

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Council**

**THURSDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 1886**

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## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*Thursday, 25 November, 1886.*

Administration of British New Guinea.—Suspension of Standing Orders.—Warwick to St. George Railway.—Messages from the Legislative Assembly.—Building Societies Bill.—South Brisbane Mechanics Institute Land Sale Bill.—Error in Message.—Gladstone to Bundaberg Railway.—Warwick to St. George Railway.—Motion for Adjournment.—Messages from the Legislative Assembly.—British Companies Bill No. 2.—Gold Fields Homestead Leases Bill.—committee.—Adjournment.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN took the chair at 4 o'clock.

## ADMINISTRATION OF BRITISH NEW GUINEA.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, in moving—

1. That this House, having had under consideration the draft proposals for the future administration of British New Guinea, agreed to by the Governments of New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland, at Sydney, on the 28th April, 1886, as set forth in a letter addressed by the Chief Secretary to His Excellency the Administrator of the Government, on the 20th May, 1886, laid upon the table of the House, on the 14th of July, 1886, approves of the said proposals.

2. That an address be presented to His Excellency the Administrator of the Government informing him of the foregoing resolution.

—said : Hon. gentlemen,—I am quite unable to make any observations with respect to the motion that I am now moving, and I believe that it is unnecessary for me to make any, or to give information on the subject. I am quite sure every hon. gentleman is as fully conversant with the subject-matter of this motion as I am myself—as conversant with it as anyone in Australia. I hope, therefore, that there will be no difficulty in adopting the motion ; it is an affirmation of the policy which this country has adopted quite recently in regard to New Guinea.

Question put and passed.

#### SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, in moving—

That during the remainder of the session, so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as will admit of the passing of Bills through all their stages in one day—

said : Hon. gentlemen,—I said yesterday afternoon, in giving notice of this motion, that it would only operate in respect of two Bills which I then named.

Question put and passed.

#### WARWICK TO ST. GEORGE RAILWAY.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL, in moving—

That the report of the select committee on the proposed railway from Warwick towards St. George be now adopted—

said : Hon. gentlemen,—I think it has never happened before in this House that the representative of the Government should have had so important a duty devolving upon him as that which I am about to undertake with respect to the motion standing in my name. I believe that Queensland, up to the present time, has, in all its relationship with the other colonies, never come into contact in the matter of jealousy with respect to recovering or filching the trade of any colony. We believe,—when I say we, I mean those who are identified with the progress of this colony, and those who have made their homes here—those who have been mixed up in the intricacies and responsibilities of business in this colony, those who have families and those who have settled here, and look upon the colony as their permanent home,—I say that we believe that it is our duty to conserve the trade of Queensland, to the west and the borders of our territory, for Queenslanders. I think there will be few, at any rate, in this Chamber, who will not at once assent to that proposition as a sound, although it may be said, a selfish, proposition. Is it desirable that we should stand aloof—that we should tamely submit to the policy—that has been adopted in New South Wales of running railways to our border to get the trade that has for many years been in the possession of the port of Brisbane and the port of Rockhampton ? In support of the latter statement I wish to affirm that much of the trade of the south-western portion of the colony of Queensland was done by Rockhampton, and I think my hon. friend, Mr. Lambert, will be able to corroborate me in that statement—that much of the trade of that part of the colony was done with Rockhampton many years ago, and that it has now passed away to South Australia and New South Wales. It is a scheme which I think we have good reason to believe is intended for our self-protection, and although I am more of a freetrader than a protectionist, I do not see why my mind and opinions and conclusions, although I am a member of the Ministry, should not, to some extent, weigh with me in

my advocacy—my warm advocacy—of the proposed scheme. As a colonist of Queensland I am selfish enough to believe that if this work be adopted it will result in enormous advantages to the trade of Brisbane and to the colony as a whole. In my preliminary observations, I think it is fair—at any rate it is just—that I should refer to what has transpired in the past with respect to the policy of New South Wales. That colony encountered a railway policy initiated and carried out by the vigorous young colony of Victoria, which, as it were, almost threw New South Wales on its haunches. The people of that colony were almost staggered by the rapidity with which the railways of Victoria were carried to their border, and the result was that after the speeches of Sir Hercules Robinson, delivered in the New England territory, they awoke to the fact that they should attempt at any rate to recover lost ground by reprisals upon Queensland and not upon Victoria. Sir Hercules Robinson put an amount of steam and spirit into the railway policy of New South Wales which has just saved it, I might say, from discredit. No one here can possibly have read the speeches of Sir Hercules Robinson without having come to the conclusion that he took a great part in stimulating the public men of New South Wales into a strong and enthusiastic spirit of enterprise which led to a vigorous railway policy. Well, now I have shortly sketched the result of Sir Hercules Robinson's speeches. He was a man of broad views. He believed in the whole of the colonies being connected by rail, but he also believed that every colony should have its own trade. We have been asleep, as it were, in respect of the trade immediately west of Brisbane for many years, and instead of pushing our railway, as we have been doing, towards Roma, for the purpose of entrapping part of the trade that would have gone to Rockhampton, we should have run the line right out from Toowoomba due west to Thargomindah. I say that a mistake was made in the railway policy of the colony at that time, and it has been admitted on all sides since. It is admitted by many old colonists that if we had started from Toowoomba due west to the South Australian border, and discarded Roma, Dalby, Miles, Chinchilla, and such places, the country would have adopted a policy much more advantageous than that which has been carried out. However, it is never too late to mend. We are now about to remedy the defect in our railway system, which has been forced, as it were, upon the attention of public men as well as upon the Government, and there can be no question whatever that the railway now before this House is one that will result in great advantage to the trade of this colony, and the port of Brisbane in particular. I will not have time here this afternoon to refer to the evidence in detail, and indeed I believe it is not the desire of many hon. gentlemen to attempt to spin out the discussion upon this question ; but I wish very respectfully to show a few of the consequences that would ensue if we did not adopt the proposal now before the House. I will endeavour to generalise the evidence. From Warwick to Thane's Creek we have an extent of country already fully settled—that is, fairly settled—and the country will be more fully settled if this railway becomes an accomplished fact. Passing from Thane's Creek on to Goondiwindi, it is in evidence that the country, at least two-thirds of it, is quite suitable for breeding cattle and breeding sheep, and a fair proportion of it is suitable for agriculture. That the country is well watered is beyond question—that goes without saying. From Goondiwindi to St. George there are no difficulties whatever in regard to the construction of the railway. There is one

little range, a short way out of St. George, to be got over between the watersheds of the Weir and the Moonie. Well, I say that right into St. George the larger portion of the country is eminently adapted for agricultural purposes, and the country from Goondiwindi to St. George is, on the whole, of a better class both for sheep and cattle farming and cultivation than the country between Goondiwindi and Thane's Creek. It was also shown in evidence that nearly the whole of the trade of this district has been taken to New South Wales—that, in fact, practically the whole trade inwards and outwards in our own territory is done in New South Wales. Now, I think that statement proves a good deal. I might enlarge upon it for an hour, and give the House full particulars, but that can be seen in the evidence. I will simply ask hon. gentlemen whether it is not our duty to protect and encourage our trade to flow into the channels which were constructed for it? Why should we be debarred from constructing a railway in any quarter, simply because New South Wales has endeavoured to take our trade from us? I say that if the railway is not constructed we shall be lacking in pluck; we shall be wanting in loyalty to the country of our adoption if we decide to abandon a proposal which would bring so much good to the people of this colony. More than that, I believe this line will attract a large population which will settle down and engage in pastoral pursuits. It will attract a great many small selectors of 320 to 1,280 acres, and they will settle down on the sound, healthy, well-watered fields along the route. They will settle in a country that is well adapted for the production of wheat and of all other cereals. The country, moreover, all the way to St. George will carry a considerable population, and it is a country that, if there were no border question at all in the matter, would justify any Government in constructing a railway through it. Apart altogether from the question of conserving to ourselves our own business, we have a country that is, on the average, very much better than the country through which that railway, which the Hon. Mr. Taylor so well advocated—namely, the Central Railway—passes. At the time the railway started from Gogango, outside of Rockhampton, until it reached Emerald Downs, there was no production and very few people along the route. That railway has paid well, though the climate is not so good in that part of the colony as it is in the country through which this railway will pass; and from the time it leaves Emerald Downs, with the exception of about 25 miles of country passing through Surbiton, there is no good grazing country till Barcaldine is reached. But if hon. gentlemen will examine the country to the right and the left of the railway from Warwick to St. George, they will find a very much better country on the average, up to within 15 miles of Goondiwindi, than subsists in the vicinity of the Central Railway. This is a project which should have been put before Parliament as one of the first railways from Toowoomba; and it is not creditable to those who have been in power in the past to have omitted the establishment of this great factor in the success of this part of the colony and the development of the districts near the border of New South Wales—it is not creditable to them that they have omitted, in their ignorance or in their wisdom, to found a policy of rapid railway extension from Brisbane to the South Australian border. A border line is essential to the preservation of our interests; and self-preservation is the first law of nature. If we do not assent to this policy it means the disheartening of our merchants in the towns affected and the limitation of the operations of those who are doing

business in this noble port of Brisbane. I say "noble port," because we must have in view the dredging operations going on, which will make this harbour, within gunshot of this Chamber, the foremost of all the ports of the Australian colonies within a very few years. What is the good of dredging banks in rivers and giving means of access to our harbour if we have no trade? Therefore I say that we must look to the West, and gather up every atom of trade that belongs to this colony for ourselves and for this port. The evidence taken before the select committee shows that agricultural pursuits can be profitably carried on in the vicinity of the proposed railway, and that its construction will contribute enormously towards the increased growth of agricultural products. The present trade of the district is worth having, but the prospective trade is much more worth having. In asking the House to adopt this motion, it must be understood that it will not be necessary, if it is considered undesirable, to take the railway to Goondiwindi. This motion only has reference to the construction of the line as far as Thane's Creek. The policy you are asked to affirm is that of taking a line to St. George, which may or may not pass through Goondiwindi. Apart from the question of the border trade, there is sufficient traffic to warrant the construction of the section from Warwick to Thane's Creek even as a branch line. If that section of the line were as far from the border as a line inland from Gladstone, its construction would be perfectly justified as a branch line. I have endeavoured briefly to sketch out what should be the policy of this colony with respect to the border trade, and now I come to the question of cost. I think this House should not be deterred from adopting the motion on account of the expenditure which would be necessary on account of the line passing through flooded country. Several allegations were made before the committee with respect to the condition of the country that may or may not exist in the vicinity of Goondiwindi, but though flooded country is found within 20 miles of Goondiwindi, it may prove to be unnecessary to take the railway to Goondiwindi at all. I am asking the House to affirm the policy that it is desirable to take a line in the direction of our southern border, and this first section to Thane's Creek is a section that can be approved, because it goes in the direction of St. George. With respect to the flooded nature of the country about Goondiwindi, when any section of country through which a railway passes is flooded it does not follow that the feeders to that railway will be barren of traffic; and it is nonsense to say that because a certain section of a line is flooded, therefore the railway should not be constructed. It has been shown that when floods take place in that part of the territory the water is quiescent, and the current, if any, is not perceptible, so that there will be little or no damage done to the earthworks or embankments. Therefore the question of flooded country may be dismissed from the minds of hon. gentlemen. Moreover, up to Thane's Creek, it has been shown that there is a considerable quantity of timber within moderate distance of the proposed railway track, than which there is no better supply in the southern section of the colony. It is capable of producing enormous quantities of railway sleepers for other places as well as for the proposed railway, and there is enough timber to supply the wants of the population for the next fifty years. Gold, copper, and other minerals subsist in a great degree within a moderate distance of the terminus of the first section, and these are conditions such as must commend themselves to hon. members in dealing with the question. I hope that in my last observation I shall be able to imbue this Chamber with a sense

