, and everyone was well pleased with it, but when he saw the route the permanent survey took, he was so angry that he could not possibly sleep at night, and he had been angry ever since, and could not reconcile himself to it. It was a monstrous shame when a line could be made at much less expense, and the line laid down by the trial survey would certainly have been a cheap line and an efficient one. The Minister for Works was quite misled in his idea that he (Mr. White) did not want the line to go further. He had property within half-a-mile of the terminus at 11 miles—valuable property—so that he wanted it to go that distance; but he did not want an absurd amount of money to be spent.

Mr. HAMILTON said the hon. member had been a great denouncer of syndicates for railway-building and land-grabbers—men who wished to acquire the whole country—and yet they were now told upon the authority of the Minister for Works that the hon. member wanted money to be expended on a railway to his own door; he certainly thought it was rather hard on the hon. member. They had been informed by the hon. member that the intelligence of the Chief Engineer was of rather too high an order; but they had been completely disabused by

the statement of the Minister for Works. One thing which struck him as a strange anomaly was that the Chief Engineer for the Southern and Central division had exactly the same salary as the Chief Engineer for the Northern division. The salary paid to the Engineer for the North, Mr. Hannam, was not too much, because if they wanted a man of ability they must pay well for him. But a man who, like the Chief Engineer, had the expenditure of hundreds of thousands involved in his recommendations, should be paid well as they wanted a good man; and it appeared strange that Mr. Stanley, who had been fifteen years in his position, and had six times the amount of work that Mr. Hannam had, who had only been one year in the service as Chief Engineer, should be paid the same salary.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said it was very sad to think the hon. member for Stanley had lost so much sleep over that railway, but he thought it would be redressed now, seeing that the special committee appointed to inquire into it by the Legislative Council had determined not to recommend it, so that the country would be saved a large amount of money. He hoped the hon. member would sleep easier after that, as the railway would not trouble him any more. He (Mr. Macrossan) wanted to know from the Minister for Works who had succeeded Mr. Phillips in the duties he performed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the duties performed by Mr. Phillips were now discharged by Messrs. Depree and North; Mr. Depree doing the office work, and Mr. North the work of inspecting surveyor.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked if it took two officers to do the work Mr. Phillips did?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that one officer received £700, and the other £725, or between £1,400 and £1,500, while Mr. Phillips had done the same work for two-thirds of that. He was afraid that it would not be as well done even with two officers, as anyone acquainted with Mr. Phillips would know that it would be very hard to replace him. He would like to know if Mr. Phillips had been forced out of the service, or forced to resign in any way, as it was currently reported that the service was made too hot for him, and that he resigned to save his manhood, having been snubbed and insulted.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said Mr. Phillips had not been forced to leave the service.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said one of those officers was called "assistant engineer in charge of surveys." Who was the chief engineer in charge of surveys?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mr. Depree is the assistant engineer under Mr. Stanley.

Mr. BLACK said that in the vote for surveys there was a matter which included possible future surveys. Lines might be surveyed which might possibly be constructed in the future. He believed it was the intention of the Government—in fact, of any Government who might enter into power—to connect the various coast towns, and he hoped the Minister for Works would bear in mind the necessity of going on with some of the surveys for a line connecting the coast towns, even before there was any parliamentary sanction for the railway being constructed. He referred particularly to that connecting Bowen and Mackay. It need not necessarily be an expensive survey, but it

would be advantageous to the colony to have certain possible future loops laid down for railway construction, in order that the land might be reserved, and the extension of railways facilitated at some future time. The Minister for Works had already given a promise to have an economical survey made for that purpose; and the Government would do well to reserve certain areas of land along the possible route of the railway. He hoped the Minister would also bear in mind the necessity of connecting Mackay with the South. The line already extended some twenty miles towards Rockhampton; and it would certainly be judicious if a flying survey at least were made to some place south of the present terminus.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had promised the hon. member for Mackay some time ago that he would take an early opportunity of having a trial survey made from Mackay to Bowen. He was given to understand that there was a considerable quantity of land between those two places suitable for close settlement, and for that reason he had promised to have the trial survey made.

Mr. CHUBB said that at the present moment there was a very large quantity of Crown land between Mackay and Bowen, and if a survey were made it would be advisable to reserve such land as might be required for a future line. If that were done before any land was alienated, the question of compensation for resumption would not arise.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that was the object of making the trial survey—that the land might be reserved.

Mr. HAMILTON asked when the Minister for Works expected to have the permanent survey of the third section of the Cooktown Railway completed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the surveyors were now employed on the permanent survey of the third section of the line; when that was completed the Government would take into consideration the survey of the other portion of the line.

Mr. HAMILTON said of course he knew that. What he asked was when the permanent survey of the third section of the Cooktown railway was expected to be completed. Some time ago, when the hon. member for Musgrave, Mr. Philp, asked about the second section of the Cairns railway, the hon. gentleman not only gave the information, but also stated when tenders would be called and when the working plans and sections would be ready. He (Mr. Hamilton) did not want so much information as that. He only wanted to know when the permanent survey was likely to be completed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had already informed the hon. member that the permanent survey of the third section of the line was now being proceeded with.

Mr. HAMILTON said he had already informed the Minister that he knew that perfectly well. That was not his question; he wanted to know when that permanent survey would be finished?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was not in a position to answer the hon. member's question. He did not know how many times since the opening of the session the hon. member had questioned him about the survey of that line, and apparently he would close the session asking the same question. It did not matter how often he answered the hon. member, he came again day after day, day after day, wanting to

know about that survey. The surveyor was now engaged making the permanent survey of the third section, and when that was done possibly the other would be proceeded with.

Mr. HAMILTON said it was a disgrace to the department that he should have day after day to ask a simple question. Although he had been asking it day after day, he had never had an answer yet. A Minister who was unable to answer a question like that was not fit for his position. It was a very simple question. They knew that during last year that survey had been made. They knew that sometimes the parliamentary plans were made from a very superficial survey, and on other occasions, when there was no hurry, they were made from the permanent survey. If any Minister who was fit for his position occupied the place of the present Minister for Works, he would be able to answer that simple question—when the survey of 17 miles of a railway which had been going on for the last year or so would be finished. It was not only a disgrace to the Minister—it was an insult to his (Mr. Hamilton's) constituents in the North, that they were not allowed, through their member, to have that simple information which was so important to them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he would give the hon. member some further information. There was only £88,000 now available for the construction of that line, and before there was any extension beyond the Laura a fresh appropriation would have to be made.

