

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 1887

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 1 November, 1887.

Questions.—Personal Explanation—Resumed half of Kilkivan Run.—Motion for Adjournment.—The Rabbit Question.—Distilleries Act of 1849 Amendment Bill—third reading.—Warwick to Thane's Creek Railway—further consideration in committee.—Adjournment.

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

QUESTIONS.

Mr. KELLETT asked the Minister for Works—

1. Are the Government aware that the contract for the second section of the Brisbane Valley line was let to H. A. Brigg, a short time before the clause was introduced into Government railway contracts providing for settlement of disputes by arbitration, and that the contract in question was the last one let in which the arbitration clause was not inserted?

2. Has a claim been made by Mr. Brigg for work alleged by him to have been performed and not paid for, and for incorrect and insufficient measurements, and other matters in dispute between him and the District Engineer?

3. Is it a fact that the Government are aware that the Minister for Works stated that, in his opinion, some of the claims were just and reasonable, and promised that an inquiry into the matters in dispute should be held, in order that the contractor should not be prejudiced by the omission of the arbitration clause?

4. Has any such inquiry been held?—If so, by whom and when; and what action, if any, has been taken in the matter?—If not, is it the intention of the Government to grant the inquiry?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) replied—

1. The contract for the second section of the Brisbane Valley line was let to H. A. Brigg before the arbitration clauses were inserted in the conditions; but it was not the last one let in which those clauses were wanting.

2. The contractor has asked for a reconsideration of his claims.

3. No.

4. The claim on account of fencing was inquired into by me, when I found that the statement in support of this particular claim was so incorrect that I would not proceed further. It is not the intention of the Government to grant any inquiry.

Mr. BLACK asked the Colonial Treasurer—

When will the Government be prepared to commence the harbour and river improvements at Mackay, now that Sir John Coode's reports have been received?

The COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) replied—

On receipt of Sir John Coode's report I referred it to the Engineer of Harbours and Rivers for his recommendation as to the best mode of carrying out design C, and especially as to when dredging operations should be begun.

I have to-day received Mr. Nisbet's report. He is of opinion that dredging cannot be usefully begun until a part of the training bank has been constructed.

Instructions have been given to call for tenders for the supply of the necessary material for the construction of the bank, and it is proposed to proceed with the work as soon as the necessary arrangements have been made.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

RESUMED HALF OF KILKIVAN RUN.

Mr. BAILEY said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to make a personal explanation in regard to the question I have upon the paper, concerning the grazing rights of the lessee of Kilkivan Station, over the resumed half of that run; and also in regard to the notice of motion, standing in my

name, in reference to the same matter. I was under the impression that an injustice had been done to the lessee of that run; but I have since received a communication from him, in which he asks me not to bring the matter before the House, and states that he would far rather the matter should be dealt with by the department. I therefore beg to withdraw from the notice-paper the question and notice of motion standing in my name.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

THE RABBIT QUESTION.

Mr. MURPHY said: Mr. Speaker,—I rise for the purpose of bringing a matter before the House, and shall conclude with the usual motion. The subject I wish to refer to is one which I have brought up before—namely, the spread of the rabbit pest into Queensland. It is a matter that deserves the most serious attention of the Government. It is an undoubted fact that this pest has obtained a considerable hold in Queensland; in fact, I have it on the very best authority that rabbits are now to be found at least 112 miles inside our border, at a point upon the Bulloo River. I do not wish to mention the name of the station, because it might do some injury to the pastoral tenants holding property in the neighbourhood. I know from undoubted and reliable authority that what I have just stated is correct, that rabbits are now 112 miles inside our border. In order that the House may realise the way in which this pest is spreading, I will remind hon. members that Mr. Humphry Davy, who was the special commissioner sent by this Government to report upon the rabbits, made his report on the 4th October, 1885, over two years ago, and he then stated that the rabbits were then, at the nearest point, 130 miles from our border. Now we find that they are 112 miles within our border, showing that, so far as we can calculate, in two years they have travelled over and infested the country 242 miles in a straight line. That fact is one which should be sufficient to make the Government, the House, and the country thoroughly realise the magnitude of the evil that is hanging over us. I would not trouble the House if I did not feel that in calling attention to this matter I am calling attention to a very grave public danger. I took the trouble to write to a friend of mine in Sydney, and asked him to go to the rabbit inspector there and make inquiries. The rabbit business there comes under the Department of Mines, and there is a special officer told off to attend to it, Mr. Henry C. Taylor. I asked a friend of mine, Mr. Neville Griffiths, who is a reliable man, and was a member of the last Parliament of New South Wales, to go to that office and get what information he could from Mr. Taylor. I will read the letter Mr. Griffiths sent me, which reveals some startling facts in regard to rabbits:—

“Department of Mines,

“Rabbit Branch,

“Sydney, 22nd October, 1887.

“MY DEAR MR. GRIFFITHS,

“In reply to the inquiries made by you on behalf of Mr. Murphy, M.P., Queensland, I desire to inform you that rabbits have been found in this colony as far east as Angledool and Gundabluie, no great distance from where the Barwon or McIntyre intersects the border of the two colonies.

“The reports regarding the existence of rabbits in the vicinity of Narrabri are, unfortunately, too true, and eight have already been killed there; but whether they are the progeny of tame rabbits turned out there some years since, or whether the great rabbit wave has yet reached that place I am unable to say. However, an expert leaves for that place on Monday night, and his report as to the extent and spread of the pest will be eagerly looked for.

"You may have noticed from a summary of a report of mine published in this morning's *Herald* that upwards of 10,000,000 rabbits have been destroyed in this colony during the first eight months of the year, and putting the cost of the destruction of each of these at 6d. per head (a very low estimate) you will see that the cost to the country has been over £250,000; and the above should, I think, be sufficient to encourage your Queensland friends in insisting upon prompt steps being taken to destroy the few rabbits which have ere this made their way into that country.

"Yours faithfully,

"H. C. TAYLOR."

That is thoroughly reliable information, because it comes direct from the Rabbit Branch of the Mines Department in New South Wales, and it shows that out of the consolidated revenue of that colony the sum of £250,000 has already been spent during the first eight months of this year in attempting to destroy this pest. I may say in passing that this £250,000, so far as we can gather from the report of the conference that sat in Sydney some time ago, has been utterly wasted, because they have gone on wrong lines and are now shifting their ground and going to commence to fight the pest by means of fencing. I have also an extract from a Sydney newspaper—I do not know what paper, because this is only a slip that was sent to me. It is a police court report from Wilcannia, showing the desperate straits in which station-owners in that neighbourhood have been placed by the rabbits, as follows:—

"NEGLECTING TO DESTROY RABBITS.

"An Important Case.

"(By Telegraph.)

"Wilcannia, Wednesday.—At the local court to-day, before Messrs. Gower, P.M., and Dickens, J.P., Mr. A. J. Clarke, rabbit inspector, proceeded against Mr. W. P. Wynne, the manager of the Teryawynnina Station, for neglecting to obey an order for the destruction of rabbits. It was stated that the station consisted of twenty-three blocks, and that rabbit-destroying had only taken place on seven of these. Notice was served on Mr. Wynne to increase the number of men employed in destroying rabbits to 180, but this order had not been obeyed. In defence, Mr. Wynne said that during June he spent £7,743 on rabbit destruction, the result being that over half-a-million were killed. Since then shearing had commenced and men could not be obtained. The bench thought that putting on 180 men would be ruinous, but as the disobedience of orders had been proved they were bound to inflict a fine. Mr. Wynne was then fined £5 5s. and costs, making a total of £12 7s. 10d."

Under the present Act in New South Wales the consolidated revenue is responsible for three-fourths of that £7,700 spent by Mr. Wynne in destroying rabbits. That shows very conclusively the state into which that part of the colony has got through the rabbits; and the great wave only went there in 1883. On account of the rabbits the Government have lost £2,500 a year rent from the Teryawynnina Run, which at one time carried over 200,000 sheep. The number has been reduced to considerably under 100,000, so that there is a loss to the country in the carrying capacity of the run to the extent of 100,000 sheep, which is a very serious thing. Besides that, the country has had to pay over £5,000 for one month alone out of the consolidated revenue to assist the pastoral tenant to destroy the rabbits, whilst the annual rent he paid was £2,500. That again shows how wonderfully this pest is spreading. I only take this as one instance, but there are hundreds of other instances in New South Wales of runs equally afflicted. The only remedy we have for this pest is fencing, as has been demonstrated by the action of Victoria and New South Wales. In Victoria they are now fencing the border and taking steps to divide the colony into sections, separating the uninfested from the infested portion. In New South Wales they are doing exactly the same; they are fencing between New South Wales and South Australia, and

also taking steps to fence the infested from the uninfested portion of the colony. They are also going to introduce a Bill to lend money to pastoral tenants and land-owners for the purpose of fencing in their own runs, in order that they may still more cut the colony up into small areas, because it has been shown that the only way to fight the rabbits is by enclosing them, as it were, in paddocks, and dealing with them in detail. To show that fencing is the only remedy, I will read a recommendation contained in the report of the Rabbit Conference held in Sydney, on Monday, 14th June, 1886. The conference consisted of fifty-four delegates from all portions of New South Wales, representatives of every class in the community directly interested in the rabbit plague. I will read the 7th paragraph of that report, which will show that they agree that the action this Government has taken in fencing the boundary of the colony is practically the only remedy for the rabbit plague:—

"This conference resolves that it is absolutely necessary at once to erect rabbit-proof fencing to divide the infested from the uninfested country, and that a line of fencing, which may be called the barrier line, shall be erected from the Queensland border to the Victorian border, and that the country within the infested areas should be separated by main lines of subdivision, rabbit-proof fencing, dividing it, as far as possible, into three classes—of thickly infested, moderately infested, and very lightly infested country—and that these lines should, as far as practicable, follow existing run boundaries and railway lines; and, further, that an inter-colonial barrier line of rabbit-proof fencing should be erected along the South Australian border, and thence up the Murray as far as Koondrook."