of the importance of this matter to the country as a whole. We do not want New South Wales or South Australia to rob us of our own heritage. We are doing business enough with those districts that cannot go elsewhere than to Brisbane or any other ports of the colony for what they want, but I respectfully insist that it is our bounden duty to follow out the policy of self-protection being pursued by New South Wales and Victoria, in order that this country may have its own due and its own rights, and to do that we require a vigorous railway policy along the border, and by that I mean an expeditiously constructed railway. The country is good enough to justify a railway on its intrinsic merits irrespective altogether of the border trade. I do not care if we never get a pound of merchandise from New South Wales or send a pound of our merchandise across the border, but we shall be responsible for the diminution and restriction of our natural expansion of business if we do not adopt the proposal now before the House. I hope the matter will be weighed, considered, and decided, as it should be, entirely upon its merits, because I believe that if it be dealt with upon those grounds the result will be eminently satisfactory alike to the districts affected and to the colony as a whole.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY said: Hon. gentlemen,—In order to shorten the discussion as much as possible, I propose, before I proceed to discuss the various points which I have to bring forward, to state in what respect I agree with the observations that have fallen from the Postmaster-General. In the first place, the policy of constructing a line as direct as possible from the metropolis to the West sufficiently far south to hedge in the largest amount of traffic, and conserve to Queensland the largest possible benefits from railway construction in that part of the colony, is one in which I fully agree. The only question left is the selection of the best route, and to decide that it will be necessary for us to consider it under several headings. I have no intention of following the example of the proverbial parson whose discussions extended as far as seventhly and eighthly, but wish to say what I have to say under a few headings. The first I shall consider is the purpose for which the work is undertaken. No doubt it will meet a very great want. In bringing down produce from our western and south-western interior we must take a fair and reasonable view of the extent to which we may give and take with the neighbouring colony of New South Wales, for when our railway systems are completed there must be equitable give and take in providing ready access to our ports. As far as Queensland is concerned it is in a very much better position, from the nature of its coast, to take probably more than its own share; but as that is the result of the natural topographical features of the country, it will not be an aggressive act on our part to make a railway to meet the requirements of the country generally. To come to a further understanding of the subject, it will be necessary to consider the character and quantity of the traffic which the best line to be selected will open, and I will very briefly run over some of the statistics of the district generally. To simplify the matter, I will state further that I agree with the Postmaster-General as to the quality of the country for the first 20 miles of the proposed railway along the banks of the Condamine, where there are some thousands of acres under cultivation, but when we get to the end of that 20 miles I fail to discover, either from the evidence or from my own personal knowledge of the district, any useful purpose in following the course suggested—I am not condemning the principle of carrying the line westward. At one time there was about £20,000 worth of gold discovered in

the vicinity of the first section of the railway, but to talk about the revenue to be derived from the carriage of gold would be a burlesque: besides for a large number of years the quantity of gold discovered there has been very small. We might expect some revenue on account of the presence of the mineral if there were ores to be carried away, but it will not pay to carry ores any great distance, unless they are very rich. If the works are conducted on the spot all that will be required to be carried along the railway will be the machinery to the ground, and the supplies that are not obtainable in the immediate vicinity, and even for a population in a district like Gympie the supplies which would have to be brought along the railway would be very small. There is no coal worth working till we get over the McIntyre River, and from Canal Creek the line goes over some of the most inhospitable country, as far as producing anything useful is concerned, as can be found in the interior. There is some timber in the vicinity of the proposed railway, but no better than the timber to be found along any other route the line might take. I next come to the pastoral interest in that direction. The returns show that the whole of the stock depasturing at the commencement of this year in the district through which the line will pass were as follows:—In the Leyburn district there were 765 horses, 1,344 head of cattle, and 61,000 sheep, just about enough to stock one good station, and that is for the whole district. There is no mistake about these figures, because they are taken from a Government return, and I have been assured by people with whom I am acquainted that they are correct. At Inglewood there were 1,100 horses, 14,000 head of cattle, and 66,000 sheep. In the police district of Goondiwindi there are between 1,500 and 1,600 horses, under 10,000 head of cattle, and 78,000 sheep. The numbers relating to Inglewood and Goondiwindi, the only districts that will be affected by the railway until we get to St. George, produce a total of 2,700 horses, 24,000 head of cattle, and 144,000 sheep. Hon. gentlemen who have perused the evidence given by the witnesses must have noticed the absurdity of many of their statements. After we get to St. George there are 1,700 horses, 21,000 head of cattle, and 120,000 sheep, so that along the whole of the line till we get to St. George, unless we reckon what is to come from Cunnamulla, there would be only 3,200 horses, 46,000 head of cattle, and 326,000 sheep; and we are asked to make a railway to meet the requirements of the whole of that district. A good deal has been said about agriculture, but setting aside the country sixteen miles from Warwick, the total amount of agriculture is not very great. At Goondiwindi there are 67 acres of cultivation; around Inglewood there were 160 acres at the beginning of this year, and at St. George there are 688 acres under cultivation. We now come to the question of population. The district has been occupied about fifty years, and in the vicinity of Leyburn there are 300 inhabitants; at Inglewood, 100; and at Goondiwindi, something under 400. Reckoning the people on some of the stations which are not included in these numbers, there are about 1,200 people in the whole district until we get to St. George. I may mention that in the division of Inglewood, which runs as far as Stanthorpe, there is a population of 1,770. The population is sufficient to levy a rate of £1,750 per annum, and the total value of the rateable property is £23,000. I now go to another question as to what is the amount of dutiable articles of merchandise crossing the border. I have looked back for several years to see if I can find anything better so that I might qualify

my statistics, and show that from some particular cause when the last return was made the trade had fallen off, but I have been able to find nothing. Up to the 30th June of this year the value of the dutiable goods at Goondiwindi was £457, and at Mungindi, which is comparatively close to St. George, the total is £2,972. Well, that would give a revenue at Goondiwindi of £63, and at Mungindi £965. Those may be taken as reliable statistics. Now, I will proceed to the question of the character of the country that the railway is proposed to be taken through, and I will soon narrow up the whole question. To prevent any misapprehension I may state that in quoting I will confine myself almost exclusively to the evidence of Government officials. I think I cannot do better, although I may have occasion to quote from one or two other authorities. In the first instance the Engineer-in-Chief is examined, and he gives the following information:—

"5. Are you able to give any information at all as to the probable cost of this projected railway from the end of the first section into St. George? So far as I can gather from the reports of the surveyors, I do not think there will be any difficulty in constructing the proposed line; and I see no reason that the average cost should exceed £4,000 per mile."

From that reply it would be supposed that he knew all about it, but when I quote a little further it will be shown that Mr. Stanley came forward knowing nothing about the question, and that his own officers were unable to furnish the required information. The answer goes on:—

"The chief expenditure, I apprehend, to be dealt with will be provision for flood waters; and Mr. Austin, the surveyor in charge of the line, is now, upon my instructions, making a special examination of the route throughout, with a view to determine the extent of the flood waters. I considered it was a suitable time, after the recent floods that have taken place in the district through which the line passes, to procure that necessary information."

He is then asked—

"6. By Mr. F. T. Gregory: You stated, Mr. Stanley, that the average cost of the present section would be £4,218 per mile, while, on the other hand, you estimate that the remainder would not exceed £4,000. How do you reconcile that with the fact that the remainder of the country—that is, I am assuming you refer to the way by Goondiwindi—is lower than that over which the first section of the line passes? The earthworks on this section of the line are heavier than I anticipate they will be on the rest of the route. I can give no very definite information on that matter, because I am not yet in possession of sections of the survey. My information is contained in the reports of the surveyors after the general examinations made by them of the country."

"7. Then you do not lay much stress upon getting through the inundated country? I am not in a position to say to what extent that will affect the cost of construction; but, as far as I can gather, I do not think it will very materially affect the total cost. It is only portions of the line that will be subject to flood."

Well, if he knew the country was subject to flood it would be all very well, but he does not know that to be a fact, as I will show further on.

"8. May I ask, have you any distinct information as to the character of the remainder of the works? No more than I have stated. I expect to be in possession, shortly, of more definite information, as Mr. Austin is now engaged in making a careful examination of the country with the view of determining the extent of the flood waters which will have to be contended with."

That is no information, because he has not got it. He is again asked—

"9. Have you any information that would guide you as to the desirability or not of taking the railway, instead of directly to Goondiwindi, more directly from the end of the proposed section, to St. George, and making the connection with Goondiwindi by a branch line? Not at the present time. I anticipate that I shall have information before very long."

"10. You have thought of such a contingency? I have thought it might probably have to be considered desirable to do that."

"11. You have no information to offer as to the character of the country direct between the proposed terminus to St. George? No; I am not in possession of any definite information."

"12. Has your department been furnished with any rough sections whatever of the line from Thane's Creek through Goondiwindi? Only for a portion of the distance. The trial surveys extend somewhere about 50 miles from Warwick, at the present time."

So there is the extreme limit of his knowledge when he gives his evidence, and it is only necessary for me to read one or two more extracts from the evidence:—

"17. Is it of any value in forming an estimate of cost? No. It does not give you sufficient information to have an estimate upon, except in a very general way."

Again, when questioned as to when he would be furnished with the information, he said in about a fortnight.

"23. From Goondiwindi to St. George you have nothing to guide you except what you call a barometrical survey? No. No trial survey has been made yet."

Then he read his report which simply states the number of miles from one place to another, and if hon. members want any further information upon that point, I would refer them to the evidence. The report winds up by saying that the cost of the first 25 miles is £106,000. Now, if there was any good purpose to be served by constructing this line for the first 25 miles, we might possibly ignore the remaining distance. If it could be shown that there is any prospect of its paying, I am not one of those who deny a railway to the people of the district; but here is a railway proposed to be constructed for 25 miles, at a cost of £106,000, to bring in a little produce that lies on the route itself, and beyond that, as I shall show, there is nothing. I will now take the evidence of Mr. Austin. After answering a number of questions which are really not immediately relevant to the subject, he is asked the following questions:—

"544. Have you any knowledge of the country as regards the levels? No; not with regard to the levels. The barometrical reconnaissance includes that."