Mr. HAMILTON said the Minister for Works seemed incapable of comprehending a simple question—he kept replying to a question which he (Mr. Hamilton) had not asked. What he wanted was information regarding the third section, not what was going to be done beyond the third section. He would ask the hon. gentleman for some information regarding the Cairns railway—how many miles the third section of that railway would consist of, and when the hon. gentleman expected to have the permanent survey completed? He was confident that if the hon. gentleman would take the trouble to ask the Chief Engineer he could answer that question in five minutes. The Minister for Works must reply to that question in some way before the vote went through.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I will stop here till to-morrow morning.

Mr. HAMILTON: All right; I will stop here till to-morrow night.

Mr. NORTON: I think you will be alone then.

Mr. DONALDSON said that perhaps while the Minister for Works was making up his mind to reply to the hon. member for Cook, he would state when he expected to be able to commence the trial survey beyond Charleville.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said at present there was no survey party available for the purpose. Not only that, but he did not think there was any hurry about it. The present contract did not expire till the 1st of May, 1888, so there would be ample time before the railway reached Charleville to make any number of surveys.

Mr. DONALDSON said that surely the hon. member was in error in saying that the contract time expired in 1888.

The PREMIER: No; that is right.

Mr. DONALDSON said there was an error somewhere. On the 5th of August last he asked the Minister for Works—

“When will the survey of the railway line from Charleville towards Mount Margaret be completed?”

He replied—

“Owing to the severe drought and the consequent absence of grass and water on the route, the survey beyond Charleville had to be suspended in October last. Arrangements will shortly be made for the survey to be again proceeded with, and it is expected that thirty or forty miles can be completed in about six months.”

That was the promise given him by the Minister for Works last August, and he accepted the explanation in good faith, believing that as soon as there were grass and water on the line and a surveyor at command it would be done. Now the hon. gentleman intimated that it was not intended to commence the survey until the contract time for the construction of the railway to Charleville had expired. He asked for the information because the construction of the telegraph line to Adavale could not be proceeded with until the survey had been made a part of the way.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he never intimated that the survey would not be commenced until the railway to Charleville was completed. What he said was that the contract time for constructing that railway did not expire until the 1st May, 1888, and that a survey could be made long before then. It was a very expensive thing shifting a survey party from one part of the country to another, but as soon as more progress was made with the border line the surveyors would be at liberty to complete the work beyond Charleville.

Mr. NORTON said he would suggest that as the Minister for Works and the hon. member for Cook intended to stay there all night other hon. members might go home, with the exception of the hon. member for Stanley, Mr. White, who, as he could not sleep at night, might be prevailed upon to stop and see fair play; and prevent any unfortunate *contretemps* that might arise.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had already told the hon. member for Cook that a surveyor was hard at work on the second section of the line, and as it ran through very difficult country, the preparation of the permanent survey involved a great deal of labour. As soon as that work was completed the surveyor would be moved on to the third section. The survey was being pushed on as fast as possible.

Mr. HAMILTON said he was alluding to the third section of the Cairns railway. If the Minister for Works was utterly ignorant of the details and could not answer the question, let him say so. He (Mr. Hamilton) knew that surveyors were already at work on the third section. What he wanted to know was, how many miles did the third section consist of, and whether the Minister for Works could give him an approximate idea as to when the permanent survey of it would be completed? Those were matters of great interest to his constituents, and to himself as their representative.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that of all the most senseless questions he had been asked that beat them all. How was it possible that he could tell him where the third section would terminate? That would be fixed on the recommendation of the Chief Engineer, who would select some convenient place where they could get water. There were no surveyors on the third section. There were two completing the permanent survey of the second section, and when they had finished that they would proceed with the third.

Mr. HAMILTON said the statement of the Minister for Works was nonsense. The permanent survey of the second section had been completed months ago, and tenders had been called for the construction of the line. The working plans and sections must have been prepared from the permanent survey, the works of which were in the office. The hon. gentleman did not seem to know his own business.

Mr. ANNEAR said he was very glad to find that the Government had fallen in with his idea of calling for tenders for ironwork within the colony. He had observed in the *Gazette* that they had let a contract to J. W. Sutton and Co. for cylinders and bearing girders for a bridge over the Albert River, on the Beenleigh to Southport railway. Would the hon. gentleman inform him what was the difference between the cost of the English articles and those to be supplied by J. W. Sutton and Co.?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The colonial price is about £350 higher than the English price.

Mr. ANNEAR said he had heard that the colonial price was about 3 per cent. in excess of the price for the imported article.

Mr. BLACK: Mr. Chairman, has this anything to do with the vote before the Committee?

The CHAIRMAN: It has nothing to do with the vote before the Committee.

Question put and passed.

#### ENGINEER FOR EXISTING LINES.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving that £1,425 be voted out of loan for salaries of the department of the Engineer for Existing Lines, said there was a decrease of £175 on the vote of last year, caused by a reduction in the salary of the draftsman.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN asked the Minister for Works how it was that those salaries were paid out of loan? The Engineer for Existing Lines was the engineer in charge of maintenance, and he and his officers were paid from revenue. Where, then, was the necessity of paying him out of loan as well?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Engineer in charge of Existing Lines had other works to attend to besides maintenance. The £1,425 was for works that he had to complete out of loan.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: What works are they?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Station buildings and sidings.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said station buildings were made out of loan when the line was constructed, and they ought to be kept up from revenue. He would ask what the superintendent of signals, for whom a salary of £400 was put down, had to do with station buildings or sidings?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he would explain it by taking the Sandgate line, for instance. From the time that line had been constructed fresh stations were continually being put up, platforms extended, additional shed accommodation provided, and so on, in consequence of the increase in the traffic. All that work had to be carried out by the Engineer for Existing Lines.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said all the increased traffic went into revenue, and ought

to pay for the increased sidings, platforms, and other accommodation required. Surely they could afford to pay for the superintendence of the erection of signals out of revenue instead of out of loan.

Mr. NELSON said he should really like that matter explained to the Committee, although he had given up all hope of understanding the railway accounts. They were quite beyond his comprehension, but the matter in question might be explained. How was it that railways in existence required an engineer and staff to be paid out of loan? He believed the expenditure was simply for renewals. If a station building was eaten down by white ants, they put up another, and paid for it out of loan, and the same with other things requiring renewal. How that was consistent with any sound system of finance was more than he could understand.