The Government of New South Wales are acting upon the recommendations of this conference, and they have practically commenced the fencing recommended by the conference. They are advertising now for tenders for a line of fencing from Bourke, on the Darling, to the Queensland border, twenty-three miles eastward of the Warrego River. The line follows the railway from Sydney to Bourke a certain distance down as far as the crossing of the Bogan River; then it follows the Bogan across to Forbes and Wagga, on the main line between Melbourne and Sydney, and follows that to the Murray. We see from this fact that the Government of New South Wales evidently realise that the conference were perfectly right in their recommendation. I also wish to read an extract from an article on this subject in the *Sydney Mail* of 15th October. There are some remarks in it which are well worthy of our consideration. The article was written in consequence of action which had been previously taken in this House with respect to this matter. The manager of this paper has had every opportunity of being able to arrive at what is a correct and just conclusion with regard to the rabbit question, because it has been so much argued and talked over both in the New South Wales Legislature and also at the conference to which I have referred, as well as among private persons in that colony. The article is headed "Rabbits in Queensland." The first part consists of extracts from newspapers showing how the rabbits are spreading in this colony, and the end is a warning to us. The part to which I wish to direct attention reads as follows:—

"The effect of procrastination in the matter of defence is, alas, well demonstrated in the present condition of the colony. In round numbers there are now employed 3,500 men rabbit-hunting. Put down the wages bill of each week as £7,000, which is a very moderate estimate, and it appears that, irrespective of the loss of grass, the rabbit plague is costing New South Wales £364,000 per annum. The actual cost may be less or it may be more, but in either case there is a base sufficient to support the argument that it would be true economy on the part of Queensland to spend hundreds of thousands sterling on defence works. There should be erected as speedily as possible a couple of complete lines of barrier fence; one along the

boundary, the other a score of miles further inland. Action similar to this was suggested recently in these columns as suitable for this colony, and in the Queensland Legislative Assembly on Tuesday the Government of that colony was requested to erect a second barrier line. In reply the Minister in charge of such matters—"I believe it was the present Minister for Works, not the Minister for Lands, who gave this reply:—"In reply, the Minister in charge of such matters gave his hearers to understand that he did not look upon the position as being very serious; and while acknowledging the desirability of keeping the present fence in repair, declined to erect a second one. The subject is worthy of consideration. Two lines of rabbit-proof fence, with good supervision, may save Queensland. Need we remind our neighbours that the object is worthy of the effort?"

I agree with every word in that article, and I think we ought to take steps at once to erect a second barrier fence against the plague. We should acknowledge at once that we have got an infested district. There is no use shutting our eyes to that fact; the rabbits are here, and have got a firm foothold in the country. We should therefore take immediate steps to erect a second barrier fence, so as to separate the infested from the uninfested district. I have brought the subject up this afternoon for the simple reason that I wish to again force on the Government the necessity that there is to put a sum of money on the Supplementary Estimates for this purpose, and I only hope that my remarks on the subject and my continual hammering at it will make them see the matter in the same light as I do. I know they do see it in that light; but I believe they are afraid to face the large expenditure of money which is absolutely essential in order to cope with the difficulty effectively. I think they should face that expenditure; otherwise we shall within two years at the outside be in the position of New South Wales, which is spending £364,000 per annum to fight with the pest. And that is not the only loss; there is also the loss of the grazing capacity of the country. An enormous amount of grass is eaten by the rabbits, and numbers of runs in that colony which formerly carried hundreds of thousands of sheep are now quite denuded of stock. If rabbits once get a firm footing here the effect will be felt by every man, woman, and child in the community, and the result in the end will be disaster. I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. H. Jordan) said:—Mr. Speaker,—I am sorry that I did not hear the commencement of the remarks made by the hon. member who has just sat down. I gather from his remarks that he alluded to a paragraph which appeared in the evening papers yesterday.

Mr. MURPHY: No.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There were two paragraphs which appeared in the evening papers yesterday, and one of them stated that the rabbits have been found north of Thargomindah; that some fifteen of them have been seen there; and it alluded also to the damage recently sustained by the fences through floods. I think the hon. member for Barcoo is quite right in keeping the attention of the House directed constantly, during the remaining portion of the session—it will not last very long—to the great importance of this question. I do not know how the members of the House generally may feel with respect to it, because very little has been said on the subject, except by the hon. member for Barcoo. In fact, he says enough for the whole House. I attach very much importance to what he has said, and I believe every member of the Government attaches very great importance to this question. I stated before, immediately after the question was introduced in this House by the hon. member for Barcoo, a few weeks ago, what had been done about the fences on

the border. The very next day I sent a telegram to the gentleman who has the matter in charge, Mr. Donaldson, instructing him to re-engage the contractors who had been employed in carrying the line to within twenty-one miles of the Warrego to continue the fence forty-four miles further. I have received a reply to that telegram during the last few days, in which Mr. Donaldson states that, in accordance with the instructions sent to him to put that matter in hand, thirty miles out of the forty-four will be completed shortly. Twenty miles will be completed in about two months, and the remainder of the thirty miles in three months. He also states that he will put the remainder in hand as quickly as possible. So that it will be apparent that the Government have not lost a single moment in this matter, and that we are doing our utmost. In the first instance 450 miles of fencing was determined upon, and the sum of £50,000 was voted for the purpose; but that has not been found sufficient, and another £50,000 will be placed on the Supplementary Estimates to complete it, and the additional forty-four miles to which I have alluded. I do not know that anything more can be done by the Government, unless they immediately undertake to make the second line of fencing advocated by the hon. member for Barcoo. If that is done we shall, in the first place, have to determine where the second line should be. The hon. gentleman suggested, I think, that it should be four miles from the line, which is now very nearly completed, or will be completed within two or three months. Well, I am afraid that would not meet the case, inasmuch as the rabbits have been found very much further within our border than four miles—in fact that they have been found sixty miles within the border.

Mr. MURPHY: One hundred and twelve miles inside the border.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Now it is stated that they have been found still further within our border. If a second fence is put up, the question is where is it to be put up, and where is it to end? Are we to put up a third and fourth fence? I suppose it will come to this: that all the pastoral tenants of the Crown will have to fence in their runs, and pay for the fencing by an assessment on stock or something else. The Government are doing their utmost, and I think the hon. member will admit that. We have given instructions to proceed with the building of the huts. We shall have to hunt them out and kill them; and the fence must be kept in proper repair, and provision is now made for huts for boundary-riders. I do not think I need say any more on the question. I suppose the Government will still continue this work until it is completed as far as the £100,000 will go, and it will then be for the House to consider whether a second line of fencing will have to be erected.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—The figures quoted by the hon. member for Barcoo are certainly alarming, especially those which prove that within the last eight months 10,000,000 rabbits have been destroyed, costing 6d. a head; but I think the cost of destruction is still greater. In any case a quarter of a million of money has been expended, with the result that the rabbits are as numerous as ever, and that is in the face of a very large previous expenditure. The previous year, there were a still greater number destroyed at a greater expense, and the question is—Is there to be no end to this expenditure? They do not seem in New South Wales to be exterminating the rabbits. They do not seem even to be reducing the numbers, and we shall have to look in some other direction for a solution of the difficulty. There have been several

attempts made, and I would like to believe with the member for Barcoo that fencing is a remedy. He says it is an efficient remedy, but so far, that does not seem to have been the case in New South Wales. I do not say it is not a preventive, but in New South Wales it has not been an absolute cure. I think we are quite right in trying the remedy before us, but I would just like to remind the House that there are several solutions of this difficulty which I believe in time will be far more efficacious than fencing. Professor Watson, of the South Australian University, has on several occasions tried to import a remedy. I believe he has failed three times, but has succeeded at last in introducing from Germany a certain disease which kills off all rabbits. I may refer also to the disease which exists among the rabbits of North America. Many populous tribes of Indians had for years lived on rabbits, and in a certain year a disease overtook them in the shape of scab or murrain, and they almost disappeared from the country, with the result that the Indians were starving. It is very possible, therefore, that a solution of the difficulty may be found in that way, but I sympathise with the hon. member for Barcoo in his endeavour to get the Government to realise the importance of the rabbit question, and I am certainly astonished to find that the rabbits have been found 112 miles inside the border. The matter is one that the Government are justified in giving their earnest attention to, but whether a second fence is going to stop the invasion is certainly problematical, considering that the first fence has not succeeded in keeping the rabbits back. I think the Government would be justified in trying to discover a remedy, perhaps in the shape of a disease, which may be harmless to other animals and fatal to rabbits. They have admitted the necessity of making inquiry into the subject of pleuro-pneumonia, and perhaps a little science may come to our aid.

Mr. ALLAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I very much sympathise with the hon. member for Barcoo in his repeated endeavour to bring this matter before the House. The Minister for Lands has said that the Government are doing all they can to stop the spread of this plague. I know the Minister for Lands took action directly after the last debate on this matter in the House, but I do not think that the Government are taking the matter into consideration. There is a very large line of country still open to the rabbit pest from the Warrego eastward, and nothing has been done with regard to fencing that part of the country. The hon. member for Barcoo read a letter from the rabbit inspector of New South Wales, in which he mentioned the fact that rabbits had been found as far east as Gundabluie, and that is a long way eastward of the present rabbit fence. That is near Moree, I think, or in that direction; and from there up to Angledool they are to be found. But that country is a long way to the eastward of the Warrego. That is the part of the country that wants great attention. I think the Minister for Lands has received some letters from a resident on the border at Mungindi who has taken a great interest in the question, a Mr. Bucknell, and he has written to several people in Queensland connected with squatting pursuits on the border to find out if possible the way in which the rabbit pest may be stopped in that direction. His proposal may seem absurd, but such as it is I am afraid it will have to be adopted, and that very quickly, if we wish to stop this pest from entering the colony. I do not apologise to the House for taking up its time, because this is a question worthy of consideration. I have several letters which I have received on the subject; a gentleman wrote to me to-day, and his case astonished me very much.