"547. You have been over that country? No; I have been over portions of it. I was engaged as a commissioner out west there, and I got a good deal of information with regard to the country."

That was some ten years ago when it was not anticipated that a railway would be constructed in the district, and indeed Mr. Austin has not been over that part of the country upon which we more particularly want information.

"548. You have not been beyond Inglewood in connection with this railway? No."

"554. That is the average—£4,000 a mile, all the way from Warwick to Inglewood? Yes; I think that estimate would be quite sufficient. Some places would be a little more expensive, and some a little lighter than others; but I think I have calculated quite within the expenditure when I say it would not cost more than £4,000 a mile."

He makes that statement, not having seen the country; and only having heard of it by general report. My statement may be reduced to this, that the question I have just quoted refers to the country between Warwick and Inglewood, the surveyor not having personally been in the country. Then, in questions 567 to 570, he is asked about the character of the country:—

"567. Is it all up and down grading for the whole distance of five and twenty miles, or is there any portion of it level? There is scarcely any portion of it level. Here and there in the range part of the country we have put in a portion of about a mile level, but it is not naturally level."

"568. I am speaking of that part of your section from the beginning of the range country to the end of it. There is scarcely any of it level? Very little level."

"569. And very little of it straight? Very little of it straight; no great lengths; but, notwithstanding that, I do not think we have increased the gross distance more than three miles in the sixty miles. I have got a tolerably direct line, though not a straight line."

"570. By Mr. Macansh: When you speak of the range being 1,700 and 1,800 feet high, you mean above the sea level? Yes; some of the country near Marshall's was most deceiving. Some of it looking very easy was found to be most difficult, and some that appeared most difficult we got through with the greatest facility."

I will now take up the evidence of the surveyor who was employed on the line—an officer who, I am told, is a very able officer; who may be young, but still one who is quite as competent to give an opinion about the nature of the country as either of the senior officers. The evidence is that of Mr. William Drew:—

"1130. Have you been over the proposed route between Warwick and St. George, *via* Goondiwindi? Yes.

"1131. Did you make surveys of the whole line from Warwick to St. George? I made a hasty barometrical examination, marked every mile, took the heights with a barometer, perambulated the distances."

We find nothing more bearing on the subject until we come to question 1139.

"Then your examination did not extend for any distance right and left of the proposed line? No; it did not."

And again at 1145—

"Had you, from personal observation, any opportunity of estimating the height of the floods, we will say, in tolerably severe seasons of inundation? No, not personally. I heard from residents. There was no drift, or anything of that sort, to denote a big flood."

Well, I will simply say that I have been over some of that ground within six months of a flood where I knew the water had been ten feet deep, and I did not find a log for miles and miles together, for the reason that there was nothing to obstruct them from drifting away to the end of the inundated country, and with the exception of the rifts in the ground there was nothing to indicate that the water had been over it. Now we come to No. 1148:—

"Have you any estimate in your mind of the number of miles that might be under water in the highest floods between the points I have just referred to? I daresay there are 15 miles of very flat country, right along between Goondiwindi and the Weir River; and it is similar country to the Jondaryan section; but it would require a tremendous flood to bring it under water, although persons say that, at times, it is under. It is such an extent of flat country that to put it a foot under water would require a tremendous rainfall."

That resolves itself into a matter of opinion. It so happens that the country in question between Inglewood and the Weir River is at flood-time under water, and I will undertake to say that within the last 150 years the Jondaryan country he refers to has not been under water. The country is very similar, no doubt, to a casual observer, but experience teaches us that this country is liable to be flooded.

"I want to ascertain whether you can give a reliable opinion as to the extent of the floods? I could not give a reliable opinion; because I went through too quickly. But I should fancy there would not be two feet of water, at any rate, on that country."

"I am referring to the number of miles in extent of flooded country, to begin with; not to the depth—? That is, the country said to be flooded extends 15 miles—we will say 10 miles. As soon as you cross the Weir River you are clear of floods—from a mile on the other side of the river."

The following question only refers to the distances:—

"I may remind you that the distance from Goondiwindi to the crossing of the Weir is 30 miles. Now, within that 30 miles, what distance do you think is ever under flood, or has been under flood within the last five-and-twenty years? The distance is 20 miles, I think."

And further on, question 1154 says:—

"That is 27 miles. What extent of that had been under flood? I should say 12 miles at the outside, under flood."

There is no evidence to show the depth of water, but I shall be able to show from the evidence of other parties that the country he refers to is under water from 5 to 10 feet at times.

"What do you think would be the probable depth—the average depth, perhaps, I had better put it—of inundations over that district, which you believe to be inundated? I should say a few feet—three or four feet. Where the line goes it is some distance off the river bank."

"Does the plan fairly indicate the direction that you propose to take?—(*Map scrutinised.*)—Do you think that it would require piles and an open viaduct to carry the line between Goondiwindi and Welltown? Well, it would have to have embankments and plenty of openings—and good water openings."

"What number of miles would you roughly estimate would be necessary to have of open pile-work to place the line above flood? I could not say at all. It depends, of course, upon the amount of country flooded, and upon where the floods are found to be."

"And do you think that the earthwork made out of the soil on the spot would stand the currents during the high inundations to which I refer? Well, it is all soft; and if there was a rush of water, it would not stand, I think. It would have to be banked up."

"Even then there would always be a risk of a considerable number of miles of the embankment over that flat country being destroyed in some of the highest inundations? Yes; with the rush of water, I should think so;—unless ample openings were left, and the water diverted by side drains into them."

"Have you formed any estimate of the cost of construction of a line between Goondiwindi and Welltown? No."

"Could you in a rough way give us a general idea of what—of course, without prejudicing your professional knowledge—you think would be the cost of that 20 miles? Well, I cannot give an idea, because I have got nothing to go upon whatever. At the outside, my survey was very rough. I had no section, except barometrical."

Moving the question then to another part of the country, he is asked—

"You told us that you examined the line from Dalby *via* the Moonie to St. George? Yes."

"Can you give us a general idea of the probable engineering difficulties on that portion of the line which lies between Dalby and Tartha, on the Moonie? Yes; from Dalby, at the crossing of the Condamine, there would be floods to contend with; it is flooded country about Riserard; but from there you run the watershed of the Moonie down, and it is easy going—take the side of the watershed and run it right down; it is all very easy country."

"Then, with the exception of crossing the Condamine River and the Condamine flats, there is no very great engineering difficulty between the two points I have just indicated? No."

Then again:—

"What do you consider to be the best line from the Moonie to St. George? I should say from Ballandean, on the Moonie? That is all fairly flat country; no difficulty on it anywhere."

"By Mr. Macansh: You have described the country from Goondiwindi towards St. George, and said that about 12 miles of it had been flooded? Yes."

"Do you think that if the line was constructed on the level, and there should be rain, there would be any danger of its being destroyed by the floods? Well, I fancy it would have to be raised, at any rate, two or three feet, so as to give openings."

"So as to carry the line along flood mark? Yes; good openings, too. Of course, my knowledge of the country is not very extensive. I only rushed through it, you may say. I did not make an ordinary survey."

"Would the lower place you spoke of the swamps, not be sufficient to carry off the flood water? No; I think not. They are mere hollows where the rain-water lodges and lies."

"They are not sufficiently low. They are not much below the level of the country? No; just hollows."

There are some further questions of interest, and I will not detain the House any further by reading them, but there are some questions which bear upon the way the surveyor tested his levels, and the depression of levels in different parts of the country.

"Have you a record of the fall in feet between Goondiwindi and Welltown? When you say Welltown, do you mean the crossing of the Weir River?"

"Yes; we have been calling it Welltown? There is a fall of about 16 or 18 feet.

"About a foot per mile? Yes.

"Now, when the river is in full flood, what sort of current would you anticipate from a fall of a foot per mile? It would be a pretty strong one, I should think.

"Sufficient to be rather severe, as infringing upon an embankment? Yes."

That shows, according to his own estimate, that there is a fall of 1 foot per mile for 16 miles; so that no class of embankment could be constructed to prevent the water destroying any railway; and it must therefore, if constructed at all, be constructed upon piles, at such a height as to prevent the water going over and destroying the line. I think, so far, the evidence in reference to this line is quite enough to show us that the construction of it is not advisable, and, in fact, that the construction of the line should not be attempted. The evidence also shows us that they have not brought forward sufficient information to enable us to judge what will be the cost and the ultimate result of carrying out the line. I think, therefore, that before we proceed any further those points should be definitely set at rest. The other evidence which I will draw attention to is that of some men who have lived in the district for a considerable number of years, and their evidence will show to what extent the evidence of the other witnesses is reliable; and I apprehend it will also show that many of the answers to the questions which I have quoted are highly unsatisfactory answers. I will quote the evidence of Mr. Frederick Striver:—

"46. Then you will be unable to give us any very definite information as to the possibility of constructing a railway across that country? Yes; I can.

"47. Do you think it is an easy line to construct? From where?

"48. From Warwick, *via* Thane's Creek, to Goondiwindi? No; I do not.

"49. What are your reasons for thinking it would not be an easy line? I feel it would be a very expensive line. Near Goondiwindi, the country is subject to floods.

"50. What number of miles of inundated country do you think you would have to pass over to get there? Oh! I think the length would be about 20 or 30 miles.

"51. And to what extent in depth would the inundation average, we will say? I cannot say. I have seen, sometimes, when I have passed, trees with marks of flood-waters high up in the branches—5, 6, and 10 feet up. At all events, too high for any railway to be constructed, except on piles.

"52. Do you think there would be as much as 10 miles of country covered 10 feet deep? I think fully.

"53. More? It might not be 10 feet. Much more, at all events, would be covered with a few feet of water. But the flood would be up to 10 feet.

"54. Have you any knowledge of the country from Goondiwindi onward to St. George? Yes; I have been beyond. I have been between the two rivers, the Moonie and the Weir. I have seen that country which would form the line towards St. George.

"55. Could you give us any idea of the first 10 miles from Goondiwindi towards St. George, either by following the Barwon or going direct? All the country is too low for a railway.

"56. Is it within your knowledge that the country from Goondiwindi down the Barwon has been frequently under water for 15 miles, for a depth of from 4 to 10 feet? It has, in former years, and, I think, lately again.

"57. I will now take you to another part of the country. Have you any knowledge of the country from about where you reside, taking a direct line towards St. George? Yes, I have.

"58. And would that line of country be subject to inundation? No."