Mr. BLACK asked who was the superintendent of signals? The estimates referred to page 40 of the schedule, but on turning to that he found it related to goldfields.

Mr. FOXTON: Look at page 41; I found that out—Mr. Cottew.

Mr. NELSON said the Chief Engineer and his staff received nearly £20,000 a year out of loan, and how was it that he could not superintend the small works to be done by the Engineer for Existing Lines? If it was new construction surely it ought to be under his department. What occasion was there for another staff to be paid out of loan to the extent of £1,425? Surely the Chief Engineer ought to be able to do all that small work with the staff he had under him. He (Mr. Nelson) thought it was simply waste of money as well as an improper way of spending loan money. The Committee were entitled to some explanation of the matter.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was very easily explained. New works were continually being erected on lines that were open for traffic, and they were under the supervision of the Engineer for Existing Lines. It was much more convenient that he should carry out those works than for the Engineer-in-Chief to do so.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman said the matter was very easily explained, but he had not explained it. From Mr. Cross's report hon. members would see that last year he spent on maintenance—that was out of revenue—£80,000, taking it in round numbers; and now they found that he was actually spending about £41,000 out of loan—more than half what he had spent out of revenue. There must be something very wrong about that system. Mr. Cross's staff for the expenditure of money out of loan cost £1,425, and on turning to his staff paid out of revenue, they found that he himself had a salary of £800; assistant engineer, £400; chief clerk, £300; three clerks, £520; superintendent of ways and works, £300; line inspectors, £720; and messenger, £52—over £3,000 paid away in salaries out of revenue. Then there was, as he had said, £1,425 for that officer's staff out of loan, and yet the loan expenditure amounted to actually a great deal more than that was paid out of revenue for maintenance. Did it not occur to the Minister for Works that the £41,000 should have been expended under the control of Mr. Stanley? It was all very well to say that Mr. Stanley was in charge of the whole, but when the Minister severed the offices of construction and maintenance he should have kept them separate. Instead of that he had actually allowed the renewal of stations, eaten

by white ants, as was pointed out by the hon. member for Northern Downs, to be paid for out of loan instead of out of revenue. That was not a proper system of finance, and it was time it was given up. If the railways were owned by a private company the renewals and repairs would not be paid for out of capital account or the company would soon come to grief. There was a different system in the North, and on the Central line also, where there was no engineer for existing lines. When Mr. Stanley went on the Central line he was the engineer for existing lines, and that line with its branches would soon measure 500 miles.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member ought to know that applications were being continually made for sidings, goods sheds, shelter sheds, and additional accommodation, and he could not expect them all to be erected out of revenue. The work must be done out of loan.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the only reason was because the Commissioner for Railways and the Minister for Works wished to make the railway receipts appear larger than they really were. If the truth were told about the railways, they would not appear to be paying  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. The Colonial Treasurer knew very well that if a proper system of finance were adopted in connection with the railways they would appear to be paying probably  $1\frac{1}{2}$  or 2 per cent.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he could quite understand the hon. member. While he was Minister for Works he went in for those nasty cheap lines, and every time a train went along them it straightened out the curves or else left the track. If the hon. gentleman wanted him to make such railways, all he could tell him was that he would not do it. The hon. gentleman knew that curves on the Brisbane Valley line were straightened every time a train went along; either that, or the train left the track. He could assure the hon. gentleman that the Government exercised the greatest economy consistent with stability.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the only train that had left the line was one that left the track the other day under the authority of the Minister for Works himself. If he wanted to see rails shifted he might do so on any line under his authority. The maintenance men were continually putting rails into their proper places. There were 5-chain curves on the Southern and Western Railway. There were very few 4-chain curves on the Brisbane Valley line, and they were put in by the Engineer-in-Chief. Five-chain curves had been flattened out to 6 and 7 chain curves by the maintenance men on the main lines and on the Brisbane Valley Branch with the knowledge of the inspectors and engineers.

Mr. ANNEAR said he agreed with what the hon. member for Townsville had said as to maintenance on the Southern and Western line, compared with the Central and Northern lines. Mr. Cross was in charge of 659 miles of maintenance, while the Chief Engineer had under his charge the whole of the construction and the maintenance of the Maryborough, Bundaberg, and Central lines, amounting to 590 miles. If they adopted the system advocated by the hon. member for Townsville, they would know what they were doing.

Mr. NELSON said they could never come to a satisfactory conclusion until they had a definition of "construction," because what was called construction was either renewal or reconstruction. Since the opening of the line from Ipswich to Toowoomba the sum of £280,000 had

been spent upon it out of loan. That was called "construction," and according to such a system the construction of the line would go on to all eternity. It would be better if the Treasurer would publish accounts to show how the money was spent, because hon. members were perfectly in the dark as to the accounts. Even the Chief Secretary seemed very much astonished at some of the items of expenditure from loan—whether it was affectation or not on his part he did not know.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would like the Treasurer to answer the hon. member for Northern Downs. He had a correct idea of what construction, reconstruction, and renewals were. If they paid for all reconstructions out of loan they would know exactly what interest they would have to pay. If they laid down a hard-and-fast rule—which they should do—that all future expenditure on that railway must come out of revenue, they still would know what they were doing. It might only pay 1 or  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. But if they went on year after year adding to the capital account of one million, at last they would open their eyes in wonder to find that it had become two millions. And still they went on making railways on the same system. It would be far better to tell the truth to themselves and to their neighbours also.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he was informed that the practice established by the Railway Department was this: that in the matter of renovations—such as stations eaten by white ants—renovations of plant and rolling-stock, they were, and very fairly, charged to revenue. But in case of new stations required by increasing traffic on a line, it was considered right and proper—and there was force in the argument—that they should be charged against loan, being an actual increase to the capital value of the line. Such was the distinction drawn by the department between construction and renovation; and that was the principle adopted by private railway companies. He was informed that although the superintendent of signals might appear to be employed on existing lines he was chiefly employed on signals on lines under construction, and the greater portion of his duties appertained to the superintendence of expenditure of loan money. That was the reason why at the present time he was kept on the loan estimate. He (the Treasurer) should certainly like to see—and he hoped the time would speedily arrive—when several of those salaries would be charged to revenue. It would make the loan fund go further, and save a great deal of misconception in the debates on those respective salaries. So far as he had been able to ascertain, he did not think the accounts justified the charge of any intention to conceal the truth or the actual position of the railways from the public. The Commissioner discriminated very justly and correctly between what should be charged strictly to revenue or maintenance and what should be charged to loan for the capital value of the railways.