He writes now to say that he is erecting a rabbit-proof fence to save himself. He does not absolutely say they have come upon him, but that they are 100 miles within our border, and he writes from a place between here and St. George. Mr. Bucknell suggests that six parallel lines of rabbit-proof fencing should be erected about four miles, or thereabouts, apart, the first line to be identical with the surveyed boundary of the colony, with cross-lines where deemed advisable—say about every seven or ten miles. This may be supposed to be a new idea, but I recollect that some such idea was suggested by our Inspector of Stock, Mr. P. R. Gordon, when he came back from the conference held in Sydney. That gentleman went still further, and proposed that at each division of these fences there should be traps, sufficient to destroy the rabbits, but not sufficient to destroy such of their natural enemies as might fall into them. The gentleman to whom I am referring further suggests:—

“That an offer be made to the squatters and others along the border that those who will erect these lines of rabbit-proof netting shall have twenty-one years’ leases of the country so dealt with—that is, that those border squatters who will at once go to work lines of rabbit-proof netting shall have twenty-one years’ leases granted them of the whole of their runs, including the resumed areas. A great many—it is thought the majority—of the border squatters would, if the above terms were offered them, erect the six netting fences. In many cases they would only have to attach the netting to the fences already on the ground. The netting fences would be a great improvement to the country, and would enable all other noxious animals to be exterminated, and would almost certainly prevent the rabbits spreading into Queensland, as they would never cross through six netting fences and pass through five narrow paddocks without being discovered and destroyed.”

This gentleman also suggests that the first line of fencing should be erected on the New South Wales side of the Barwon River and Macintyre Brook. The squatters there would be very glad to assist in this matter and bear a share of the expenses, and give an undertaking to look after the fences themselves. These fences should be erected on the side of their runs next the border, as the country there is more open than on this side, and much more easily supervised. These matters have been carefully thought out by these gentlemen, and it seems to be the consensus of opinion now that there is but the one way of stopping the pest, and that is by the erection of rabbit-proof fencing. In the letter from which I have quoted, this gentleman mentions that the rabbit plague cost New Zealand no less than £1,800,000 in 1882 in experiments to clear them out, and we have heard from the hon. member for Barcoo how much it is costing New South Wales yearly to attempt to stop them; and I think that no effort we can make here, however great, will be too much to stop this plague from spreading within our borders. Now is the time to make the effort, for at first we have the natural enemies of the rabbits to help us, and if we wait until the wave reaches us it will be found almost impossible to eradicate them. The hon. member for Burke said that fencing is of no use, but that is incorrect. Of my own knowledge I am aware of many places in Victoria where the rabbits have been exterminated after fencing. I mentioned some time ago, in this House, the case of Messrs. Robertson Brothers, of Colac, who eradicated the rabbits from their freehold at an expense of £1 an acre for fencing. Fencing, then, is the only solution yet found for the problem, which will entail enormous expense upon this country in a year or two if it is not now promptly adopted.

Mr. MURPHY, in reply, said: Mr. Speaker,—I am very glad to hear from the Minister for Lands that the Government are putting on

boundary riders to look after the rabbit fence, because I am credibly informed that the fence has had gaps made in it in many places by floods and is otherwise in a neglected state, and these boundary riders will of course see that the fence is kept in such repair that the rabbits cannot burrow under it. The Minister for Lands was under a misapprehension in saying that I suggested that the second line of fence should be only four miles from the first. What I did in that connection was to read an extract from the *Sydney Mail*, in which it was suggested that the second line of fence should be a score of miles from the first. But it must be understood that when writing that article the writer was not aware that the rabbits had reached a point 112 miles within our border. The second line of fence will have to be erected outside the infested country in order to cope with them. Some hon. members may argue that, because the present fence has failed to keep them out, no fence subsequently erected will do so. But they altogether forget the fact that the present fence was put up after the rabbits had got in. If we had taken time by the forelock—and we were sufficiently warned in Queensland—and put up that fence when we ought to have done so, years ago, we should never have had a rabbit in the colony. I guarantee the fence would have kept them all out. It has been indisputably proved in Victoria that fencing is the only means of coping with them. Valuable freeholds and squattages were there completely overrun by rabbits, but the lessees and owners fenced them in, and by that means destroyed the rabbits infesting their holdings. The Government of Victoria, after an experience of twenty years in fighting this plague, are now making a rabbit-proof fence between their colony and South Australia. They do not make many mistakes in Victoria, and they are not likely to make such a mistake as to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds in erecting a border fence, after twenty years' experience of the pest, unless they are satisfied that that is the way in which to deal with it successfully. They have gained their experience from the farmers and land-owners, and have seen them cope with the rabbits and keep them down in that way. That can only be done by the settlers upon valuable purchased land. We have no land here like the land there possessed by the Robertson Bros., of Colac, to whose estate my hon. friend, the member for Darling Downs, alluded. That estate carries seven or eight sheep to the acre. We have no land like that, and our lessees and land-owners cannot afford, any more than those of New South Wales can afford it, to spend £1 an acre upon their land to keep out the rabbits. It is utterly beyond the power of our pastoral tenants to do anything of the kind, and it would be better for them to cut the throats of their flocks and herds and leave the country. As I have already told the House, they are about to introduce a measure in New South Wales to empower the Government to lend money to the pastoral tenants and owners of infested land to enable them to keep down the rabbits. They are backed up by the experience of Victoria. They know how the pest has been fought there, and the New South Wales Government are acting on the experience of the Victorians. And we cannot do better, on our part, than be guided by the experience of those colonies. It is idle—it is almost monstrous—for hon. members with no experience on the subject, to say that fencing will not succeed. If they will only read up and study the question, as I have done, from every point of view, they will find that there is only one known method of dealing with the rabbits, and that is by fencing. With regard to a second fence, I

suggested some time ago in the House that our South-Western Railway line should be fenced rabbit-proof from end to end; that it should be done expeditiously, and that the fence should be carried thence from the terminus to the South Australian border. That line would separate the present infested districts from the uninfested districts; and that is the only practicable way we know of at present of dealing with the pest. Even supposing some means are discovered of communicating some disease to the rabbits that might sweep them off, even then the line of fencing would not be wasted, because the pasturage would be saved on the inner side of the fence. Hon. members seem too often to forget that the farmers of Darling Downs are just as much interested in this question as the pastoralists. Rabbits have marched northwards 242 miles in two years. Let them but advance another 242 miles, and where will the Darling Downs farmers be? Where will be their crops of lucerne, hay, oats, and wheat? They will all be devoured by the rabbits, and the farmers will be driven off the ground. It is all very well for hon. members to treat this question as one which affects only the squatters. It will injure the farmer as much as the squatter, and it will injure Queen street even more than it will injure the squatter. No doubt the squatter and the farmer are primarily interested in this matter, but, after them, the entire community is interested in it. If the Government will put up a second fence, I do not think there is a single squatter in the country who will object to be taxed to pay the interest on the money expended on that fence. They will be perfectly willing to acknowledge that they are the first men interested in the matter, and if the Government will borrow the money, or raise it in some way, to erect this second fence in the way I suggest, not one will object to a stock tax being put upon them in order to pay the interest on the money. I think I have thrashed this question out pretty well, and I must leave it in future for the Government to deal with. I felt that in bringing the matter before the House continually, as I have done, that I had a duty to perform to the country; and as I consider now that I have performed that duty, I shall not this session trouble the House any more with it. I throw the responsibility of acting upon my suggestions, or not, upon the Government. If they will not see the thing in the light in which I have put it before them—and every statement I have made, every figure I have quoted, I have obtained from the most unimpeachable authorities—if the Government will not see the gravity of this question, and the importance of urgency in connection with it, I wash my hands of it, and throw all the responsibility upon them. I beg to withdraw the motion.

Motion withdrawn accordingly.

DISTILLERIES ACT OF 1849 AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

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

WARWICK TO THANE'S CREEK RAILWAY.

FURTHER CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE.

On this Order of the Day being read, the House went in committee for the consideration of the following resolutions:—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed railway from Warwick to Thane's Creek, in length 24 miles 50 chains 50 links, as laid upon the table of the House on the 23rd day of September, 1887.

2. That the plan, section, and book of reference be forwarded to the Legislative Council, for their approval, by message in the usual form.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed railway from Warwick to Thane's Creek, in length 24 miles 50 chains 50 links, as laid upon the table of the House on the 23rd day of September, 1887.

2. That the plan, section, and book of reference be forwarded to the Legislative Council, for their approval, by message in the usual form.

—said the line of railway he now proposed was a branch of the main Southern line, leaving the Southern line at a point about twenty chains south of the East Warwick railway station; from there going in a direction about north-west, or a little north of west, through part of the town and suburban land of Warwick on the southern side of it. It did not go through very much of it, but went along by the town common, skirting the boundaries of the town of Warwick. It went in the direction of Sandy Creek for a distance of about nine miles, and after crossing the creek it got into very good agricultural country, the rich flats of the Condamine.

Mr. MOREHEAD: There are not many flats there.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said it kept along the flats of the Condamine, which was a very fine piece of country for about seven or eight miles, although most of it, he believed, was private property. Further on it turned slightly off to the westward until it reached Rogers Creek or Oaky Creek—two creeks that came in close together; the line crossed both of them, which appeared to be, so far as he could understand, branches of the same creek.