Then there is the following evidence, beginning with question 72:—

"Then it is your opinion that it will be a more expensive line per mile to go from Warwick to Goondiwindi than from Beauaraba to St. George? I think from Beauaraba to St. George 2 miles could be made at least for 1 mile from Warwick to St. George. By the route from Beauaraba to St. George the railway

could be made for half the money at least that it would cost to make the line from Warwick. I would not advise a railway from Beauaraba to Goondiwindi; but I think it should be kept away from Goondiwindi, on high ground, more generally direct to St. George.

"And could you give us a general idea of about the quantity of country that is in occupation between the present Beauaraba terminus and where you leave the good country of the Condamine, going westward? The best I could give you would be by showing it on the map.

"Can you give us a general idea?—Is it a populous locality? It is the most densely populated district we have at present on the Downs; and a good deal of it agricultural.

"In other words, it is both good country and fairly densely populated?—Am I correct in that?—closely settled? Yes; closely settled. The first 30 or 40 miles from Beauaraba is good country and closely settled."

A great many more witnesses were examined, very much to the same purpose. Here is part of the evidence of Mr. Lalor, to be found at question 133:—

"Having had such extensive experience of the district of course you necessarily have a good deal of knowledge as well from hearing so much, both of its physical geography as well as its adaptability for pastoral settlement; and you are able, undoubtedly, to form an opinion as to the soundness or unsoundness of the country for carrying a railway to Goondiwindi. As a very old colonist, with all your experience and knowledge of the country, which route do you think is the soundest, in the public interests—from Warwick to St. George, *via* Goondiwindi, or from Beauaraba to St. George, or from Beauaraba, *via* Goondiwindi? I am certainly in favour, looking at it in a national point of view, of the line from Warwick to Goondiwindi. The route is well watered; there are no engineering difficulties in the way that I know of. Of course, I am not a professional man; but, so far as I can judge, I speak. There is no mountainous country. There are large rivers, very fine alluvial flats. Perhaps I am not such a thorough believer in agricultural pursuits as some other men. I have heard a good deal about agricultural settlement; but it has yet to be done."

I have marked the observations of several other witnesses all bearing in the same direction, and I think there is not one who is in favour of carrying the line *via* Goondiwindi, except some four or five who live in that direction, and who are naturally in favour of getting a railway at any cost. In one instance it was said that 750,000 acres of land existed in the vicinity of the proposed railway in one block—on the top of sandy and stony mountains—land worth 15s. or £1 per acre—land that was all Crown land. If that were as true as I could wish it would be a very nice source of revenue for the railway. Out of the great mass of information I have bearing in the same direction I will only select the following:—The distance from Brisbane to St. George, *via* Goondiwindi, is—from Brisbane to Warwick, 166 miles; from Warwick to St. George, 235 miles; making a total of 401 miles. From Brisbane to Beauaraba the distance is 136 miles, and from Beauaraba to St. George 193 miles, making a total of 329 miles, which will very shortly be reduced by 10 miles when the Toowoomba and Drayton connection line is constructed. But before that is constructed the difference in favour of the Beauaraba line over the Warwick line is 72 miles. The distance from Brisbane to Dalby is 153 miles, and from Dalby to St. George 181 miles, making a total of 334 miles; the line *via* Beauaraba being 5 miles shorter, and 15 miles shorter when the railway from Toowoomba to Drayton is constructed. I can say positively from my knowledge of the country that, from the crossing of the Condamine along the route from Beauaraba to St. George direct, the country is of very much the same character as that between Dalby and St. George; consequently we have two routes, 72 miles and 82 miles respectively, shorter than the proposed route *via* Warwick. I know my argument will be met by the assertion that we are going to have the *via recta* shortly;



but that is widely beyond all likelihood, because it is acknowledged that the construction of that line would be as difficult from an engineering point of view as the line between Brisbane and Toowoomba. I have brought a map, which hon. gentlemen are at liberty to examine, showing that the westward route I have advocated is very much better than the one proposed, because it will afford railway communication to a larger population and will not be subject to inundation; and what is of very serious importance, the cost of maintenance will bear no proportion to that of a line *via* Goondiwindi. I have been over the route from St. George to Cunnamulla, and though I am not an engineer, I was for a good many years practically commissioner of public works in the neighbouring colony; and having had considerable experience with regard to every description of country as well as twenty-five years' experience of Queensland in all its vicissitudes of climate, I do not hesitate to say that the money required to take a line to St. George *via* Goondiwindi would take a direct line out west as far as Cunnamulla. As to whether it is desirable to construct the first short distance as far as Thane's Creek, I have very grave doubts; but to start it under the impression that it is to be a part of the Great South-Western line would be a fallacy. To call the section of railway to Thane's Creek a part of a line from Warwick to St. George is about as misleading as it would be to call a line from Toowoomba to the Logan part of a railway from that town to Sydney. I cannot feel justified in supporting the line to Thane's Creek under the impression that it is part of the Great South-Western extension as far as St. George; and the protest which I have entered against it will sum up my reasons. The protest is as follows:—

"I dissent for the following reasons:—

"That the evidence of the Government engineers and railway surveyors does not disclose data on which to base a reliable estimate of the probable cost of construction of the line beyond the first section of 25 miles from Warwick.

"That the weight of evidence goes to show that there are many miles of country between Goondiwindi and Welltown subject to such heavy inundation as to preclude the construction of a railway within any reasonable limits as to cost.

"That should the line be constructed from Warwick to Goondiwindi, there is neither passenger, goods, or produce traffic existing at the present time sufficient to pay working expenses.

"That there are shorter and more practical routes between the port of Brisbane and St. George, such as *via* Dalby and the Moonie River (181 miles), and from Beauaraba to St. George direct (193 miles), on which the engineering difficulties to be met with are much less, while they would pass through and give access to a larger extent of fertile country available for settlement."

I may conclude by stating that under the present circumstances, with the limited reliable and official knowledge we possess, we should be entering on an undertaking upon which the colony is not justified in entering. If the Government can find enough supporters to carry the line they may do so, but I enter my solemn protest against the adoption of the report.

The Hon. E. B. FORREST said: Hon. gentlemen,—I am sorry I cannot travel over this country with the same rapidity as the Hon. Mr. Gregory, because I do not know a single foot of it, and have to be guided by the evidence taken before the select committee. I intend to confine my attention to the report, and also to the Hon. Mr. Gregory's protest. I think we may esteem ourselves fortunate in this instance in having a report and a protest, both of which we may approve, because I submit that, leaving out the 4th clause of the protest, the report and the protest are substantially the

same. I will deal with the report first. The statement contained in the 1st paragraph is a very safe statement to make either with or without evidence, and it is one from which no hon. member will, I think, dissent. It is as follows:—

"The evidence taken shows that the construction of a border railway is sound public policy, because it will retain within the colony the trade along the border of Southern Queensland, which now passes to and from New South Wales."

I am sure everybody in the colony will endorse that. The 2nd and 3rd paragraphs state facts. The 2nd clause says:—

"Considerable timber and mineral resources exist within short distances of the proposed first section and of its terminus; and the committee believe that wheat production to a great extent will, in that region, result from the establishment of railway communication."

The 3rd clause is—

"There is already settled along the proposed first section a prosperous population engaged in agricultural and pastoral pursuits."

Now, if we can believe the evidence brought before the committee we must believe that these two paragraphs are simply statements of fact. The 4th paragraph corresponds practically with the 1st clause of Mr. Gregory's protest. It reads thus:—

"The evidence of the members of the engineering staff demonstrates the practicability of the proposed first section being executed at a moderate cost."

It will be observed that the 5th paragraph only commits the House to the approval of the first section of the line, leaving the continuation to be considered subsequently. That paragraph is as follows:—

"The Committee recommend that the plan, section, and book of reference be approved."

As regards the continuation, I do not believe it will ever go to Goondiwindi, and I do not think, from the evidence, that it ever ought to go to Goondiwindi. There are miles of country there that are not fit for railway construction, and it is for hon. members to agree to the construction of the first section without committing themselves to the continuation of the line, for certainly, by adopting the first section, we are not obliged to continue the line in the direction spoken of by the Ministry. I will now make a few remarks about the protest, and I may say at once that I am surprised that the Hon. Mr. Gregory left the protest in. As a matter of fact it was framed when a different report was before the committee, and not the report against which the hon. gentleman protested. At a subsequent meeting that report was so much altered that I am surprised to see the protest left. Every clause of the report was submitted by the Chairman and discussed and amended, and the Hon. Mr. Gregory agreed to every clause of that report as amended. The mere fact that he did agree with the report in this way shows that the report and his protest are practically the same thing, the only difference being in the 4th clause of the protest. I will read his protest. He dissents, for the following reasons:—

"That the evidence of the Government engineers and railway surveyors does not disclose data on which to base a reliable estimate of the probable cost of construction of the line beyond the first section of 25 miles from Warwick."

We are discussing no section beyond the 25 miles; consequently there is no necessity to protest against that. The 2nd paragraph says:—

"That the weight of evidence goes to show that there are many miles of country between Goondiwindi and Welltown subject to such heavy inundation as to preclude the construction of a railway within any reasonable limits as to cost."

I agree with him that the evidence has established that, and I do not believe the extension of the railway will be in the direction indicated. The 3rd paragraph says:—

“That should the line be constructed from Warwick to Goondiwindi, there is neither passenger, goods, nor produce traffic existing at the present time sufficient to pay working expenses.”

It will be observed that this clause speaks of a line from Warwick to Goondiwindi, but it is ominously silent upon the first part of the extension, that is, from Warwick to Thane's Creek. Evidence has been given that there is a population there; that cultivation to a very large extent has been already carried out. Witnesses have given evidence as to the character of the country there; and I say that if the line never goes a foot further it will be a good line for that part of the district. The 4th clause reads thus:—

“That there are shorter and more practicable routes between the port of Brisbane and St. George, such as *via* Dalby and the Moonie River (181 miles), and from Beauraba to St. George direct (193 miles), on which the engineering difficulties to be met with are much less, while they would pass through and give access to a larger extent of fertile country available for settlement.”

I say as regards that, there is no more in favour of that conclusion than there is evidence showing that the proposed route will be satisfactory. As to the choice of routes the evidence, as will be seen, is exceedingly conflicting, and I submit that there is no more reason in the assertions in favour of the alternative route in the Hon. Mr. Gregory's protest than for the route proposed by the Government. I think we can all agree upon this, that a border line for Queensland is an absolute necessity, and every year that goes over our heads that necessity will be greater, and will enable our neighbours to take our trade away from us. If we do not pass this line now, I have not the slightest doubt that some time a border line will have to be constructed. I hope the motion will be passed to-night, and we can vote for the first section without committing ourselves to the extension *via* Goondiwindi to St. George.