Mr. NELSON said that was all very well. What the Treasurer said was perfectly correct, but was he prepared to tell them that he had examined the accounts himself, and had found them what he had stated? They had no guarantee whatever from the Auditor-General, or from any responsible Minister. The Minister for Works himself would not guarantee that he had examined the accounts and certified that the principle laid down by the Treasurer had been carried out. What he (Mr. Nelson) maintained was that when they examined the Loan Account in the Commissioner's report they could not tell whether it might or might not be so. His

impression was that it might not be so. When they looked back to the accounts for the year before, there was a little more detail, and they found that it was not so; and that raised a suspicion that the Commissioner had been ordered, or of his own motion—he did not think the Commissioner did it of his own motion, for he was too good an officer to do that—to condense his accounts so that they were unintelligible. The Committee could not really tell from them whether the principle laid down by the Treasurer was or was not carried out. He would refer to one matter brought up last session—the carriage of material for new lines. That was an item that might very fairly be charged to capital account, so far as the cost of the railways was concerned. Last year the Commissioner for Railways had charged it to Loan Account, and when it was pointed out, the Treasurer immediately denied it. That showed the Treasurer's honesty of principle. However, the facts were against him, and after looking into it he admitted it was so charged. He (Mr. Nelson) did not object to the carriage of new material being charged to capital account, but he believed it was a very mean way of making a living. It was a masterpiece of meanness that they who professed to be desirous of making railways to open up the country could not actually afford to carry over existing lines the material for making new lines without taking the actual cash out of loan. Of course, the Commissioner for Railways knew very well how to keep a non-paying account. He did it with the Post Office. The whole thing appeared to be concocted in such a way as to disguise the real truth of the matter and to burke criticism upon the mode in which the expenditure was carried out. If they put a plain straightforward statement of accounts before the public, the colony would be much benefited by it, and everybody would take an interest in it which they did not do now. The Treasurer himself professed—and he believed thoroughly held the same opinion as he (Mr. Nelson) did—that every matter should be put straightforward so that every man in the colony could form a judgment for himself. But it appeared that the Works Office was too hard for the Treasurer, and he could not afford to do that. The consequence was that they had accounts now that they could not make head or tail of.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Treasurer was mistaken if he thought any man in the House wished to charge the Commissioner for Railways with any sympathy with a system of falsifying the accounts. He was quite sure the hon. gentleman had no sympathy for any such system, but he had followed up a bad system established in the colony from the beginning. The same system existed under the late Ministry. It existed now, and would exist always unless some Ministry changed it. The hon. gentleman was not certain as to what should be charged to capital account, and what to revenue. He said everything that went to increase the capital value of a railway was chargeable to loan. Now, he would give the Treasurer an item, and would ask whether that should be charged to capital account. When the Northern Railway was being made over the Range and the Central Railway over the Drummond Range, he (Mr. Macrossan) proposed that the rails on the ranges should be 60-lb. rails, and they were ordered. Shortly after that Mr. Stanley suggested that the Toowoomba Range should be laid down with 60-lb. rails, and he agreed with him. That was done, but was it not simply a renewal? It added, no doubt, to the value of the line, but it was simply relaying; the same thing occurred—a rail was taken up and a new one put

down. A new rail was taken from a heap of new rails; it was put down and charged against loan. The men's wages were not charged against loan, but the whole of the 60-lb. rails laid down on that line were charged to loan. He did not know what became of the rails taken up, but they were probably used on branch lines.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the relaying of the Main Range was an improvement and added to the life of the road; still there was a great deal of force in what the hon. gentleman said as to renewals being charged to revenue. The hon. gentleman went further, and said that whenever new rails were laid down for a short distance, that was charged to loan; but it was not so. Whatever rails were relaid were invariably charged to revenue.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Can you tell us where that item can be found?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he could inform the hon. member for Townsville that when the line between Laidley and Helidon was relaid with 60-lb rails it was charged to revenue. He thought he had informed the hon. member that there was £8,000 carried forward from the maintenance vote of last year, which had been appropriated to the relaying of the road out of revenue. That was the first occasion when they had relaid a road out of revenue, and the Government were desirous of carrying out that principle. Hon. members must remember that during the passing of the Railway estimates last session there was a very strong expression of opinion from members that the cost of carriage should be reduced. The consequence was that the tariff had been lowered by 25 per cent. to 30 per cent., and hon. members now said, "You must renew everything out of revenue." How was it possible to do so if they reduced the tariff to such a rate that the returns scarcely paid working expenses?

Mr. NELSON said they could not reason with a man who talked like the Minister for Works. They might just as well argue with a man who disputed the validity of the Eighth Commandment. He told them he was compelled to take loan funds for renewals and repairs. He knew it was wrong and unjust and dishonest; but still he must do it, or else he would not be able to show any revenue. That was a most damaging admission to make. He could not conceive of anything more damaging to the credit of the colony than a statement of that sort.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said they could not reduce the tariff and maintain the receipts too. What did they find they were doing in New South Wales? The taxpayers objected to freight being carried on the lines for nothing, and it was now proposed to raise another £60,000 a year out of the railways. If the carriage was reduced to a very low rate, of course they could not have revenue too.

Mr. NORTON said he did not think the hon. gentleman understood what responsible government meant. Did the hon. gentleman think he was a responsible Minister? Surely he was not bound to be coerced by members of the House into reducing the railway tariff. If he did not think it should be reduced, he should not have reduced it, but the hon. gentleman consented to reduce the tariff, and now he must take the responsibility himself. It had never been shown yet to the Committee what the loss had been by reducing the tariff; and until it was shown what difference the reduction had made, they could hardly accept the hon. gentleman's statement that they had reduced the revenue by a reduction in the tariff.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he merely wished to point out in what part of the Commissioner for Railways' statement could be found the expenditure out of revenue for the renewal of permanent way. He would direct the attention of the hon. member for Northern Downs to page 158, Return A :—