Mr. MOREHEAD: You have not been over the ground.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he had not; he was going by the description. He had seen and knew some of the country the line passed through along the Condamine and South Toolburra, and also further on towards Leyburn, having been through it many years ago. After crossing those two creeks the line passed through a good deal of ridgy country, which was finely timbered, and of which the hon. member for Northern Downs had spoken. In many places also, where there were small creeks and valleys, there was very good agricultural land to be found, until it reached its destination at or near Thane's Creek. Upon Thane's Creek there was, he believed, a great deal of good land, and also a considerable amount of settlement, and at Rogers Creek, Oaky Creek, and Sandy Creek there was a small amount of settlement. The only place along the line which was not so thickly settled was the richest and most valuable portion of it, that on the flats of the Condamine; and he thought if there was any place where a railway line would be of value, for the purpose of carrying away agricultural produce, and where good use would be made of it, it was that. He believed the holders were at present only grazing sheep upon it, but if they had the advantages of a railway—

Mr. MOREHEAD: Is this land unalienated?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said unfortunately it was in private hands, but he assumed that private people would make better use of good agricultural land if they had railway communication than merely grazing sheep upon it. That was not the only line which ran for some distance through private property. He believed the Killarney line was carried to a large extent through private property, and where it went outside that property, except in one or two cases, it went through very

poor land. But the completion of that line had been the means of settling some of the most hopelessly poor country that ever he had seen. Almost impenetrable-looking scrubs had been cleared and settled along the southern side of the line. In fact it surprised him to see the effect of the railway line passing through such country—creating settlement in places where one would have thought no settlement would have taken place for the next century. Of course, the desirability of the proposed line could only be urged on the ground that it would bring into use—agricultural use, he presumed—the best of the country there, some of which was quite as good as any country on the Downs—the land on the Condamine River. If there could be any justification for building a line for purely agricultural purposes—for converting land at present used for grazing sheep into agricultural land—he thought it could be urged that the proposed line would have that effect quite as much as the Killarney line, the Highfields line, or the line to Crow's Nest, which he was told had been constructed for that purpose. Whether it was likely that the line would be extended was a matter for future consideration. As an agricultural line he thought a good deal might be fairly urged in justification of its construction. It was not to be a very expensive one as compared with many other lines, although it went through some rather difficult country. The total cost, including permanent way, sidings, and everything preparatory to opening the line for use, was £97,599.

Mr. NORTON: The estimated cost?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That was the estimated cost, and lately lines had generally been built within the Engineer's estimate. He was rather surprised to find that it was so, but nevertheless it was a fact. There was not a great deal of land to be resumed—town allotments, 4 acres 2 roods 13 perches; private land, 206 acres 3 roods 13 perches; Crown lands, 66 acres 2 roods 15 perches; and roads, 8 acres, 3 roods 19 perches: making a total area of 286 acres 3 roods 9 perches; and unless people had extraordinary ideas in that part of the country, or were assisted by committees of that House in the future, he believed that land could be resumed at a cost of about £21,000 or £22,000.

Mr. NORTON: After there is a railway?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes; even when there was a railway there. He did not know that he need say any more upon the subject. Some hon. members had a more intimate knowledge of the country than he had, and what it was likely to be in the future, and he dared say they would hear their opinion upon the matter. As he had said before, if agricultural lines were desirable lines to build, he thought that might be considered a desirable line to construct. He thought it should be placed in the same category as the Killarney, the Highfields, and the Crow's Nest lines, which had been considered desirable lines to build, and would undoubtedly lead to satisfactory results in the future. Of course they could not be expected to pay from the jump, but they had certainly been the means of producing a great deal of settlement. As he had said, the Killarney line had been the means of redeeming and settling some of the most hopeless-looking country he had ever seen. He begged to move the resolution.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought members of the Committee had listened with great interest to what had fallen from the hon. gentleman in charge of the resolution, and he was perfectly certain that in acting as the spokesman of the Government on that occasion he had adduced every possible argument, so far at any rate as the

Government themselves were concerned, for the construction of that line. It was a matter of personal regret to him that the hon. gentleman himself had not inspected the line, because he knew the hon. gentleman had a very good knowledge of country, and a very good idea of the probable requirements of the district through which that railway was proposed to traverse. However, from the hearsay statement that the hon. gentleman had made to the Committee he did not think that even those hon. gentlemen who had so strongly advocated that extension in the past would be so eager to advocate it that night. They had heard from the hon. gentleman that the land was of indifferent character, but that there were spots of good land on the banks of the Condamine well fitted for agriculture. That was no doubt the only redeeming feature that the advocates of the line saw in the speech of the hon. gentleman; but he had cruelly knocked the crutches from under them when he said that the lands were already in the occupation of the grasping grazier, and that if the line were made they would probably be sold to the unsuspecting agriculturist. They were asked to make a line for the benefit of the holders of any good land that might exist there; it was evident that there was no good land to be taken up anywhere within the range of the railway. He (Mr. Morehead) could quite condole with the hon. gentleman, who from party exigencies, and from the necessity of keeping a certain section of the House in accord with the Government, had to come down and defend a railway which, under other circumstances, he would be the first to oppose. It was evident that the hon. Minister for Works had very considerable doubts as to the extension of any of those agricultural railways in the Darling Downs district; he seemed very properly to see that the extension of those railways was surrounded by "ifs." If so-and-so happened, then so-and-so would happen. The hon. gentleman probably put on one side the fact that the other agricultural railways he mentioned were constructed under more favourable circumstances than the proposed line to Thane's Creek. The Crow's Nest line and the other railways the hon. gentleman mentioned had, as a rule, gone through an average of very rich land; and if agriculture was going to pay, as he believed it would in time, there was an inducement for the construction of those railways. No such case had been attempted to be made out by the Minister for Works in the present case. When the Treasury was overflowing, then railways might be constructed at the expense of the State on what might not unfairly be termed a problematical basis; but at the present time the colony was not in a position to make any experiments in railway-making; and unless the case was clear enough to carry almost the unanimous vote of the Committee, the present was not the time to commit themselves to any such expenditure. He had before him a paper laid on the table that evening—a statement of the estimated expenditure from the Loan Fund for the year ending 30th June, 1888. Of course he had only been able to make a hurried examination of it, but he believed his conclusions would be found to be substantially correct. The total estimated expenditure was set down at £2,000,621. The cash balance on the 1st July, 1887, was £2,734,804, the balance of loan since received £451,639, making a total of £3,186,443. Against that was to be set off the estimated expenditure of £2,000,621, leaving an estimated balance of £1,185,827 as the probable amount remaining in the hands of the Treasurer on the Loan Fund on the 1st July, 1888. But they had also to take regard—and the creditors of the colony would have regard—to the contingent liabilities, which were imperfectly shadowed

forth in that paper, due to contractors already under contract to the Government. He would take the list in detail. Of course the figures were purely problematical, and the balances in the Treasury on the 30th June, 1888, might be greater than those set forth, or they might be less. If hon. members would look at the first page they would find, with regard to the line from Brisbane to Southport and border and branch to Beaudesert, that the estimated expenditure on the contract, dated 29th December, 1886, during the period dealt with in the tables, was £85,000, leaving a contingent liability of £68,232. On the next item—Brisbane to Caboolture and Gympie—there was £37,444 in the same position; on the Wide Bay and Burnett line there was £49,000 in the same position; Emu Park line, £22,626; Cooktown to Maytown, £9,444; Herberton to the coast—contract signed 26th January, 1887—£140,984; on public works and buildings the balance not provided for—the contingent liability—was £68,773; and there were some small items—bridges and main roads—amounting in all to nearly £10,000. All those added together brought up the total to £418,000, which he proposed to deduct from the amount of £1,185,827, leaving a balance of £767,827 lying to the credit of the Treasury in the various banks, or wherever it might be. He would point out in regard to those tables that they were incomplete, and, to a certain extent, misleading—incomplete as not setting down figures which the Government were in possession of, and misleading from the very reason he had pointed out. If hon. members would look at the City to Fortitude Valley railway they would see the expenditure on account of the contract set down at £40,000 for the purchase of land. Now, the Committee had reason to understand that the contract for that portion of the Valley extension that had been agreed to by the Government had been already signed, and therefore a fixed sum should have been set down there, a sum which he held would be vastly in excess of the sum set down in the tables before him—some £117,000 altogether. So that they might add that £40,000, which would reduce the balance to £720,000, which would be available to the Government, without going into any further expenditure except that which was contained in the sheet he held in his hand. Supposing in the meantime that the state of their income being such, from their ordinary revenue, that they were not fairly able to pay their way, and they already had a deficit which was not alluded to in the paper at all, and that the loan funds in the hands of the banks, which amounted in July last to, roughly speaking, £3,000,000, were brought down to something under £1,000,000, what would be the effect upon the colony? Had anyone attempted to grasp it? Had anyone seen what disaster must accrue to the colony if they were to go on with that reckless expenditure of loan money which they had been going on with? The colony had been fed upon loan money, not only by the present Government, but specially by the present Government, and a terrible day of reckoning must come unless they eased off, and put on the brake. The sooner that brake was put on the better. They had been sliding down the hill too long with the brake neglected, and the proposed line was one of the railways they might fairly not be called upon to construct. Under the existing state of affairs, as he had shown by figures that could not be disputed, it might be well done without. Everyone knew there were exceptional cases in the history of a colony such as Queensland, where the necessity arose for the immediate and rapid construction of railways. When he said that, he alluded particularly to the necessity that he believed had arisen

for a railway to Croydon, which was one that ought to be constructed. Any man who had any regard or affection for the country and its welfare, he was sure, would see that a railway of that sort must be made, even under circumstances such as those under which the colony was suffering now. But the necessity had not arisen for the line before them. He thought he had proved clearly that the financial position of the colony, as shown by the tables before him, did not warrant them in expending any money which was borrowed money, and which they were to a certain extent only the trustees for, at a time when the Government were not justified in spending one sixpence where that expenditure could be safely avoided. They knew what had happened in New Zealand. They saw what a policy of inordinate borrowing had brought that colony into. The disaster had come upon them more suddenly and quickly than was anticipated; but it had been seen by many, and the Government was forewarned by many. God forbid that the same thing should happen in Queensland. He would ask the Committee to take the matter in time, and keep control of their affairs so far as they possibly could. Although they had been hurrying on fast, he did not think the danger was irreparable. By judicious management they could yet prevent any disaster coming upon them; but that a great disaster was threatened he did not think any hon. member could deny, if they went on with the same reckless amount of expenditure that they had during the last four years. He would ask hon. members, irrespective of the constituencies they might represent, whether they were prepared to go into an expenditure of £100,000 for a railway that he believed would be utterly useless. In the first place, to make it useful would entail the repurchasing of the only available land whereby what they all desired, that was close settlement, could be obtained. He had said all he need say at present. Holding the views he held—and those views, he was sure, were shared by every member on his side of the Committee—he would be perfectly justified in doing all that was possible in every way to prevent that railway from being passed. In doing so members on his side would not be acting to serve any party or to oppose any, but to prevent what they considered would be a disaster to the State.