The Hon. A. J. THYNNE said: Hon. gentlemen,—I did not anticipate speaking at such an early part of the evening, and I hoped to have heard some of the arguments of those hon. gentlemen who are personally acquainted with the country, before speaking myself. Having heard the arguments which were offered by the last speaker, I think I ought to address myself to them in the first instance; and the hon. gentleman's arguments in favour of this line are really summed up in one sentence, that the country is not being committed to a line from Warwick to St. George by the adoption of this portion of the route. That is, no doubt, the argument which is advanced by those who are supporting this line, and upon which they, no doubt, rely a great deal to influence some of the votes which may be given on the question. But I contend, hon. gentlemen, that that is an argument which cannot be regarded as having any weight whatever. True, the proposal which we are asked to adopt to-night, so far as one detail of the whole route is concerned, only refers to a portion of the line of railway for 25 miles, but I do not think that the Hon. Mr. Forrest, or any other hon. member of this Chamber, would, in matters affecting themselves privately, contend for a moment that, under similar circumstances, they would not be morally pledged to carry out the proposed line from Warwick to St. George, *via* Goondiwindi. The plan and book of reference, as sent up to us, are described as the plan and book

of reference of a proposed railway from Warwick towards St. George. The very fact of its being described as the first section of the proposed railway binds the House, if they pass this proposal, to at any rate the approval of a continuation of the main section from Warwick towards St. George. I do not think there can be any question upon that, because, if I am not mistaken, the money which is proposed to be applied towards the construction of this line is part of the amount of money which is appropriated by the Loan Act for the construction of a railway to St. George. We are therefore applying money to this first section which was borrowed by the country upon the representation that it must be applied towards a main line of railway to St. George. We got the money upon that representation, we expended a portion of it upon the first section of that main railway, and we would therefore, to all appearance, be committed to the construction of the line from Warwick to St. George.

The Hon. E. B. FORREST: By what route?

The Hon. A. J. THYNNE: The first part of the answer to the question which the Hon. Mr. Forrest asks is, I think, pretty fairly laid down or defined by the direction which this first section takes to Thane's Creek. We will then have to find a route from Thane's Creek to St. George.

The Hon. E. B. FORREST: Just so.

The Hon. A. J. THYNNE: And we cannot avoid certain difficulties which are sure to be made, and, in the next place, we are committing ourselves to the route to St. George, in respect to which we have no definite information of any kind before us. I mean we have no definite information in the sense that we have no knowledge whatever of the engineering difficulties that may be met with after passing Thane's Creek. In considering the report of the committee, we have to look at the matter which was referred to the committee for consideration—namely, to consider the first section of this proposed railway from Warwick to St. George, and we have the committee bringing up a report in favour of the first section of this line, although it is made perfectly plain to them that there is absolutely no definite information as to what difficulties may be met with and what expenditure may be incurred in the completion of the proposal. I will read some extracts from the evidence of Mr. Stanley, the Chief Engineer. At question 6 it is stated:—

“By Mr. F. T. Gregory: You stated, Mr. Stanley, that the average cost of the present section would be £1,218 per mile, while, on the other hand, you estimate that the remainder would not exceed £4,000. How do you reconcile that with the fact that the remainder of the country—that is, I am assuming you refer to the way by Goondiwindi—is slower than that over which the first section of the line passes? The earthworks on this section of the line are heavier than I anticipate they will be on the rest of the route. I can give no very definite information on that matter, because I am not yet in possession of sections of the survey. My information is contained in the reports of the surveyors after the general examinations made by them of the country.”

Then we have question 7, as follows:—

“Then you do not lay much stress upon getting through the inundated country? I am not in a position to say to what extent that will affect the cost of construction; but, as far as I can gather, I do not think it will very materially affect the total cost. It is only portions of the line that will be subject to flood.”

We have it in Mr. Stanley's evidence, at any rate, that the line will be subject to flood. The extent of line which is likely to be subject to flood is left a very open question. Some evidence, I think, has been given that some 15 or 20 miles

of this proposed route will be subject to flood, and floods of a very serious character indeed when dealing with railway construction :—

"May I ask, have you any distinct information as to the character of the remainder of the works? No more than I have stated. I expect to be in possession, shortly, of more definite information, as Mr. Austin is now engaged in making a careful examination of the country with the view of determining the extent of the flood waters which will have to be contended with."

Now, I would make a remark upon the answer to that question, and in doing so I would refer hon. gentlemen to page 8 of the report, in which it appears that a letter was received by the committee from the Commissioner for Railways, dated 5th November, stating that instructions had been given to Mr. Surveyor Austin to proceed to Brisbane as quickly as possible, and another letter, of even date, was received from the Chief Engineer, stating that the barometrical survey to St. George was made by Mr. Surveyor Drew and not by Mr. Surveyor Austin, who had never examined the country between Warwick and Inglewood, and asking if both witnesses would be required to attend before the Committee. It appears, therefore, that Mr. Surveyor Austin was not engaged in making the careful survey of the country which the Chief Engineer had spoken of, and that some other surveyor has actually done his work. I would call attention to the fact that the letter stating this to the committee was dated 5th November, the same date as Mr. Stanley's letter, and that Mr. Stanley's evidence and letter are contradictory, inasmuch as the barometrical survey, which I may say is a very unreliable survey for the purposes of railway construction, had been already made by Mr. Surveyor Drew, and that Mr. Surveyor Austin was not then actually engaged upon it. At question 11 it is asked :—

"You have no information to offer as to the character of the country direct between the proposed terminus to St. George? No; I am not in possession of any definite information."

Now, I think, hon. gentlemen, that the evidence of Mr. Stanley goes for nothing when we look at the proposal in the light in which I look at it—that it will commit the country to carrying out the extension to St. George from Thane's Creek. I do not think that such a proposal ought to be adopted by the House. We should be committing the country to an unknown expenditure, to unknown difficulties, and this House ought not to go on evidence or statements which have been brought before it in the hurried way in which this scheme has been brought up. I do not wish to say that at a future time I might not be of opinion that this course from Warwick to Goondiwindi *via* St. George might not be the best one; but I say that we have not before us sufficient information to justify us in committing the country to this very large and unknown expenditure, and that we would not be doing our duty to the country in adopting the proposal which is not supported by full and complete information. I think, if we adopt this proposal, we are committing the country absolutely, at any rate, to the continuation of the line from Thane's Creek to St. George, without the route being ascertained, and I say further that in considering the policy of the construction of a section of a main route of railway, we ought to have some information as to what is to follow, before we commit ourselves and the country to it. I notice that the estimated cost of this section is £106,000, and hon. members having had such large figures before them lately, might not be inclined to notice the amount, but it appears to me that £106,000 is a very large sum for us to expend in the present state of the finances of the colony upon a section of 25 miles of railway. If this line

came up before us as a railway to an agricultural district there might be something to be said in favour of it, but as it has been put before us, and with the meagre information in support of it, I certainly think we ought not to adopt it. I have given briefly my reasons for opposing this line, and I trust hon. gentlemen will express their views upon it, so that the House may arrive at the best conclusion it can.

The Hon. A. C. GREGORY said: Hon. gentlemen,—I had hoped that the Hon. Mr. Macanish would have afforded us the advantage of his experience in regard to this matter now before us. However, of course, it depends upon each hon. member when he will choose to speak. Now, the question before us is considered by one part of the House to be a very small one indeed, simply the construction of 25 miles of railway line, and they allege that if that 25 miles is approved of, it will not commit the Government in any way to going on with the line towards St. George. Now, that is truly absurd, because we well know, first of all, that the designation of the line in the Loan Act is "Warwick to St. George," and we have that designation in the report of the select committee. Evidence has been taken by the committee with regard to the extension of the line, and that has not been confined to members opposed to the line, but questions have been asked on that point by those who are most active in their advocacy of it. Therefore, if we pass the line we shall commit ourselves to the subsequent extension of it. In fact this is a repetition of what is constantly occurring. We have made a line to Highfields, and find it is no good unless carried to Crow's Nest. So with regard to all railways, we are generally pledged to their extension. Now, this line is proposed to go down the banks of the Condamine, a distance of 25 miles, to Thane's Creek. In going down the river it will no doubt go through a fair proportion of good country, some very good, but the larger portion of the good country lies nearer to Warwick than to the end of the line, and beyond the end of the line we find a piece of country which is absolutely non-agricultural. We come upon a number of slate and quartz reefs where gold has been worked some time ago, and where good finds were made; but if a railway was constructed down to that point how much of the traffic from that portion of the country would go by rail? Our practical knowledge on the subject is that, after you get about 10 miles from the town, the railway begins to be used; but that up to the distance of 10 or 12 miles it hardly ever is used, except for a little passenger traffic. We see that illustrated in the case of the line between Ipswich and Toowoomba. If we wish to see the line in its most active state, we go up on Saturday, and we see that from the extensive agricultural district of Rosewood there may be twenty or thirty passengers going in or out according to the time of day. The good country along this railway line will not in any way compare with the good country about Rosewood, and we cannot expect an amount of traffic sufficient to pay for the maintenance. A great deal has been said about the country beyond; but this portion of the line will give no access to anything important beyond. The tobacco growth at Texas is some 20 or 30 miles off the line, and is more easy of access from the Stanthorpe extension. By itself this line has nothing to recommend it. An extension which will go to Warwick will increase the distance very materially, from 50 to 70 miles, beyond what would be the result of starting the line from other points. I have heard it said outside that there is what is known as the *via recta* from Ipswich to Warwick, but until that is settled in the affirmative we are not justified in starting from Warwick to carry out an extension into the

interior; because in going from Toowoomba we actually go back towards the coast to get to Warwick, and we have far worse country to go over from Warwick in going westward. Indeed, if it were finally decided to start from Warwick it would be better to divert the line somewhat to the north, in order to get the best country for construction. Few hon. gentlemen are likely to know the character of the country there because it is covered with scrub, and although that is no impediment to a railway it is a very great impediment to people going to look over the country. I have gone through that country, and I do not think any hon. gentleman would like to have followed me. However, it would be possible to carry the line there without any very serious engineering difficulty to the westward. If you diverge to the south towards Goondiwindi, about 10 or 12 miles from that place you enter the flooded country. It is possible to avoid the flooded country until you reach that point, and there the Barwon throws a vast sheet of water over the plains to the north and south. The reason why Goondiwindi is at all occupiable is that it is just in the fork, and there is a certain quantity of sand swept up and formed into a little bank, upon which are the principal buildings, such as the court-house and schools. The sandbank is only covered in ordinary floods to a depth of about two or three feet, and the rest of the country a little more. On the north side it is very much deeper. Now, we begin our difficulties at that point. The flooded country spreads out until at last the Barwon flows into the Weir. The flooded country spreads out and unfortunately becomes of a worse character. I do not know whether hon. gentlemen will understand me when I say that the country is covered with brigalow and oak scrub, which means that the country is very like what one would go through in going out to Roma, in the worst part of the scrub country. When you get to the Moonie the flooded country widens out to such an extent that the northern limit reaches up along what may be termed the Balonne water, until it gets a little above St. George. In high floods the water covers the whole of the land which is occupied by the town of St. George, but to no great depth, because by building embankments round the houses and bailing out the water with buckets, people can continue in possession. In order to get access to St. George, which is spoken of as being an important point, we cannot go very far to the southward, but will have to go to the enormous expense of carrying the line along the northern boundary of the flooded country. While encountering no very great or difficult rises, of which there are very few in that direction, the land will there be sufficiently high to carry out the works until we get to about five or six miles from St. George. Then we must cross the great flooded land of the Balonne, which is locally known as the "Lagoons." Now, St. George is the best place for crossing the Balonne, as it is above the junction of the several affluents, the Narran, the Ballandula, and the Bokhara. There is also a rocky ledge there which keeps the water together, so that it is the most suitable place for a township in the district. Physically it is about the best point to which any line of traffic can go, quite apart from any question of vested interests of those who live there already or are likely to live there. Many persons may say this is not going along the southern border; but taking the question of our being anxious to construct a line solely for the purpose of securing the whole of the traffic of our southern border, so as to prevent its being diverted into New South Wales, it would be an exceedingly blind and stupid policy to run the line right along the border. It ought to