SOUTHERN AND WESTERN RAILWAY. RETURN OF EXPENDITURE FOR MAINTENANCE for the Year ending 31st DECEMBER, 1885, showing Total Cost and RATE PER MILE PER ANNUM.			
Heading of Accounts.	Total.		Rate per Mile per Annum.
	£	s. d.	
Brisbane to Mitchell and Stanthorpe, with Sandgate Extension and Branches (including Main Range and other Sections and Branches which are shown separately below)—			
Repairs to permanent way and sidings ..	51,438	15 7	89 10 10 $\frac{1}{2}$
Repairs to earthworks ..	5,990	17 7	10 8 6 $\frac{1}{2}$
Repairs to bridges and culverts ..	2,902	17 0	5 1 0 $\frac{1}{2}$
Repairs to tunnels ..	4,664	10 7	8 2 4 $\frac{1}{2}$
Repairs to fences and gates ..	47	5 0	0 1 7 $\frac{1}{2}$
Repairs to way ..	770	14 3	1 6 10 $\frac{1}{2}$
Renewal of way ..	2,008	16 7	3 9 11 $\frac{1}{2}$
Supply and repairs to tools and plant ..	2,352	14 0	4 1 11
Casualties by floods, slips, etc. ..	32	16 8	0 1 1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Repairs to stations and works ..	5,373	15 10	9 7 11
Contingencies ..	5,115	2 0	8 18 1
TOTAL ..	80,698	5 1	140 9 6 $\frac{1}{2}$

The total length of line maintained is 570·78 miles, but, including through sidings, is equivalent to 587·33 miles of single line.  
The average length allowed for in this return is 574·46 miles of permanent way for the twelve months.

The hon. gentleman would find that a statement of the expenditure on the different sections of the line occupied the following two or three pages, and then on page 162 he would find a return of rails and other material used in renewal.

Mr. NELSON said that was all very well as far as it went, but the Treasurer could not guarantee that it was the total expenditure. There was no railway in any part of the world where the permanent way was maintained at such a low rate per mile. A large part of the maintenance was paid out of loan; and if they looked at the Commissioner's report, they would find any number of items charged to loan which ought to be charged to revenue. He was tired of quoting them, but they were printed for them in the report.

Mr. FOXTON said a statement had been made by an hon. member opposite—he thought it was the hon. member for Townsville—that if they told the truth their railways would be seen not to pay anything like 3½ per cent. That appeared to him to be a very damaging statement, especially coming from a prominent mem-

ber who had occupied the position of Minister for Works. Now they were told that £208,000 had been added to capital account—with reference to the Ipswich-Toowoomba line—since it was originally constructed. Now, unless he was very much mistaken, that £208,000 would appear in the capital account which was debited to that line; and if it paid 3½ per cent., it was upon the whole capital, including that £208,000, that the 3½ per cent was payable. That was to say, they did not suppress the fact that £208,000 had been added to the capital account chargeable to that line, and whatever they said in the public account that that line paid, it paid upon the total amounts of capital—not upon the original amount of loan money expended on it.

Mr. NELSON said any fool could make a railway pay if he paid for the maintenance out of the Loan Fund. The hon. member for Carnarvon seemed to think that was the proper thing.

Mr. FOXTON: No, I don't.

Mr. NELSON: The hon. member said they had a statement made that the railways were paying 3½ per cent. That was wrong. The Commissioner even could not—

Mr. FOXTON: I only took the figures of the hon. member for Townsville as an illustration. I do not care whether they are right or wrong.

Mr. NELSON said he believed the total net revenue from the railway last year, according to the Treasurer, was £201,000. If a lot of the charges that were paid from loan had been properly charged to revenue, that amount would have been considerably reduced. It was simply deceiving themselves, and deceiving the public—the shareholders of the line—if they pretended that the net revenue last year was £201,000—if expenses which should have come from revenue were taken out of loan. He contended that it was useless to attempt to prove that the railways were returning anything at all. They might be paying the working expenses, but nothing else. He did not find fault with that; but he found fault with the Government for putting a false statement before the public, and especially before the people from whom they borrowed the money. They were simply trustees; they had a double trust—from the people who lent the money, to see that it was spent in reproductive works, as they had engaged to spend it; and from the people of the colony, to see that it was spent in an economical, wise, and prudent manner.

Mr. FOXTON said the hon. gentleman had not gone to the point of his argument at all. What he wanted to point out was the fallacy of the argument that because they only spent a given sum out of loan money for the original construction of the line, therefore the percentage of earnings was necessarily calculated upon that sum; whereas it was calculated upon that sum with the addition of all sums which were subsequently taken from loan. The capital account was debited with the whole of the loan moneys expended on the line.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member for Carnarvon thought no member of the Committee should make a statement damaging to their railways, even if the statement was correct.

Mr. FOXTON: No; I did not say that.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had not made the statement the hon. member had attributed to him.

Mr. FOXTON: What statement did you make?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. member took the £208,000 which had been added

to the original cost of the line from Ipswich to Toowoomba, and said that the interest was calculated upon the original amount with that added. Well, the people did not understand that system. Say they equipped a railway thoroughly, put it into proper working order, and it cost a million of money: afterwards, in working that railway for years, they found it gradually cost two millions. Now, the hon. member took the railway from Ipswich to Toowoomba, and said that if it paid  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. the  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. was calculated upon the total cost of the railway—say, £1,208,000. Well, supposing it did pay  $3\frac{1}{2}$  per cent.—he admitted that for the sake of argument, though he knew it did not—where did the additional money come from that had to be paid to meet the interest? Did it come out of revenue? Should not that also be added to capital account year after year? Would it be found there? Not a single farthing. But that was what a private company would have to do. If a railway did not earn enough to pay interest and working expenses they would have to borrow more money to make it up. Supposing the original cost of the Southern and Western Railway was £1,000,000, it would be found that it had really cost £2,000,000 or £3,000,000; and they did not know it. The Commissioner for Railways did not make his calculations upon that, but upon the money actually expended out of loan, whereas the calculation should be made upon the money actually expended out of loan with the yearly deficiency added to it. All those things had to be taken into account by private companies who had no public to put taxation upon if their lines did not pay enough; they were obliged to borrow to make up deficiency of revenue, and the amount borrowed went to the capital account.

Mr. FOXTON said the hon. member asked where did the  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., or the 1 per cent., or the  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. necessary to make up the 4 per cent. paid on the loan, come from? It did not come out of loan money but from general revenue. The community was satisfied to suffer that particular loss year by year for the sake of having a railway.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that no doubt it came from revenue, but it ought to be debited to capital account nevertheless. Next year the interest on that would be still larger: it would be an increasing cost. If the hon. member would refer to "Votes and Proceedings," he would find the actual cost made up to a certain date, showing that the actual loss on the railways had been far more than any Commissioner of Railways, or any Colonial Treasurer, had adequately stated.