The PREMIER said the motion for the approval of the plans was, in substance, one to give authority to the Government to expend the money, although he must say their system of authorising the construction of railways was not a very logical one. That was the way in which authority was taken by the Government to proceed with the expenditure of money which had been raised on the authority of a Loan Act; so that they were really just in the same position at the present time as if they were in Committee of Supply. The question was whether the Government should receive authority to expend a sum of money at the present time; and that being so, the Government thought it desirable to place the Committee in possession of a fuller statement of the position of the Loan Account than they had had before. He had said the other evening that he believed at the end of the present financial year their position would be very much better than hon. members sitting opposite to him appeared to think. He had felt bound to lay a statement of the estimated loan expenditure upon the table before they went into committee that afternoon. To make a confession, in his desire to lay the papers on the table that afternoon he laid an incorrect statement before them, and he would point out where the mistake was. He had examined all the items very carefully; but the mistake had happened in this way: It had been the practice

for a long time past in the Railway Department to charge all the cost of permanent way to an item called the "Suspense Account," which was not an item of expenditure authorised under any Loan Act, but was treated as unforeseen expenditure, and then, from time to time, the permanent way, as it was used up on the different lines, was debited to those lines and credited to that account. In making up the statements of expenditure on those different lines of railway for the current year, the officers of the Railway Department had treated as expenditure on account of those lines, the amount to be debited to particular lines, in respect to the permanent way used on those lines, when, as a matter of fact, all that permanent way had been bought and paid for long ago. So that all the items for permanent way, with the exception of a very small percentage, represented sums that would not be paid during the present year, because they had already been paid. That was how the mistake had arisen. He discovered it almost as soon as the paper was laid on the table. There was an error of £160,500, which ought to have been deducted, according to his addition, which might be inaccurate, although he did not think it was very far out. The result, of course, would be that, instead of the expenditure for the current year being £2,000,621, the right amount was £1,840,121, which was very nearly the sum he estimated about a fortnight ago the expenditure would be. The credit balance of the Loan Fund on the 1st July would be £1,345,000, as nearly as possible.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Has any permanent way been paid for this year?

The PREMIER said that all that had been used had been paid for, and there were large stocks on hand—more than sufficient to lay down all the lines to be finished during the year.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I want to know whether it was paid for this year?

The PREMIER said some had been paid for this year, and there was a sum set down which was considered quite sufficient to cover the cost of all the purchases during the present financial year.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then you are living from hand to mouth.

The PREMIER: No. There were large stocks on hand, sufficient to lay all the railways to be made up to the end of next year. The state of the fund was therefore considerably more favourable than appeared in the paper laid on the table; at the same time, the error was only a comparatively small amount as compared with the large amount of the total expenditure. He would lay on the table a correct statement to-morrow if possible; in the meantime the figures laid on the table would assist hon. members, because the errors were only in the items to which he had drawn attention. The detailed items on which expenditure was likely to take place were not all stated in the paper, but he had them all in his possession. The contingent liabilities at the end of the year the hon. member estimated would be over £400,000; he (the Premier) estimated that they would amount to somewhat more. At the end of the year there would be very few lines going on unless more contracts were made. The Western extension would be entirely finished. On the Brisbane to Southport and branch to Beaudesert lines there would be a small amount left unpaid, but not more than £20,000, as far as he could ascertain. The Gympie line would, he hoped, be going on—part of it certainly would. The contract let on the 9th August would not be completed, but the other contract would be finished before that. That would not be very much. The Beauraba branch would be entirely out of hand. The

duplication of the Brisbane and Ipswich line he hoped would be out of hand. On the next item, "Buildings and sidings," there might be some expenditure.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: That will never be out of hand.

The PREMIER said those particular items would, but there would, no doubt, be other items amounting to about the same sum. With respect to the Brisbane and Cleveland line, there would, he hoped, by that time be a liability which might be estimated at £60,000; and there would be a liability on account of the extension to the Valley of nearly £100,000. The Ipswich to Fassifern line would be out of hand. On the South Brisbane extension he did not suppose any liability would have been incurred. In the Wide Bay district only the Gayndah line would be under construction. In the Central district there would be nothing under construction, unless the extension of the Central railway to the Thomson were commenced. At present the Emu Park line was the only line under construction, and that would be nearly finished at the end of the financial year. In the Northern district the Herberton line was the only one for which a contract was already let. Either one or two lines from Normanton would, he hoped, involve a very large contingent liability, very much larger than the hon. member estimated. On the line from Bowen to Townsville it was proposed to spend £20,000 during the year, and there would be a much larger contingent liability.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I only dealt with the contracts let.

The PREMIER said he was speaking of contracts expected to be in hand; and they would, of course, involve a contingent liability of more than £400,000.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: What about the Cooktown line?

The PREMIER said the contingent liability on that would be only about £10,000. At the commencement of the financial year there was a credit balance of £92,000 on account of that line, and it was estimated that £44,000 of that would be spent during the year. He did not think there was anything to be alarmed at, though he agreed they could not keep up loan expenditure at the same rate. As to the contingent liability—

Mr. MOREHEAD: You will leave that for your successors.

The PREMIER said the hon. member need not talk about successors. The Government had no successors yet, and it would be very hard to name them. He should be very glad to have successors, but they need not consider that now. He thought hon. members would see there was nothing to be alarmed about as to the state of the Loan Fund at the end of the financial year. He quite agreed that in considering every proposal to spend money they ought to have regard to the state of the funds, and so firmly impressed were the Government with that belief that they considered it desirable to place the Committee in possession of all the information they could give with respect to the Loan Fund. The hon. member said the estimate was only approximate. It was, of course, only an approximate estimate, but it had been very carefully considered, and if there was an error in regard to the liabilities, it was not on the side of under-estimating them. He had pointed out an accidental error amounting to something like £160,000, but beyond that he thought the estimates might be taken to be about as accurate as ordinary estimates of revenue and expenditure could be. It had not been the practice to make estimates up in that form, so that there was some excuse for the mistake which had occurred. The estimate had

been carefully checked over and over again, and he did not think it contained any material error beyond the one he had pointed out.

Mr. KATES said the Premier had disposed of the financial aspect of the question, and he (Mr. Kates) would now proceed to dispel some of the false impressions which prevailed as to the character of the country through which the proposed line would pass. The leader of the Opposition had asked the Minister for Works whether he had inspected the country through which the line would pass, and he (Mr. Kates) would ask the leader of the Opposition whether he had been there, because, if he had, he would not have made such a poor speech in connection with the character of the land as he had made. The hon. member compelled him, after what he had said, to go into details in connection with the line of railway from Warwick to Thane's Creek. He had seen the country and could give full information on that point. He could also give the name of every settler living on the line from East Warwick right to Thane's Creek, and the area of land each had under cultivation. In the Sandy Creek district, near Warwick, Mr. Le Brecke had 45 acres under cultivation; J. Byrnes, 45 acres; J. Doolan, 20 acres; H. Topfer, 12 acres; Mrs. Bell, 28 acres; Mrs. Tilley, 240 acres; G. Thorn, 45 acres; H. Bell, 25 acres; V. Karle, 50 acres; J. Kircher, 90 acres; Binz, 20 acres; P. Higgins, 310 acres; R. Saunders, 40 acres; M. McKone, 200 acres; G. Eckhardt, 40 acres; H. Mitchell, 80 acres; A. Bracke, 20 acres; T. Beeson, 56 acres; G. Affleck, 90 acres; H. Dipplesman, 39 acres; J. Thompkin, 40 acres; J. Strickfuss, 18 acres; total, 1,553 acres. On Darkey Flat, on the Condamine, A. Evans had 800 acres under cultivation; A. Davidson, 80 acres; S. Ryan, 70 acres; D. Garvey, 70 acres; E. Webber, 90 acres; G. Dickson, 10 acres; J. Keleher, 70 acres; J. Nicholls, 43 acres; R. Tambling, 40 acres; J. Bowen, 25 acres; T. Paton, 10 acres; T. Ahern, 5 acres; J. Brushaber, 10 acres; J. Draydon, 30 acres; C. Seibel, 40 acres; T. Beil, 10 acres; J. Stevenson, 20 acres; J. Baker, 80 acres; Mrs. Hutton, 20 acres; C. Lambley, 10 acres; H. Steele, 20 acres; J. Marshall, 30 acres; total, 1,583 acres. Two miles further on, at Grey-mare Creek, W. Marshall had 15 acres under cultivation; J. Cleary, 30 acres; J. Bell, 70 acres; D. Ryan, 10 acres; J. Henry, 40 acres; J. Horan, 8 acres; W. Clancy, 5 acres; D. Higgins, 25 acres; G. J. Wickham, 20 acres; A. Johnstone, 15 acres; M. Pender, 5 acres; J. Schneider, 14 acres; T. McKey, 10 acres; J. Mullins, 5 acres; J. Smith, 5 acres; J. Karle, 10 acres; A. Karle, 10 acres; H. Schwitzerling, 15 acres; Mrs. Lalor, 20 acres; P. McNamara, 5 acres; J. Sexton, 5 acres; M. Killeen, 10 acres; R. Stirling, 5 acres; T. O'Brien, 12 acres; C. O'Brien, 10 acres; Mrs. Dwyer, 10 acres; T. Sexton, 5 acres; M. McDonnell, 5 acres; total, 399 acres. The grand total in those three districts was 3,575 acres. That was the area of land under cultivation along the proposed line from Warwick to Thane's Creek. He challenged anybody to contradict those figures. He had given the quantity under cultivation last year; those areas had been increased this year, and he maintained that if the line was taken in that direction, and those people had facilities of transit, the quantity would soon be increased to 5,000 acres. What kept those settlers back was the want of cheap communication with the market, hence the proposition to proceed with the construction of that railway to Thane's Creek. A great deal had been said about the line by people who knew nothing at all about it. The enemies of the line he divided into four classes. The first class, of course, included the Toowoomba bunch. The Toowoomba members had always been against the