be run 30 or 40 miles within our territory, because it would have a far better chance of being fed by the products of the country; we should have 30 miles on each side, instead of having 30 miles on one side only, and I look upon that as a distance which is easily covered on either side of a railway. In fact, we can hardly expect to carry our railways closer together as a rule than from 60 to 100 miles. It would be better to carry it 30 miles from the border, not on account of any less engineering difficulties, but purely on account of the policy of the construction of the line. Then comes the question, Is there not—it has been alleged that there is—a considerable amount of traffic across the border? There is not. From Tenterfield, and following down the watercourses which form our southern boundary, we find that the whole traffic which crosses is simply what may be termed "single station" traffic; that is, a dray-track from each station. There is no such thing as a through-fare. Texas, perhaps, may be a partial exception to this rule, but the rule holds good from Texas down the Barron until you get to Mungindi, which is about south-south-east from St. George. A road does cross from New South Wales and run up the Barron, and to St. George; but the population of that country is unfortunately exceedingly sparse. During the last fifty years agriculture has gradually decreased, and there was far more cultivation there in the old times than there is now. It has been asserted that abundance of wheat can be grown there. If so, why is it not? It is said that the Warwick and New England flour can compete with it; but if we make a railway to it we shall remove the present protective duty of freight, and in reality, even if it were now just a paying industry, we should crush it, so that the railway is not likely to increase the agricultural occupation. We may inquire what is the reason that the township was started at Goondiwindi; it does no traffic across the border? It was simply because there was a good crossing place for stock which were driven across from Queensland into New South Wales, and *vice versa*. Then, will the railway increase the pastoral occupation? No, because the country has already been overstocked. I myself have been through that country in not a bad year, when the stock were dying in hundreds, simply because there was no grass. For 12 miles on each side of the water the grass was gone, and I was obliged to go away with my horses more than 12 miles where there just happened to be little patches of grass, where I could give them a feed and then go back 12 miles for water. One serious difficulty in turning in to the flood country will be that there is no timber after you pass Leyburn which is suitable for the construction of bridges, and very little for sleepers. There are a few patches near Inglewood and Western Creek where ironbark appears; but it is exceedingly unsound and can hardly be termed timber. This line has been compared with the line from Rockhampton into the interior; but anyone who has travelled on the two routes will know that the line from Rockhampton, after the first 10 or 20 miles, traverses country which is vastly superior to anything that there is along the southern border of the colony—certainly until we get past the Balonne. When we take into consideration that the Government have set forth their intention, and have actually placed upon the loan vote an amount of money for the construction of a line from Ipswich to Warwick, until it is decided whether that line is to be constructed or not it would be premature for us to start any line from any point to the westward. Even if that line were carried out, I believe it would be found that the actual length of that line will so far exceed what it is expected

that there will be very little saving. Nevertheless it might so happen, if such a line were constructed, that the balance would be found in its favour. With our present knowledge we are bound to see that there is very little prospect of the line being much shortened even by the construction of the *via recta*, as it is termed. If hon. gentlemen would like to know what sort of difficulties they would have to deal with in regard to that line, I may point out there are some places in going up the ridges where you have to run up one side, tunnel through, and come out at the other side—a sort of winding staircase. You go into a ridge here, and come out there; and, I believe, in one ridge alone there are about three of these winding staircases. Each of these will involve a very considerable increase of distance. The plain at the bottom of the range we know is not much above 500 feet, and the top of the range at the best place of crossing is about 2,500 feet. If we adopt the gradient of 1 in 50, which we have decided to be a reasonable one to adopt in any important line, it will take 20 miles of line to get from the bottom of the range to the top, even if we could find a steady even gradient from the base to the summit. If we found ourselves near the summit of the range in less than 20 miles, we must of necessity go and seek out another place in order to increase the distance by winding in and out, according to the condition of the country, until we have used up the distance of 20 miles, and ascended at a gradient of 1 in 50. There are certain matters of engineering which have shown that long gradients of 1 in 50 are not possible to be worked with safety and economy, and it is indispensable to introduce what are termed flats or levels, upon which the engines may be filled up with water, and other little matters set right which would not be possible upon heavy gradients. On a heavy gradient of some extent it is impossible to force any more water into the boiler; you are obliged to cut off the supply of water, and use the fuel and steam to the very utmost. Then when the engine reaches a little piece of level ground the boiler has to be filled. These are some of the reasons why you cannot run up long, heavy gradients unless you introduce levels for “breathing” the engines and letting them get their wind or rather their water. Now, with the addition of 20 miles to the actual distance from Ipswich to the summit of the range, I think there will be very little in favour of that line; but under any conditions we have no right to waste the money of the country in carrying out lines which may prove to be altogether in the wrong places. When this question of the direct line from Ipswich to Warwick has been settled, then will be the proper time to consider what we shall do with regard to the proposed extension. I trust to have the opportunity of hearing the views of the Hon. Mr. Macansh, who, as a member of the select committee and also as a resident in the district for many years, will be able to give the House some valuable information in regard to the matter.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR said: Hon. gentlemen,—I wish to say a few words on this question, as the Hon. Mr. Macansh won't get up to say anything about it, though every hon. member has been expecting to hear him. First of all I must congratulate the representative of the Government on the manner in which he has introduced this question, for in my opinion no previous leader of this House has ever shown as much eloquence and ability as the present Postmaster-General has shown last night and to-night in bringing forward these railway motions. I give him great credit for

the way in which he has done his work. I do not suppose all the talk in the world will alter a single vote; and I will take this opportunity of saying that votes have been asked for previous to these railway motions being discussed, and I think it is most disgraceful to canvass for votes. I know that some votes have been promised, and I say it is most disgraceful that they have been promised.

The Hon. F. H. HOLBERTON: Name!

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: I shall not give any name. I might name you if I did. You have no right to call “Name.”

The Hon. F. H. HOLBERTON: I think I have.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: Exception has been taken by some hon. members to the decision of the select committee having been questioned by this House. I laughed when I heard hon. members say that the House ought not to object to the report of the select committee. What did they do in New South Wales a few years back? Out of thirty-one reports from select committees twenty-eight were rejected by the House, and only three adopted. Yet the select committee appointed by this Chamber object to reports drawn out by them being questioned, and think it rudeness for the Committee of the whole House to revise their doings. In this case we find a committee consisting of five men directly interested in the matter, and not one single man from the opposite side. I do not wish to make any disrespectful remarks, but I must say it is strange that the Postmaster-General should appoint such men. He was forced, however, to put poor old Foote off, and put someone else in his place at the last moment. He may laugh, but it is true that pressure was brought to bear on him, and poor Foote had to go. I am entirely opposed to the line, because I believe it will be the ruin of the colony, in spite of what the Postmaster-General has said. I am satisfied that if the border line is carried out it will not bring one ton more goods up to the border, nor take one ton more down. It is to all intents and purposes a political line, as the one was that was passed last night. I will now read an article from one of the strongest supporters of the Government in the Assembly:—

“According to the provisions of the Railway Act of 1864, under which railways in Queensland are carried out, it is provided that before any railways can be constructed by the Government, the plans, sections, and book of reference must be approved by both Houses of Parliament. Hence, if the Legislative Assembly approve of a line of railway and the Legislative Council disapprove of it, and decline to pass the plans, sections, and book of reference, it cannot be constructed. The Standing Orders of the Legislative Council also provide that all plans, sections, and books of reference for proposed railways must be referred to a select committee of that Chamber for consideration and report. On Tuesday last the Presiding Chairman of the Legislative Council read a message from the Legislative Assembly forwarding for the approval of the Upper Chamber the plans, sections, and book of reference of the proposed line of railway from Warwick towards St. George. The Postmaster-General thereupon gave notice that on the 2nd November next he would move the following resolution:—That the plans, sections, and book of reference of the proposed line of railway from Warwick towards St. George be referred to a select committee and that such committee consist of the following members.”

Mark the following members—a beautiful, undivided family:—J. D. Macansh, a man well known to have a vast interest in the matter; E. B. Forrest, a man who signed a petition in favour of the railway—

The Hon. E. B. FORREST: Will you produce it?

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: Yes.

The Hon. E. B. FORREST : I do not think you will. Mind what you are saying about me.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR : Next was J. C. Foote, a man well known in Ipswich.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL : Not so well known in this House !

The Hon. J. TAYLOR : Very well known in Ipswich, and that is sufficient. What is known in Ipswich must be known here. The next was W. H. Wilson—the lieutenant of the Postmaster-General ; and then there was the mover—that was himself. Now, is that a fair committee to appoint to take evidence upon that line ? Every one of them in favour of the line !

The Hon. F. T. BRETNALL : Are they all the members of the committee ?

The Hon. J. TAYLOR : Yes.

The Hon. F. T. BRETNALL : The Hon. Mr. Gregory was on the committee.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR : He was put on afterwards in place of poor Foote. The article goes on to say :—

“The intention of the Upper House in passing the Standing Order we have quoted was evidently to enable the members of that Chamber to obtain the very best and most reliable information procurable as to the necessity of proceeding with the lines of railway referred to them for their approval. That this principle is a sound one is beyond question, and several times since 1861 the Legislative Council have rendered good service to the country by rejecting political and otherwise useless railways, and saving the taxpayers from very large and unnecessary expenditure of public money. We desire to point out that in the selection of the committee above named there is an evident disposition on the part of the Government to secure a favourable report for the Warwick to St. George railway. We have no objection whatever to a fair committee. The Standing Order of the Legislative Council, approved as it has been by the Governor, is part of the consolidated law of the colony, and as such is entitled to such proper observance ; but in the selection of a select committee to determine such a great question as the Warwick to St. George railway, involving as it does two or three millions of money, we think it would be only common fairness to the whole colony to have a committee composed of fair and impartial gentlemen. We desire it to be distinctly understood that we do not object to any member of the committee named by the Postmaster-General, on personal grounds. Our contention is this : That as the committee now stands there are, avowedly, four who may be regarded as favourable to the Government policy, and only one supposed to be the other way. It is impossible that the public can have confidence in the report of a committee so constituted ; and it certainly gives colour to the report which is in circulation that the Government are determined, *volens volens*, to force the Warwick to St. George railway upon the people of the colony.”