The PREMIER said he was sorry to deprive the hon. member of the last word, but he felt bound in a case of that kind, where the credit of the colony was likely to be injured, to point out at once the fallacy of the hon. member's argument. That argument was true in one sense, but it was not true in the sense in which words were ordinarily used. Suppose a man built a house for £5,000, and borrowed the money, and the interest he had to pay was more than it would fairly be worth for rent if he lived in it himself, or more than he could get for rent if he let it to someone else. According to the hon. member's argument, the difference between interest and rent ought to be added to the original cost of the house, and at the end of ten years he might say, "This house cost me £10,000." And it would be a constantly increasing amount. But that was a purely fictitious way of speaking, and that was what the hon. gentleman suggested should be adopted with regard to their railways. What they lost in that way was not a part of the first

cost in the sense in which words were ordinarily used. It was certainly part of what the work cost from the beginning, but that was a very different thing.

Mr. NELSON said the Premier's argument was the most extraordinary one he had ever heard. The hon. gentleman said that if a man built a house, lived in it himself, and paid no rent to anybody else, the rent was to be added on to cost.

The PREMIER: No; that is what the hon. member for Townsville says, and which I say is utterly absurd.

Mr. NELSON said the point was that the Commissioner for Railways took money from loan to pay for small things which any ordinary person would not pay out of capital. He would take a few instances from last year's report: Urinals at Brisbane, £15, paid out of loan; earth-closet at Goodna, £12 18s. 6d., paid out of loan; closet at Ipswich, £19 18s. 5d., paid out of loan; closet at Victoria Tunnel, £1 7s. 2d., paid out of loan; closets at Miles, £114 17s., paid out of loan; and so on. No doubt all those places were supplied when the railway was first built, but when they were worn out the structures by which they were replaced were also paid for out of loan. If those things were paid for out of revenue, as they ought to have been, the net earnings of the line would have been by so much reduced. That was all they were contending for.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would show the fallacy of the Premier's argument. The hon. gentleman said that if a man built a house costing £5,000, and the rent did not pay the interest on the cost, the rent should be added to the capital.

The PREMIER: I did not say anything of the kind.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the thing would be best explained by taking the case of a railway built by a private company. Suppose the company borrowed £1,000,000 at 4 per cent., and they found at the end of the year that after paying working expenses it only yielded a net revenue of £20,000 to pay interest with, the amount they had to pay being £40,000, where would the other £20,000 come from? They would have to borrow it. Thus the railway would have cost at the end of the first year £1,020,000, and the cost would go on increasing until the railway was made to pay, when a different system of keeping accounts would be brought into operation—a system which the colony had not yet, unfortunately, been in a position to adopt.

Question put and passed.

#### NORTHERN AND CARPENTARIA DIVISION— OFFICE STAFF.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving that £6,279 be voted for Office staff, Northern and Carpentaria division, said hon. members would see that there was a reduction of £2,100 caused by having only two chief engineers instead of three.

Mr. NORTON said the hon. gentleman had told them that there was a reduction in the vote through having only two chief engineers instead of three. Who appointed the third? Why, the hon. gentleman himself.

The PREMIER: We know that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member wants to be funny.

Mr. NORTON said he did not want to be funny, but he thought it very funny that that appointment should have been made one year and abolished the next. What struck him as peculiar was



that the hon. gentleman did not take time to consider what he was doing on that occasion—that he did not think for himself instead of taking the advice of one of his superior officers. They know all about that. However, he was glad to find that the hon. gentleman had grown wiser.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN asked who was the principal assistant engineer of the Northern and Carpentaria division?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said Mr. Delisser had been principal assistant engineer, but he was not now; he was carrying out surveys.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he asked the hon. gentleman who the officer was, not what Mr. Delisser was doing.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said at the time the estimates were framed Mr. Delisser occupied that position, but recently he had been transferred to surveys.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was then to understand that there was no principal assistant engineer.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not at present.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Does Mr. Delisser receive the same salary and allowance as are put down for the principal assistant engineer?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mr. Delisser is in receipt of the same salary that he had previously.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: What is he styled now: chief surveyor; inspector of surveys; or what?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know exactly what his title is.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he saw under the head "Extension surveys," surveyors, one at £500. If that was Mr. Delisser they were voting two salaries for the one office.

Question put.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said surely the Committee could be told whether the salary put down for the principal assistant engineer was Mr. Delisser's salary. If it was, then the salary £500 under the head "Extension surveys" should be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the office of principal assistant engineer was vacant, and Mr. Delisser drew his salary from the vote for "extension surveys."

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Does the Minister for Works intend to fill the vacancy, or how will the money be spent?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is not considered necessary to fill up the office at present.

Mr. CHUBB asked what were the total emoluments—salary and allowances—of the Chief Engineer, Carpentaria division?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: £900 salary, and £500 allowances—£1,400 altogether.

Mr. CHUBB: Is there any allowance besides that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes; when the Chief Engineer travelled out of the district he resided in he was allowed travelling expenses. For instance, if tenders were invited he would have to come to Brisbane to advise as to their acceptance, and in that case he would be allowed travelling expenses. In the same way, if he visited the Cooktown railway he would be allowed travelling expenses. The Chief Engineer of the Southern division was in exactly the same position.

Mr. CHUBB: Was the allowance at a fixed rate of so much per day, or a lump sum?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was a guinea a day, he believed.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said when Mr. Ballard was Engineer of the Central and Northern division he had another allowance—a man's wages, £104 a year. There was nothing of that sort allowed to Mr. Hannam, he supposed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Mr. Ballard received the same allowances as Mr. Stanley at that time, and the £104 as well. He noticed in the estimate £350 for a photographer, and allowance, £50; also "assistant photographers," £182—making £582. What was the necessity for the photographers? Were they photographing Northern scenery?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said their work was to take photographs of plans. The hon. gentleman knew well enough what their work was.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not know but what they were engaged in photographing the Barron Falls and similar places. There were no fewer than seventeen draftsmen and three photographers employed in the Northern and Carpentaria division. Did they draft the plans, and the photographers photograph them afterwards? For the Northern and Central divisions there were twenty-two draftsmen and no photographers, and it seemed strange that seventeen draftsmen and three photographers should be employed in one division to do far less work than had to be done by twenty-two draftsmen in another division. In the Northern division, either the staff of photographers or the number of draftsmen should be reduced.

Mr. NORTON said he understood that Mr. Delisser received now the same salary that he received before—namely, £500. Did he also get an allowance of £200 a year from the vote now under consideration?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was certain the photographers were not required at present, considering the small number of plans that would be required to be prepared in the Carpentaria division during the next year. If the Government carried out all the railways authorised at any time during the next three or four years, the draftsmen would be quite sufficient for the work.