line. He thought they were afraid of their seats, though he did not believe the Toowoomba people were as much opposed to the line as their members were. Indeed he was sure of that. The next section of enemies to the line were those who thought they would get into power next year, and that they could then rob the district of the money voted four years ago for that railway, and spend it on the Northern railways. Another gentleman had told him that he would like to spend the money in erecting rabbit-proof fencing. The other class were those who were prejudiced—whose minds were poisoned—and who had spoken against the railway without knowing anything about it. Considering the enormous number of acres that were now under cultivation along the route of the railway, he thought they were perfectly justified in going on with the line. He had always been an advocate for the construction of railways through agricultural settlement, and that was such a line. The first sixteen miles of country through which it would pass was good agricultural land, and then they came to the mineral lands on Thane's Creek. With respect to the mineral country he would read some remarks from an official report of Mr. Rands, Assistant Government Geologist, who inspected the locality a few months ago. This report was dated 14th May, 1887. Mr. Rands said:—

"Nearly all the watercourses in the neighbourhood of these creeks have been worked for alluvial gold, and though none of them have been very rich, they have for years back supported a small mining population.

"The creeks and gullies heading from the range forming the watershed between the Macintyre Brook and the Condamine River have all produced large quantities of gold; but although in several cases alluvial leads have been traced right up to the outcrops of quartz reefs, up to the present none of these reefs have been found payable to any depth.

"At Camp Hill alluvial gold has been found on every side, and a prospecting shaft was sunk in it, but I undertand no reef was discovered. Camp Hill is on the range at the head of Canal Creek. An old alluvial drift occurs at the summit of Camp Hill. It consists of rounded white quartz pebbles held together by a clayey cementing material. This drift is met with on the summits of several hills right away to Leyburn; it is not auriferous.

"Several reefs have been tried in the district, but in every case they have been abandoned. Some of them have lately been taken up again.

"Mr. Ken. Hutchison, the owner of the crushing mill that was here, informs me that over 1,000 tons of quartz was crushed from the Thane's Creek reefs which averaged about 1 oz. of gold per ton."

Mr. Rands then described the various reefs and gave the following returns of a few crushings, namely:—Golden Hope Reef, 50 tons of stone, yield 19 dwt. per ton; Queensland Reef, 45 tons of stone, yield 4 dwt. 7 gr. per ton; and Victoria Union Reef, 70 tons of stone, yield 1 oz. 6 dwt. There was another crushing from the Golden Hope Reef of 12 tons, which gave 7 oz. 13 dwt. 8 gr. per ton. That was a report of crushings as given by Mr. Rands, and he would not have put it in that document if he had not some reliable authority for it. Mr. Rands further stated that—

"On Darkey, about two-and-a-half miles east of the Big Mountain, Taylor's, Drayton's, the Prince of Wales, and a few other reefs have been worked. The country traversed by them is similar to that at the Big Mountain."

But he (Mr. Kates) did not wish to read the whole of the report to the Committee, as hon. members could obtain the information for themselves, the report having been laid on the table of the House. He wished to impress upon hon. members that there was only one member of that Committee who could give them the best information in connection with that line to Thane's Creek. He was a respected member of the House who had lived in the district for thirty-eight years,

and he (Mr. Kates) was sure they ought to take notice of what he said in connection with that railway. He referred to the hon. member for Maranoa, Mr. Lalor. Mr. Lalor, in giving evidence before the select committee, was asked several questions as follow:—

"Can you give us some idea of the general character of it? You mean with regard to the ease of constructing the line?"

"As regards its suitability for the construction of a railway? I can speak of the road as the best bush road that I have seen in any part of the colonies, and the best that I ever travelled over. It is a hard road, and I think, with regard to material for a railway, there is abundance. There is plenty of ironbark and lots of ballast."

Now, with regard to railway-making material he did not think there had ever been a line constructed that there would be greater facilities for making. Mr. Garget, the contractor for the Beauraraba line, had to come to that particular spot to get his sleepers and other material, and there was timber enough left to construct the line twice over. By Mr. Austin's report he found that there was no end to valuable timber on the line. There was cypress pine, gum, ironbark, and many other timbers which could be utilised and brought to market, and with reference to it he should refer to a few words of Mr. Keleher's, a saw-mill proprietor at Darkey Flat. He said:—

"The line to Thane's Creek will touch the goldfield at that place, and also the fields of Taigai and Canal Creek. From Thane's Creek to Canal Creek there is an abundant supply of timber not to be surpassed in Queensland. This would furnish a very important item of traffic. There are 20,000 acres of land under occupation at Darkey Flat, and of this area 1,000 acres are under cultivation."

Now, the question was, were they going to encourage the agricultural settlement or not? Three years ago £750,000 of money was voted for the *via recta* and the Warwick to St. George line, and now they were asked only for £100,000, or scarcely one-seventh of the whole amount, and yet it was opposed as no line had been opposed since Separation. He believed that after what had been said by himself, and what would be said by the hon. member for Warwick, and his hon. colleague, Mr. Allan, hon. members would be impressed with the desirability of having the line constructed forthwith. As they were in committee, he might have a few words to say in refutation of what might fall from other hon. members; but he was quite sure hon. members would be convinced that they could not go far wrong in adopting the plans and specifications of the line as laid on the table of the House.

Mr. GROOM said the hon. member who had just sat down had omitted the largest part of the question which was involved in the motion, which was, that the House by agreeing to expend £100,000 would commit itself to the expenditure of £3,000,000?

Mr. KATES: It would do no such thing.

Mr. GROOM said the hon. member stated it would do no such thing; but that railway without the *via recta* was perfectly useless. With the *via recta* it was of course understood that it would be of some service, but without the *via recta* it certainly would not. Therefore the hon. gentleman omitted to state that the question before the Committee was not the consideration of the railway from Warwick to Thane's Creek, but the approval of plans of the first section of the railway towards St. George, because that practically was what they were asked to do. They were asked to consent to the approval of the plans of a railway connecting St. George with Brisbane. It was no use trying to throw dust in the eyes of hon. members that that was a railway simply to Thane's Creek. It was the

first section of the Warwick to St. George railway, which was the first section of the *via recta*; that was the question they had to discuss. The hon. member was altogether wrong in what he had stated with reference to the opposition to the line. The opposition had not arisen now for the first time. It was started when first the proposal was before the Committee, and he had seen nothing whatever since then to alter his opinion. On the contrary, all official documents which had been supplied by the Government strengthened him in his conviction as to the uselessness of that particular line, and certainly, taking into consideration the events which had occurred during the past four years, they ought to hesitate before they went on with the line. He had no hesitation in stating this: that if he were in the House for the next twenty years no persuasion or influence would ever again induce him to vote for a £10,000,000 loan. He said it had not only demoralised the House, but the constituencies themselves. Independence of speech itself had been imperilled, because hon. members who dared to give expression to their true convictions were liable to be punished for what they had done. He said that the Toowoomba members had been placed in that position, and they would be compelled to say so in a very short time, when they went before their constituents, and, if necessary, take the consequences of their independence. Whatever might be the result of plain speaking, he was not going to be prevented from speaking plainly on that occasion; and if he did not give expression to his honest opinions with regard to that particular railway, he should not consider that he was fairly representing his constituents. The hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, assumed a character which he was certainly not entitled to assume, when he said that the Toowoomba people were not opposed to the construction of the line. He could tell the hon. member that there were not a dozen men in the whole of the district who were not opposed to this line—he would not take Toowoomba only, he would take the large section of the Darling Downs, including Cambooya—and if the hon. member went to Cambooya for election, on the *via recta* alone, he would not be returned to that House; the hon. member knew that just as well as he did. It was, therefore, perfectly useless to say that it was only a certain section of the Toowoomba people who were opposed to the line. There was a very strong unanimity of opinion throughout the Darling Downs against that particular line, and he could mention the names of gentlemen living in Allora—large station-holders, gentlemen who had a stake in the country—who were opposed to it. He would ask the Committee to look at the circumstances under which the railway was originally proposed. He should have to refer to the memory of a gentleman now deceased, but he would not do so in indecorous language. When the railway was first proposed, before the Loan Bill was introduced, he might state what that gentleman's remarks were at a banquet at Emu Vale, and the memory of the Colonial Treasurer, who was sitting by his side, would be refreshed by what he was going to read. These were the words of the late Hon. W. Miles:—

"He would ask the Treasurer to make provision for six millions of money for railway construction, and he should look to the Minister for Lands to pilot his Land Bill through the House, to assist him in raising the money to pay the interest, so that it should not be one penny of a burden to the taxpayer."