That was written by one of the strongest supporters of the Government.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL : Name !

The Hon. J. TAYLOR : Never mind the name ; I will tell you privately by-and-by.

The Hon. E. B. FORREST : Let us know all about it ; you are afraid to name him, and you know it.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR : Afraid to name him ! I am not afraid to name anybody, or do anything. Then the article says :—

“We have before stated, and now repeat it, that if the Legislative Council approve of the Warwick to St. George railway then the colony is committed not only to the construction of the 23½ miles of line from Warwick to St. George, but also to the construction of the *via recta*, which, according to Mr. Stanley's report, corroborated by Mr. Phillips, will cost over a million sterling.”

No doubt that is correct.

The Hon. E. B. FORREST : He knows a lot about it.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR : More than you do.

The Hon. E. B. FORREST : I do not think so.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR : The writer continues :—

“The Legislative Council is in this instance a court of review. It has before it the fact that in the Legislative Assembly there was a great conflict of opinion ; so much so that on division the line was only approved of by a majority of one, and if from that majority we deduct the six votes of Ministers we have this result as far as the representatives of the people are concerned—26 against and only 21 in favour of the line. This fact alone is sufficient to justify the Legislative Council in seriously considering whether the practice which is adopted in the mother country is not the right one to pursue upon this occasion. It is part of the unwritten law of the Constitution of England that when a Bill or a great and important question excites such conflict of opinion in the House of Commons that it is only carried by a small majority, or by the casting vote of the Speaker or Chairman of Committees, as the case may be, the measure is laid aside and not proceeded with. And this is common to both the great political parties in England. Whether the Conservatives or the Liberals are in office, and an equality of votes is shown on each side, the measure or question under consideration is laid aside. It is the rule, and honourably observed by both parties, that every great political measure should be carried by an absolute majority, outside the members of the Government, to justify its being proceeded with. And Sir Samuel Griffith himself has set the example in connection with the resolution of Mr. Jordan referring to the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act. That resolution was carried by the casting vote of the Speaker, and the Premier on being asked a question on the subject said that, with such a narrow majority as the casting vote, he did not feel justified in disturbing the existing law. May we not with great propriety ask why the same rule should not apply to the large expenditure of public money involved in the Warwick to St. George railway as well as to an important public question which the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act undoubtedly is ? We think that in appointing a select committee to inquire into this railway, in view of the circumstances we have detailed above, there should have been a fair and impartial selection—impartial, that is to say, representing both sides of the question.”

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL : So there was.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR : There was not. Look at the names, and you will see there was not :—

“If, in the Legislative Council, as in the Legislative Assembly, there is a party opposed to and a party in favour of the line then the select committee appointed to draw up a report upon the question should be fairly selected from both sides, and then whatever the report may be it would inspire confidence in the public mind. But in the selection which has now been made—four on one side and only one on the other—it appears to us that the report will be very much like the Bridgeworth election—‘all on one side.’ We very much underrate the stamina of members of the Legislative Council if they permit this committee to be appointed in the manner in which it has been selected. We hope that there are members in the Council who will insist upon a selection being made that will represent both sides of the question. If that is done we have no doubt whatever as to the result. The matter is one of very serious importance indeed ; it affects the expenditure of £3,000,000, with an annual interest amounting to £120,000. Before such a gigantic scheme is carried out the country ought to be satisfied, upon the best and most reliable evidence procurable, that the railway, when constructed, will not only pay working expenses, but also some quota of the interest on the cost of its construction. As a question of justice we think it our duty to draw attention to this matter. The whole colony is largely interested in it. We have said before, and we repeat it, that it is not a matter which concerns Toowoomba or Warwick individually. It concerns the whole of the taxpayers of the colony who will have to pay the annual interest. They have therefore a large interest in it, and on their behalf, already heavily taxed as they are, we appeal to the good sense of the Legislative Council to see on Tuesday next, when the Postmaster-General moves his resolution, that a committee is appointed who will fairly and impartially represent both sides of the Upper Chamber.”

That was an article written by one of the strongest supporters of the Government, and yet he could not agree with their decision. I have a

ist here taken from the census returns for the year 1886. On Darling Downs West, including all the country from the border of the census district of Warwick and Goondiwindi, as well as that town and the stations surrounding it—140 miles of country—the population consists of 1,131 men, women, and children. From Goondiwindi to St. George there is no settlement the whole way, the country not being fit for settlement. The St. George people do not require the railway, and they deliberately declare, in meeting, that they do not require it. As I said before, the line must cost £3,000,000. There is no doubt about that, and the annual interest will amount to £120,000. The railways are now showing a decrease of £109,000. That was last year, which was a bad year, but this year is worse. This year the Treasurer estimates that he will receive £70,000 from railways in excess of last year, but what has been the result so far? The first quarter of the financial year shows a decrease of £36,000, or an average of £2,000 a week. From the 1st October to the 30th November there has been a decrease of £16,000, showing that in four and a-half months of the financial year the railway receipts have decreased to the extent of £52,000. What will be the result during the next two years we cannot say, but there will probably be a deficiency of £100,000. Hon. gentlemen, I object to this railway in every way, and I hope the House will be manly enough and have brains enough to throw it out for the present. If we are losing £2,000 a week for our railways, it is quite time to stop their extension. I shall oppose the line in every way, and I hope it will be thrown out.

Question put, and the PRESIDING CHAIRMAN declared that the "Not-Contents" had it.

The HON. A. RAFF said: Hon. gentlemen,—When I came to the House this afternoon—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Too late!

THE PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: I have declared that the "Not-Contents" have it.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Divide!

The House divided:—

#### CONTENTS, 13.

The Hons. T. Macdonald-Paterson, J. D. Macanish, H. C. Wood, D. F. Roberts, J. C. Foote, J. Swan, F. B. Brentnall, W. Horatio Wilson, J. S. Turner, E. T. Forrest, W. Pettigrew, J. C. Heussler, and A. Heron Wilson.

#### NOT-CONTENTS, 13.

The Hons. F. H. Holberton, J. Taylor, F. T. Gregory, A. C. Gregory, G. King, A. Raff, W. Forrest, W. Aplin, J. C. Smyth, W. G. Power, W. P. Lambert, F. H. Hart, and A. J. Thynne.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN said: A division having been called, there appear:—Contents, 13; Not-contents, 13. I give my casting vote with the "Not-contents," and the question is therefore resolved in the negative.

### MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

#### BUILDING SOCIETIES BILL.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN announced that he had received a message from the Legislative Assembly, intimating that they did not insist on their disagreement to the amendment in clause 26, upon which the Legislative Council insisted.

#### SOUTH BRISBANE MECHANICS INSTITUTE SALE BILL.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Assembly, intimating that they disagreed to some amendments in this Bill, and agreed to others with amendments.

On the motion of the HON. A. J. THYNNE, the message was ordered to be taken into consideration in committee to-morrow.

### ERROR IN MESSAGE.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said: Hon. gentlemen,—With the consent of the House, I now beg to move that the following message be sent to the Legislative Assembly:—

MR. SPEAKER,

In the schedule of amendments made by the Legislative Council in the British Companies Bill returned to the Legislative Assembly by message, dated 24th instant, two errors have occurred by the insertion of the word "December" in the amendments in clauses 10 and 14, where the word "January" should appear.

Question put and passed.

### GLADSTONE TO BUNDABERG RAILWAY.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL laid on the table of the House the report of the select committee appointed to inquire into the proposed railway from Gladstone to Bundaberg, and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

### WARWICK TO ST. GEORGE RAILWAY.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said: Hon. gentlemen,—The next Order of the Day is No. 4, which runs in the following terms:—

"1. That this House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed railway from Warwick towards St. George, section 1, commencing at 168 miles 48 chains, near East Warwick Station, and ending at Thane's Creek, 193 miles 70 chains 44 links, in length 25 miles 22 chains 44 links, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly on the 26th ultimo.

"2. That such approval be notified to the Legislative Assembly by message in the usual form."

In moving the resolution, I need hardly say it is not worth my while to go over the ground I have previously traversed in regard to this question, because it must be apparent to every hon. member that the question of policy and cost has already been brought before the House. That is all the select committee has to deal with. The question of policy and cost is all that is relegated to a select committee, and that is done under Standing Order No. 111, which reads as follows:—

#### "RESOLUTIONS RELATING TO CONSTRUCTION OF RAILWAYS.

"(Adopted by the Legislative Council, 24th September, 1879; approved 2nd October, 1879.)

"Whenever resolutions calling for the sanction of Parliament to the construction of railways and approval of plans, sections, and books of reference are brought to the Legislative Council, the same shall lie on the table for a period of one week, and then be referred to a select committee, which shall be ordered to sit *de die in diem*, and collect such evidence as may be attainable on the policy and probable cost of each separate line of railway, and report to the House on or before the fourteenth day after the appointment of such committee."

Hon. gentlemen are aware that we have abrogated this order to the extent of allowing committees to sit on the subject-matter referred to them before a week has expired after the plans, sections, and books of reference have been laid on the table of the House. We have also, in several instances, asked for further time beyond the fourteen days allowed by the Standing Order with a view to enable the Committee to bring up their report in the terms of their appointment. I think it is quite right that I should observe that this question of the construction of this proposed line is one that is moving the whole colony. I say that advisedly, for the reason that two-thirds of the population of the country are in the southern end of the colony, and they are all moved as one man to conserve the trade inwards and outwards of the Western territory to the port of Brisbane. Most of that trade is now going to New South Wales; part of it is going to South Australia. It is very

desirable, therefore, that this colony should, once and for ever, adopt a policy of conservatism in regard to that matter. It is simply a question of whether we should allow our trade to pass into the colonies of New South Wales and South Australia, or expend a moderate sum per mile in the establishment of a main road, which means the iron horse travelling at 20 miles an hour, into a territory which is now practically part of other colonies. Are we to stand still and be stamped out? Are we to allow our trade to be scooped up and swept to Newcastle and Sydney? Those are the questions which we have to consider. The matter is one of loyalty to our country. There is nothing more important to the southern part of the colony, than the adoption of the policy involved in the resolution before the House. The Hon. Mr. Lambert makes an interjection. I know he is an enthusiastic supporter of the Central line; but I think the hon. gentleman will allow that I have as good a knowledge of what will be the effects and the results of the construction of the Central Railway as he has; and I know that the construction of this line is much more important, with regard to the policy of the southern portion of the colony, than the speedy extension of the Central Railway, for which the hon. gentleman is such a strong advocate. Can team-carriage or camel-carriage compete with the works policy of the Government of this country? I answer emphatically, "No." It rests with this Chamber to say whether we shall stand still or go forward and secure the trade which properly belongs to Queensland. It is this Chamber that will be charged with credit or discredit, according as it adopts or rejects this policy. I think it is unnecessary for me to advert to what seems to have been a misapprehension on the part of somebody when the last motion was put, because there were unquestionably three gentlemen on their feet ready to address the Chamber before any declaration was made as to the vote at all.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No; not one.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Hon. gentlemen may say "No" a thousand times; what I declare is the fact.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: I rise to a point of order. This is a gross insult to yourself, Mr. Presiding Chairman.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: It is nothing of the kind. It would be a gross insult to say that the hon. the Presiding Chairman saw those gentlemen; but he did not see them.