The PREMIER said the hon. member seemed inconsistent. The Government were always being told of the scandalous way they neglected the North, but now they tried to get the work done quickly they were told that there were too many men to do the work. There was no pleasing hon. members opposite representing the North. Whatever the Government did was wrong.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would tell the hon. gentleman what was wrong. The staff of photographers and draftsmen on the Central line under Mr. Ballard was transferred to the Carpentaria division, but the work of the Central line was added to that of the Southern division. It was not a Northern grievance at all, but a grievance of hon. members generally. Money was thrown away, and neither the North nor the South received any benefit, but both lost by it.

The PREMIER said there was quite as much work being done by Mr. Hannam as Mr. Ballard had to do.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Nonsense!

Mr. NORTON: What work is there?

The PREMIER: The working plans of the Bowen railway, the Cairns railway, the Cooktown line, and the Carpentaria line. He thought that was a great deal more work than Mr. Ballard ever had under his charge at any one time.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the staff ought not to be reduced till tenders were called for the construction of all the lines authorised. For the whole of the session the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hamilton, had been hurrying on the Government, and the Government had been endeavouring to push on the railways in the North as fast as possible to please hon. members; but the hon. member for Townsville said there were far too many draftsmen. How was the work to be done?

Mr. NORTON: What have they had to do?

Mr. HAMILTON said there was not sufficient work done to give the photographers work. Seeing that the Minister for Works had not the slightest conception when the permanent survey of the third section would be ready, there was every probability that the photographers would not be required again in connection with the Cairns railway for ten or twelve months. It was the same with photographing the plans of the Cooktown line, because the plans of the permanent survey would not be required till the permanent survey was made, and, judging from past experience, there was little probability of the permanent survey being concluded for another nine or ten months.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the number of plans passed during the present session was a sample of the work required to be done in the Carpentaria division. They had passed the plans of the Normanton railway, a section of the Cooktown railway, a section of the Cairns railway, and a section of the Bowen railway, the plans of which were laid on the table by the hon. member for Port Curtis when he was in office.

The PREMIER said that was only a trifling thing. He was talking of the working plans; the hon. member was talking of the parliamentary plans.

Question put and passed.

#### CONSTRUCTION STAFF.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that there be granted out of loan the sum of £9,565 to defray the expense of the Construction staff. That was exactly the same amount as last year.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had nothing to say against the vote, but he forgot to ask where the whole twenty-eight of the Carpentaria staff were located at present. Were they all living in tents?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: A good many of them are.

Question put and passed.

#### EXTENSION SURVEYS.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that there be granted out of loan, for the service of the year 1886-7, the sum of £7,464 to defray the cost of Extension Surveys. That was exactly the same as last year.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he had a question to ask the Minister for Works in regard to some of the coast lines in the Northern district. He had alluded to the subject before in the Committee, and it met with some degree of favour, both from the Minister for Works and the Chief Secretary. There was a sum on the Loan Estimates of 1884 of £300,000 for the extension of the line beyond Hughenden.

He thought the Government had come to the resolution not to extend that line for the present, at any rate. He would like to ask if it would not be advisable to put that money into a line or lines from which there would be a revenue derived? He referred particularly to the line from Townsville to Herbert River, which would form part of the Coast line to Cooktown. He believed the Chief Secretary would admit that that line would have a better chance of paying than any line they had passed that session, from the amount of produce they knew to exist in the Herbert district, and also the difficulty of getting into and out of the Herbert. They had had a survey of the line already. It was dated 15th September, 1884. In the report by Mr. Ballard, he said:—

"The line commences at the railway station at Townsville, follows the Northern Railway for 20 chains, and then, taking advantage of a road 2 chains wide, it goes through the German garden village. The line from here generally follows a north-westerly direction to Ingham. Total distance of line is 66½ miles."

Now, the earthworks on that line would be really as light as the earthworks on some of the lines they had passed, such as the line from Normanton towards Cloncurry.

The PREMIER: Not quite so light.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Not quite so light, but the difference would be only in the water-way. Taking the line right through, from Townsville to Ingham, it could be made at a cost of £3,000 per mile—that was exclusive of rolling-stock. He felt certain that the line would pay immediately on its construction, not only its working expenses, but interest as well. It would pay the interest on £250,000, for in addition to the large amount of produce that would inevitably go to Townsville, there would be a passenger traffic as well, as nobody would go down the Herbert River and take the little steamers as long as there was a railway. There was scarcely any land sold on that line. It would go through Crown lands nearly all the distance until it got to the Herbert River. It would be a safe thing for the Government to consider during the recess whether they would not bring in a Bill next session to appropriate a certain amount of £300,000 on the Loan Estimates for making the extension beyond Hughenden, for that line to the Herbert River.

The PREMIER said it was impossible for him to give any definite answer to the question now. He thought the matter very well worthy of consideration, and it would receive the attention of the Government during the recess. He believed a line from Townsville to Ingham would pay—if not immediately, in the near future. Although the land between Townsville and Ingham was not much good for agricultural settlement, yet at Ingham and on the Herbert River there was a good deal available for close settlement. There was already a good deal of cultivation there, he believed, and that the climate was one of the best in the northern part of the colony, and that the place was very well suited for close settlement. A line from Townsville to Ingham was one which would certainly be made as soon as they could afford to do it. The matter would receive consideration during the recess, and if the Government saw their way to divert the money from the extension beyond Hughenden he should be glad to do so.

Mr. CHUBB said he wished to mention a fact in connection with surveys, which showed that in dealing with the vote on the lines from Bowen £7,000 was unfairly taken for surveys from the vote of £250,000. There was £90,000 on the Loan Estimates for railway surveys, and he did not see why that £7,000 should not have been

charged to the £90,000 instead of to the £250,000 voted for the construction of the lines. He would like to know why that had been done in that case and not in the other cases.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said when the survey was made there was no vote available for surveys, and the money was taken from the vote for the construction of the line.

Mr. CHUBB asked whether the Minister would recoup the vote by the sum of £7,000?