Now, let him ask that Committee and the country had that been borne out? Was it not distinctly stated that that Land Bill was to be of such a character as to enable the late Mr. Miles to say that the revenue from it for the first year

would be £500,000 per annum, that inside of five years it would have reached £1,000,000, and that in ten years it would be £5,000,000? He had said at the time that the hon. gentleman was taking a too sanguine view of what the effect of that measure was likely to be. And was it not a fact that in the last Financial Statement made to the House by the present Acting-Colonial Treasurer it was stated that the general taxpayer was called upon to find a sum of £450,000 to pay interest upon the cost of construction of their railways? So far from the hopes expressed in that speech being realised then, it was quite the other way. Further on the same gentleman said:—

"They intended to build the *via recta* and make Warwick the starting point for the St. George railway, and the Minister for Lands would settle in the country and find the revenue from that source."

Had that been borne out? He mentioned those matters to show that the proposal before them was connected with the *via recta*. It was no use to tell the Committee that it was a railway to Thane's Creek and nothing more. If the proposal had been brought before the House in 1884 as a "Warwick to Thane's Creek railway," and nothing more, they should not be discussing the matter that day—it would, he believed, have gone through without any hesitation whatever.

The PREMIER: That is what it is.

Mr. GROOM said the Premier said, "That is what it is," but they must differ from him. It was no use to try to blind them with such a statement. The late Colonial Treasurer also spoke at the banquet to which he had referred, and he would quote that gentleman's words, and he dared say the hon. gentleman would recollect them when he refreshed his memory. That hon. gentleman said:—

"The Minister for Works had made them some promises that day. He was not generally a very promising young man, but his promises were very materially different from other promises, as it was intended that they should be fully carried out. The promises the hon. gentleman had made that afternoon were quite in accord with his own feelings in the matter, and he would even go further and say that in his opinion the line from Warwick to St. George, Cunnamulla, and Thargomindah was the great justification for the *via recta*."

Could anything be more emphatic than that? That was what was said by the late Colonial Treasurer, the Hon. J. R. Dickson, in his speech at a banquet at Emu Vale in June, 1884.

Mr. MOREHEAD: And he was then in the confidence of the Premier.

Mr. DICKSON: I am still of the same opinion.

Mr. GROOM said the hon. member for Enoggera said he was still of the same opinion. If that was the hon. gentleman's opinion he had a perfect right to adhere to it if he thought fit, and no one could blame him for doing so; but he repeated that so far as that branch railway was concerned, it was part and parcel of the *via recta* from Rosewood to Warwick, and of the continuation of the line from Warwick to St. George, or to use the words of the late Colonial Treasurer, "from Warwick to St. George, Cunnamulla, and Thargomindah."

Mr. DICKSON: Hear, hear!

Mr. GROOM said the hon. gentleman said "Hear, hear," and that no doubt was the hon. gentleman's opinion then, and he had no doubt it was his opinion now.

Mr. DICKSON: That, to my mind, is the only justification for the line.

Mr. GROOM: Exactly so. Yet it was sought to make them believe that afternoon that it was not the *via recta*—it was not the Warwick to St. George line, but simply a

branch agricultural line to Thane's Creek. If it was only a branch agricultural line from Warwick to Thane's Creek for the convenience of the settlers there, there would not be the least objection to it, possibly; but it was part and parcel of a scheme already on the Loan Bill. It was no use pretending that it was not so. There was a vote of £500,000 for the *via recta* and a vote of £250,000 for a railway from Warwick to St. George, and the present proposed line was a section of the railway to St. George. It was laid on the table last session as such, and it was laid upon the table this session, and he had looked over the plans and sections and found them the same except that the words "Warwick to Thane's Creek" were inserted. He therefore declined to discuss that question within the narrow limits in which it was now placed before them. He must look upon the question on broad grounds, and say it was the first section of the *via recta*. He said, in the present position financially of the colony, they were not in a position to undertake any such work.

Mr. FOOTE: Nor any other work.

Mr. GROOM said there were no doubt other works which they could do without. His own constituency was asked to do without a work, and he did not grumble at it under the circumstances in which the colony was placed; but let them all be treated alike. The last time the late Minister for Works went to Toowoomba, or on one of his last visits to Toowoomba—it was certainly when he was rather unwell—he had spoken to him with regard to the probable railway policy of the Government, and the hon. gentleman then assured him that the Government intended to place the Drayton deviation and the Warwick to St. George railway plans on the table of the House this session. The hon. gentleman made other remarks which he would not repeat; but one of those promises was carried out and the other was not, but his constituents knew pretty well why it was not.

The PREMIER: What was the promise?

Mr. GROOM: That the plans of the Drayton deviation would be laid upon the table of the House during the present session.

The PREMIER: Who made that promise?

Mr. GROOM: The late Minister for Works.

The PREMIER: Where?

Mr. GROOM: In a railway carriage going to Toowoomba.

The PREMIER: You cannot blame me for breaking a promise I never heard of.

Mr. GROOM said the hon. gentleman made that distinct promise on that occasion. As he had said, it was the commencement of the *via recta* they were asked to approve of on the present occasion. He had some facts to put before the Committee on the subject. In the first place, he would be so disrespectful as to say that he doubted the accuracy of some of the information supplied by the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates. He was not aware and had never heard before that on any one farm in Queensland—except, perhaps, a sugar plantation, and he did not think the statement made would apply to any sugar plantation even in the colony, and he had seen many of the largest of them—he was not aware before that there was one farm on the Downs containing 800 acres under cultivation.

Mr. KATES: It is quite true.

Mr. GROOM said if so he was very glad to hear of it, but he would like to know what the cultivation consisted of.

Mr. KATES: Lucerne land.

Mr. GROOM said it was no use to tell him that country laid down in lucerne for stock to feed on could be called agriculture in the way

that word was understood. He could tell that Committee that lucerne hay could be bought at £1 per ton on the Darling Downs, and he was very sorry to have to say so. There were thousands of tons of lucerne hay on the Darling Downs that could not be sold.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Perhaps it is no good.

Mr. GROOM said it was perfectly good, but unfortunately the farmers could not get a profitable sale for it. Hundreds of bales of it were brought down to Brisbane, but after the commission was paid to those who received it here, and after the railway freight and storage rates were paid for, the unfortunate farmers, in nine cases out of ten, seldom got 15s. a ton for it. There were many cases of that kind on the Darling Downs, and there were some cases even at Sandy Creek, where their friend, Mr. P. Higgins, to whom the hon. member for Darling Downs referred, distinctly said that he had grown wheat until it did not pay him. That sort of agriculture would not pay, and would never answer the colony, and the Minister for Works, he thought, clearly understood that it would never pay to build a railway to carry lucerne hay, which could only be sold at £1 a ton. There were many productions of a far more profitable character to the farmer, which would have to be gone into to make a railway anything like profitable. When those branch lines were talked of, and introduced, there had always been some statistics adduced to give the Committee and the House some knowledge of the amount of traffic that was likely to be secured by the construction of the line. There was a total absence of all such information on the present occasion. In the evidence before the select committee on the St. George railway last year, there was no evidence given as to the traffic that was likely to be secured by the railway, except that given by that honest, straightforward gentleman, the late member for Warwick, Mr. Jacob Horwitz. That gentleman stated that the traffic would amount to fully 100 tons, and, on the following day, he corrected himself by saying that it would amount to 500 tons. Was 500 tons traffic sufficient inducement to construct a line of railway that would involve the country in £3,000,000 expenditure? Further, what was there beyond Thane's Creek to justify the construction of that line of railway?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Rabbits!

Mr. GROOM said that he had incurred very considerable odium because he endeavoured to thwart what he called the most wicked and untruthful evidence which was being adduced before the select committee, appointed by the Legislative Council, by a certain set of witnesses who came down to Brisbane to give evidence. Hon. members would remember that on that occasion there was a Queensland agricultural exhibition held in one of the committee rooms below. They would remember the extraordinary cabbage for which a bill for £1 was sent in to the Chairman for having cut it and brought it down by coach and train to Brisbane. They would remember the few ears of wheat which were brought down to make up a show of what could be grown there. Of the many hon. members who were no doubt invited to inspect that marvellous exhibition of agricultural produce, he would take the liberty—for which they would no doubt pardon him—of mentioning the names of two—the hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Black, and the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Ferguson. When the hon. member for Mackay was being shown round that agricultural exhibition, he said to the gentleman who acted as his chaperon, "Yes, it is a very nice sample of wheat; how much have you got of

it?" The answer was, "About 400 acres." On that being related to him (Mr. Groom) he immediately telegraphed to a relative at Goondiwindi, asking him how many acres were under wheat there that season; and the answer came back two or three hours afterwards, "I know of five acres and two or three patches."

Mr. KATES: Where you can grow five acres you can grow 500.

Mr. GROOM said it was perfect nonsense for the hon. member to talk in that way, especially on a matter of such importance as they were then discussing. But what were the actual facts as brought out by the statistical returns? He found from the statistical returns issued by the Registrar-General that the total area under cultivation, during the whole of 1886, in the district of Goondiwindi, was 78 acres. He had referred back to the period when agricultural returns were first supplied to Parliament, and he found that in 1862 the area under cultivation in the police district of Goondiwindi was 8 acres. Hon. members would thus see the progress made in that district between 1861 and 1886—a period of twenty-four years. There was no getting over such facts as those; and when hon. members compared those figures with the statement of the gentleman to whom he referred, that there were 400 acres under wheat, they would be able to judge of the accuracy of that statement. He intended to quote from the report of the select committee, to show the untruthful character of the evidence laid before that select committee of the Legislative Council, with a view of influencing that House to come to a certain resolution. The quantity of maize was stated at 250 bushels; wheat, *nil*; oats, *nil*; barley, *nil*; wheaten hay, 31 tons; oaten hay, 70 tons; potatoes, 1 ton; lucerne, 3 tons; and then followed this marvellous statement: Grapes, 13,960 lbs.; and oranges, 1,200 dozen. In 1865 there were three acres returned as under grapes for table use—not for wine production—and the yield was said to be 2,800 lbs., no doubt a fair yield. In 1886 there were only 2 acres under grapes—1 acre appeared to have gone out of cultivation—and yet from those 2 acres there was said to be a yield of 13,960 lbs. Let any hon. member who had any acquaintance with wine-growing ask himself whether such a statement as that could be relied upon.