The Hon. J. TAYLOR: Because they were not there.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: The hon. members themselves can say at once whether I am correct in stating that the Hon. Mr. Raff was on his feet, that the Hon. Mr. Macanish was on his feet, and that I myself was on my feet.

The Hon. W. F. LAMBERT: You were not.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I affirm that I was. I repeat that the Hon. Mr. Macanish and myself were on our feet before the question was determined.

The Hon. W. F. LAMBERT: You were not.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Be that as it may, the subject before us now is this motion I have just read. I hope hon. gentlemen will give it that warm support that they gave to the last motion, and I have no fear for the result—not a bit. This is a motion that must carry with it every hon. gentleman who has the interest of the colony at heart, and who knows, as everyone must know, that in

this portion of Queensland there is an enormous population as compared with the population in other parts. We are all interested in making the port of Brisbane as good as the ports of Sydney and Melbourne, and this port is entitled to the trade of our own territory. We are entitled to all the wool that may be produced in the Western districts about St. George, and southerly and westerly towards the border; and we should not permit New South Wales to grab it from us at the expense of our own capital. This is a question of self-protection. We wish to retain our own business—to supply our own countrymen with what they want in the way of business, and to receive in return all that they produce. If this House should affirm that it is desirable for New South Wales to prey upon us as she has been doing for the past five or ten years, then I say that is a result which cannot but produce dissatisfaction to those most interested. I am sure the matter will receive attention; I am sure it will be well discussed. I am perfectly certain that there are hon. gentlemen here able to give much more information on the subject than I am—the Hon. E. B. Forrest, the Hon. Mr. Macanish, the Messrs. Gregory, and other hon. gentlemen are well able to state that some years anterior to the present time we were doing a considerable business with that part of the country, which at the present time has no existence. The profitable business with that part of the country—the traffic of our teams and railways and steamboats and sailing vessels at the present time has all passed away; and whither has it gone? It has gone over the border to New South Wales. I think this House should have another opportunity of determining whether this policy of beggar-my-neighbour, or beggar ourselves rather, shall be carried out. As I said in an earlier part of the afternoon, we do not wish to take one ton of goods out of New South Wales, or put one ton of goods into it; we wish to protect ourselves, and attend to our own business. The construction of this railway would lead to the conservation of a very large business in the best section of the colony of Queensland, because from Cape Moreton to South Australia there is better territory than exists in the portion of the colony up to a point 200 miles north, or 200 miles north of that again, and so on up to the Gulf of Carpentaria. We have there a territory three times as large as the whole colony of Victoria, and why should we not keep it for ourselves? Are we to stand quietly by and allow our neighbours to absorb the business we have had with ourselves, and which is going a-begging simply for the want of a railway track? I answer no. I am quite sure that the response to my appeal to the hon. members of this House to be loyal to the country of their adoption—to be loyal Queenslanders—will not be answered in the negative, but will be answered in the affirmative—namely, that the policy I now propose shall be adopted by the country.

The Hon. F. T. GREGORY said: Hon. gentlemen,—I am surprised at the motion of the hon. the Postmaster-General, after he has been substantially defeated. My object in now rising is to draw the attention of the House to what I believe to be a point of order. The point of order is this: we have distinctly negatived the report recommending that the plans, section, and book of reference be approved. I cannot see how, having negatived that, we can bring up another motion that they be approved. It is exactly the same resolution that has been negatived, and I do not think it is competent for the matter to be put to the House. I therefore ask the ruling of the Presiding Chairman as to whether, under those circumstances, it is competent to put the motion?



The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: My ruling having been asked on this question, I hold that the motion now proposed is in effect the same as that which we have negatived, and that the motion cannot be put again to the House. The House has not the power to proceed with the matter *de novo* when it has negatived the same question in effect.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Hon. gentlemen,—I have now the honour to move that the ruling of the Presiding Chairman be disagreed to.

The HON. F. T. BRENTNALL: Hon. gentlemen—

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: No debate can take place on this question.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Hon. gentlemen,—Assuming I have just sat down—

The HON. W. FORREST: I rise to a point of order. The hon. gentleman has spoken.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I simply wish to make an observation.

The HON. W. FORREST: I rise again to a point of order. The hon. gentleman has spoken. I ask the ruling of the Presiding Chairman. The hon. gentleman cannot speak again if one member dissent.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Do you dissent?

The HON. W. FORREST: I do dissent.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Very well.

Question.—That the ruling of the Presiding Chairman be disagreed to—put.

The House divided:—

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The Hons. T. Macdonald-Paterson, F. T. Brentnall, W. Horatio Wilson, J. D. Macanish, W. F. Taylor, J. Swan, W. Pettigrew, and J. C. Foote.

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The Hons. A. C. Gregory, F. T. Gregory, W. Forrest, G. King, A. Raff, A. Heron Wilson, A. J. Thynne, F. H. Holberton, W. G. Power, W. F. Lambert, F. H. Hart, J. C. Smyth, W. Aplin, J. Taylor, and H. C. Wood.

Question resolved in the negative.

#### MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said: Hon. gentlemen,—I shall conclude my observations by a substantive motion, and it will be to the effect that this House do now adjourn. I think there must have been a misapprehension, or at least a *quasi* misapprehension, in the minds of some hon. gentlemen with respect to what has just transpired. I refer, of course, to the ruling of the Presiding Chairman. I say it with all respect—that the ruling of the Presiding Chairman is entirely wrong.

The HON. W. FORREST said: Hon. gentlemen,—I rise again to a point of order. The hon. the Postmaster-General has already dissented from the ruling of the Presiding Chairman, carried it to a division, and the House has decided by a majority against him. I am astonished—and yet, on second thought, I am not astonished, considering that he will use any means to carry his point—to see him get up again and say that the ruling of the Presiding Chairman was wrong, after the House has expressed a most decided opinion that it was right. I rise, as I said, to a point of order, and I ask you, sir, whether the hon. the Postmaster-General can refer to what has been settled, first by yourself, and afterwards by a division of the House?

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: The question having been settled on a division, it cannot be reopened.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I think I am entitled to ask that the Presiding Chairman's ruling should be supported by some quotations from "May," or some other authority on constitutional law and parliamentary practice.

The HON. W. FORREST: We have settled the question.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: Are we to accept the decision, without having it supported by the opinions of recognised authorities?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Order! Order!

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: I shall resume the chair in half-an-hour.

The House having resumed,

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN: Hon. gentlemen,—Having considered the matter I see no reason to alter my ruling. My ruling having been disagreed to and referred to the House, and a majority of the House having decided that my ruling was a correct one, there can be no departure from it, and I decline to reopen the question, and shall consider any attempt to reopen the question as out of order.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL: I beg to withdraw my motion for the adjournment of the House.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

#### MESSAGES FROM THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

##### BRITISH COMPANIES BILL.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Assembly, intimating that the Assembly had agreed to the amendments made by the Legislative Council in this Bill.

##### GOLD FIELDS HOMESTEAD LEASES BILL.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Assembly, intimating that the Assembly had agreed to the new clause inserted in this Bill by the Legislative Council, with the addition of the words "Provided that the purchaser must be a person qualified to apply for a lease under the Act," and had agreed to the other amendments made by the Legislative Council in the Bill.

##### COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the House went into committee to consider the Legislative Assembly's message.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL moved that the amendment of the Legislative Assembly on the new clause 22 be agreed to. The Council's amendment consisted of the insertion of the new clause as follows:—

"When a holding under this Act is taken in execution under the judgment of any court of competent jurisdiction, and sold, the sheriff or other proper officer shall execute a transfer of the lease to the purchaser at such sale; and upon production of the transfer to the warden, and payment of the prescribed fee, the lease shall be transferred to such purchaser accordingly."

That was the original amendment of the Legislative Council, and the Legislative Assembly proposed to add the proviso—"Provided that the purchaser must be a person qualified to apply for a lease under this Act." He did not think any discussion need arise upon the amendment, and he simply moved that it be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the POSTMASTER-GENERAL, the House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the amendment of the Legislative Assembly in the new clause 22.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said : Hon. gentlemen,—I beg to move that the following message be transmitted to the Legislative Assembly :—

MR. SPEAKER,

The Legislative Council, having had under consideration the Legislative Assembly's message relative to the amendments made by the Legislative Council in the Gold Fields Homestead Leases Bill, beg now to intimate that they agree to the amendment made by the Legislative Assembly in the proposed new clause 22.

Question put and passed.

#### CROWN LANDS ACT OF 1884 AMENDMENT BILL.

The PRESIDING CHAIRMAN announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Assembly intimating that the Legislative Assembly had agreed to the amendments made by the Legislative Council in this Bill.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said : Hon. gentlemen,—I am about to move that this House do now adjourn ; and in doing so I wish to say that the time for meeting to-morrow will be 2 o'clock for half-past 2 o'clock sharp. I take this opportunity of stating that in my remarks this evening, with respect to the ruling of the Chairman—I hope the House will bear with me for a moment or two—I entertained no disrespect whatever to the Presiding Chairman or his ruling. On the contrary, for that gentleman I entertain the highest respect. I had my reasons for disagreeing to the ruling of the Chair ; and hon. gentlemen who are used to parliamentary work know very well that it is not an unusual thing to disagree even to the ruling of the Presiding Chairman in this Chamber, or the ruling of the Speaker in the other House. I had my reasons for taking the step I did and speaking the words I spoke, and I wish at once to disclaim, at once in the heartiest and most honest manner, that so far as the Presiding Chairman is concerned, I have not one word of cavil to make with respect to his ruling, and I hope, on the contrary, that everyone in this Chamber will, while he occupies the position—which he I am certain adorns—will have the same opinion of his qualities as a Chairman that I have ; and if that be so there will be no fault to be found with him while he is in the position he now holds. I move that this House do now adjourn till to-morrow at 2 o'clock for half-past 2 o'clock sharp.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past 10 o'clock.