Mr. HAMILTON said he wanted to ask another question with reference to a Northern railway. Had the Minister heard any complaint concerning the manner in which the contract for the second section of the Cairns line had been carried out?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the contract for the second section of the Cairns line had been transferred from Mr. Smith to a man named McBride, who forwarded the money and paid the wages due to the men. The contract had been transferred, he believed, and Mr. McBride was in a position to carry it out.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said there was a report that the men working on the line had serious complaints to make against the contractor for wages. If that was so, the Minister had it in his own hands, because all he had to do was to give instructions to the Chief Engineer not to return a voucher for money to the principal contractor until he was satisfied that the men working for the sub-contractor had been paid their wages, because sub-contracting was not legal and not allowed without the consent of the Commissioner for Railways. Therefore when a principal contractor sublet he was still responsible for the work of the men and had to pay them, for it was his duty to see that the sub-contractor paid the men when he paid the sub-contractor.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the contractor was not in a position to pay the sub-contractor or anyone else. His banker closed with him, and, of course, the sub-contractor and the men were without their wages. The contract had been transferred to McBride, who had means, and had forwarded the money up to pay the men. The wages had been paid, and McBride would complete the contract.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the men did a certain amount of work, which, of course, the Government had to pay for. That was returned in the monthly certificate. But the Government paid the principal contractor, and therefore he should see that the sub-contractor did not run away with the money, as he was responsible for the payment of the men's wages. He (Mr. Macrossan) had enforced the law when he was in office, and he had no doubt the Minister for Works had done the same. With regard to what the hon. member for Bowen stated about railways, he thought that the Minister was perfectly justified in adopting a rule that the cost of the surveys should be taken out of the amount voted for the railways, because surveys were as much a part of the cost of the railway as the making of the line. The late Government had endeavoured to introduce that principle; they did not succeed, but he was convinced that it was a proper principle to adopt.

Mr. HAMILTON asked if the Minister for Works would communicate with the Chief Engineer and ask him when he expected to be in a position to call for tenders for the third section of the Cooktown railway?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it was impossible for him to tell the hon. member when

he would be able to call for tenders. The permanent survey had to be made and plans prepared before tenders could be called for. He did not know how long that would take; but there would be no delay.

Mr. HAMILTON said he knew very well that the Minister for Works did not know how long it would take. He had merely asked him if he would communicate with the Chief Engineer, asking him if he could inform him when he expected to be in a position to be able to invite tenders for the third section of the Cooktown railway. If the hon. gentleman would wire to the Chief Engineer he could easily get a reply to any inquiry he made. That question was a simple one, and surely the hon. gentleman had the capacity to answer it. The Delphic oracle was a fool to the Minister; anything could be made out of the answers of the oracle, but nothing could be made out of the Minister's replies.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the Chief Engineer had instructions to push on the work, and how was it possible for him (Mr. Miles) to tell the hon. member when the permanent survey would be completed, or when the plans would be ready? He was unable to tell the hon. member at what date the plans would be ready. He might say two months or six months, but that would not push them any further. He had explained to the hon. member over and over again that the plans would be prepared with all despatch.

Mr. HAMILTON said his question was a simple one. He knew the Minister could not give information of the simplest points without reference to the Commissioner, but the Chief Engineer for the Northern division could give the information, and he simply asked the hon. gentleman if he would telegraph to the Chief Engineer for the information? The Minister had complied with a similar request made by the member for Musgrave in reference to the Cairns line, and he might do the same in regard to the Cooktown line. He would ask him again whether he would wire to the Chief Engineer, and ask him if he could inform him as to when he would be in a position to invite tenders for the third section of the Cooktown railway? Now, that was a simple question, and he wanted an answer.

The PREMIER said that was simply idle nonsense. The third section of the Cairns railway could not be begun for two or three years to come; that was known perfectly well.

Mr. HAMILTON: I am not asking about the Cairns railway.

The PREMIER said the hon. member had been told over and over again what he wanted to know. His questions were not genuine or put for the purpose of eliciting information. They were for a different purpose altogether.

Mr. HAMILTON said he knew better what was in his own mind than the Premier could tell him. The Premier always put the worst possible construction on any action—assigned the worst motive for it. He (Mr. Hamilton) had asked the Minister for Works a simple question—whether he would wire to the Chief Engineer for the Northern Railways, asking him if he could say when he would be in a position to invite tenders for the third section of the Cooktown railway. The Minister could easily reply yes or no, and he (Mr. Hamilton) would ask him until he did say yes or no.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The answer is—No. The telegraph operators are far better employed than wiring for information for the hon. member.

Mr. HAMILTON said he was glad to have an answer at any rate; he was determined to have an answer. It was another strong argument for separation when members laughed at simple questions which were of great importance to the people of the North. Hundreds of thousands of pounds had been expended on political railways down here; half-a-million was going to be expended on a railway from here to the Valley, where you could go for 3d.; while men who were languishing in the far interior—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is discussing a question not before the Committee.

Mr. HAMILTON said it was very unfair to men languishing in the far interior waiting for railways, that they could not get their railways, nor even answers to the most simple questions in reference to them.

Question put and passed.

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

#### MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

##### BUILDING SOCIETIES BILL.

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

"Mr. SPEAKER,

"The Legislative Council having had under consideration the Legislative Assembly's message, dated the 19th instant, relative to the amendments made by the Legislative Council in the Building Societies Bill, beg now to intimate that they agree to the consequential amendment in clause 25; they insist upon their first amendment in clause 26, because the Bill does not make provision for a building society coming under the Act keeping a proportionate amount of unemployed capital at call to meet contingent liabilities, and it would not be for the public interest to hazard the stability of a building society by allowing it to receive moneys on deposit or as loans for shorter terms than two months; and do not insist on the second amendment in that clause.

"JNO. F. MACDOUGALL,

"Presiding Chairman."

On the motion of Mr. WAKEFIELD, the message was ordered to be taken into consideration on Thursday next.

##### CENTRAL RAILWAY EXTENSION.

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

"Mr. SPEAKER,

"The Legislative Council having come to the following resolution, namely:—

"That this House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the Central Railway from 370 miles to 436 miles, in length 66 miles, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 16th instant, beg now to intimate to the Assembly their consent."

"JNO. F. MACDOUGALL,

"Presiding Chairman."

##### JOINT COMMITTEES.

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

"Mr. SPEAKER,

"The Legislative Council, having had under consideration the Legislative Assembly's message relative to the control of the Building Committee, Refreshment Room Committee, and Library Committee, during the recess, beg now to intimate that they concur in the resolutions contained in the said message.

"JNO. F. MACDOUGALL,

"Presiding Chairman."

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn. To-morrow it is proposed to take first the motion of which I have given notice with reference to New Guinea. After that we will proceed to Committee of Supply, and, I hope, conclude it.

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