Mr. KATES: But you are proving your other figures wrong.

Mr. GROOM said he was informing the Committee that the gentleman who supplied that evidence was the same gentleman who stated to the hon. member for Mackay that there were 400 acres there under wheat. He would now give a sample or two of the evidence given before the select committee. Thomas Hunter was asked—question 1008:—

"By Mr. Macansh: Do you know how many sheep there are on the selections about Goondiwindi? About 1,086,000.

"By Mr. A. C. Gregory: All in Queensland, or partly in New South Wales? On the Macintyre, partly in Queensland, and partly in New South Wales.

"Could you roughly state what proportion would be in each colony? There would be about 1,000,000 in Queensland."

That was the kind of evidence supplied to a number of gentlemen to ask them to recommend that line of railway. He would remind hon. members that that number of sheep were said to be on selections—not on pastoral stations like Welltown and others which could easily be named, but on selections. Now, what were the actual facts, as brought out by the sheep returns? In 1886, in the entire police district of Goondiwindi, there were only 196,000. And yet there was a gentleman telling the select committee

of the Legislative Council in that year there were over 1,000,000 sheep on selections alone! It was no wonder that one gentleman in another Chamber, who had pledged himself to vote for the railway, should, after having read the evidence, and seen how it was contradicted by facts within his own knowledge, have said that he would have nothing more to do with it, and that he washed his hands of the whole affair. And there was another member in the same Chamber who, after reading the evidence and carefully consulting gentlemen living in the district, was so satisfied as to the untruthfulness of the evidence that he was determined that if ever the railway should come on in another place he would vote against it. Was that to be wondered at in the face of such evidence as that? The same witness was asked some questions as to the area under wheat in that locality. He would read a few of the questions and answers, beginning at question 1027:—

"By Mr. F. T. Gregory: Can you give the committee in round numbers about the number of acres of wheat annually grown anywhere between Goondiwindi and Callandoon? Is there any quantity ever ripened into grain? No; it is simply grown for fodder.

"Can you tell the committee why it is not ripened into grain? I could not say; but I know that the settlers on the McIntyre used to grow their own bread thirty years ago.

"Do you know the reason why they have given up the growing of wheat for bread? No; but I have heard it stated that it is in consequence of the cheap flour coming from California."

Could any hon. member believe that a number of intelligent gentlemen, such as those who constituted that select committee, would listen to such evidence as that, which was adduced solely for the purpose of justifying the colony in undertaking the construction of the line of railway which they were asked to sanction by that particular motion?—

"1030. Can you offer any reason why no one has ever set up a mill with the view of encouraging the farmers to grow it? No; I can give no reason.

"1031. Would we not be safe in assuming that they can import flour from Sydney or Brisbane at a cheaper rate than they could grow it on the spot? I could not say.

"1032. Do you think the people would continue to import flour from Sydney or Brisbane at a greater price than they could grow it for on the ground? There are a few people there trying to suppress settlement, and they care more for the grass than for the wheat.

"1033. By Mr. Macansh: I understand that you think the squatters wish to discourage the cultivation of the land? They have done so on the McIntyre.

"1034. They wish to discourage the settlement of people on the land? Yes, they have done so because, I suppose, they prefer grass to wheat."

Now, he had no doubt hon. members who were in the House at the time the late Mr. Jacob Low represented the Balonne, would remember what that gentleman told the House with regard to his own particular run—that it was utterly impossible for cultivation to be carried out there to any great extent; and he gave reasons which those who were acquainted with the run could very well bear out. But what did Mr. Hunter say with regard to Welltown Station—and mark this was, as he had said before, evidence given before a number of intelligent gentlemen with the belief that it would induce them to bring up a report favourable to the construction of that line. He was asked at question 1042, page 37, by Mr. Brentnall, who had asked some very far-reaching questions on that committee:—

"Is there a large quantity of land there suitable for the growth of wheat? Yes, the whole district is suitable for it, even the worst description of land there, the scrub land. As an instance, Welltown, when held by the late Messrs. Low, was covered with scrub, and is now studded with cultivation."

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

Mr. GROOM: Why, as a matter of fact there was only about half-an-acre under cultivation on the whole run, and that was simply a patch at the head station to grow vegetables for the manager. And yet that was the class of evidence upon which the colony was asked to commit itself to that enormous expenditure. He submitted that under those circumstances they might well hesitate, and say that there was plain evidence of a desire to mislead. The hon. gentlemen who composed that select committee knew nothing whatever of the particular district to which that witness was referring; they trusted to his honour, integrity, and truthfulness, because he (Mr. Groom) had spoken to members of the committee since, and they had assured him that they believed every word that man said, and that they were largely influenced in bringing up the report they did, favourable to the construction of the supposed border line, by the evidence he had given. Why, there was not a member of the House at all acquainted with the district, who did not know that the statement that Welltown, at the time that evidence was given, was "studded with cultivation," was not a deliberate, downright falsehood. In fact he might as well "call a spade a spade," and say that that evidence was given deliberately for the purpose of misleading the country into that extravagant expenditure. He said that such evidence was totally unreliable, not only totally unreliable, but he would go further and say totally untruthful, as every member of the House could bear him out. Then with regard to the district that intervened between Goondiwindi and Inglewood, that also had been misrepresented. It was represented to the select committee that a large amount of trade would be derived from Inglewood, and that it was one of the most flourishing agricultural districts in the colony. But what were the actual facts as brought out in the statistics supplied by the Registrar-General?

Mr. MORGAN: Who represented it so?

Mr. GROOM said he would give the names of the witness and quote from the evidence. The total area under cultivation at Inglewood in 1886 was 208 acres, and, so that hon. members might be able to see the amount of traffic there would be for a railway there, he would state the yield of that area: 10 bushels of oats, 37 bushels of barley, 1,384 bushels of maize, 32 tons of potatoes, 72 tons of wheaten hay, 130 tons of open hay, and 132 tons of lucerne; and as the hon. member for Darling Downs had spoken of the large quantity of fruit grown there, he might state that the area estimated as under orchards was described as 1 acre. And to show the amount of progress there had been in the district, in 1878 there were 142 acres under cultivation, as against 208 in 1886. He would now refer to the evidence of a gentleman in that particular locality. At page 34 of the evidence, question 959, Mr. J. McEwan was asked:—

"What crops do they grow? Wheat, lucerne, potatoes, oats, corn, sorghum, barley, and, in fact, all sorts of field produce."

He was then asked by Mr. Brentnall, who, he (Mr. Groom) might say, had his wits about him while the witnesses were being examined, and put some very searching questions to them; and when the report was brought up to be adopted, that gentleman was not quite satisfied as to the agricultural capabilities of the district, and moved an amendment, to which he (Mr. Groom) thought it necessary to draw the attention of the Committee when he came to it, as he should presently:—

"Where is the market for this produce? There is a little market for it now, but if we had a railway there a lot more would be grown. I have potatoes up there now that I do not know what to do with."

Why, the whole yield in 1886 was only 30 tons. He was one of those who thought that if a district was not capable of growing sufficient produce for local consumption it must be a very poor district. The population of a district must be very sparse indeed, and certainly not worthy of a railway, when only 30 tons of potatoes was grown in the whole year, and then they had such a large supply that they did not know what to do with it. Placing those facts together, what was the natural inference to be drawn from them?

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. GROOM said he would like to call attention to another paragraph in the evidence of the same witness with regard to agricultural produce. On page 34, question 970, put by the Hon. F. T. Gregory:—

"Could you tell the committee about the number of acres of lucerne grown within about thirty or forty miles of Inglewood? In the immediate neighbourhood of Inglewood there are about 300 acres of lucerne."

He had already informed the Committee that, according to the statistics supplied by the Registrar-General, the whole area in the district under cultivation of any sort was only 280 acres; while that witness stated that under lucerne alone there were about 300 acres. On referring to the detailed returns, showing the total extent of land under cultivation in the various police districts during the year 1886, he found that the area in the police district of Inglewood under lucerne was only 30 acres. He thought what he had quoted would show the unreliable nature of the evidence with regard to the area under cultivation along the proposed line of railway. He would next turn to another subject. A good deal had been said of the alleged richness of the district as a gold-bearing country. He thought, if all those who had contributed towards testing the district had the money in their pockets they had spent, some of them would be very well off. Some of the inhabitants of Warwick, Drayton, and Toowoomba had spent very considerable sums of money in trying to test the auriferous capabilities of the district, but, he was sorry to say, with no very great results. The hon. member for Warwick, Mr. Horwitz, gave some idea of the extent of the working for gold in that district, and he (Mr. Groom) would like to quote one or two questions that were put to that gentleman, because he had given his evidence in a very straightforward manner indeed. He was asked—page 10, question 221:—

"What reason have you to think that more gold miners will go there when there is a railway?"

In answer to a previous question, he said they would not go until there was a railway made there. Then he was asked that question, and his answer was—

"My reason is that as soon as we get a lot of people in the country doing the railway work for the Government, some of them will make it their business, in spare time, when they cannot be at their regular work, to go 'fossicking' for gold. They will be prospectors; they may make the goldfield better known than it has been."

"It is only 'fossicking' you look to. There is no regular mining going on? Yes; there is. But then we shall have more population, and more regular mining."

"Can you tell us now any particulars of the gold-mining in the district from 'fossicking'? Yes. For gold-mining there are some very good reefs."

"What are they doing on the field, I mean? At present, they are doing nothing; merely a few people are working there. The party that had a machine there took it away, so, of course, the diggers who had been working the reefs were obliged to lay up their claims. There are hundreds of tons of quartz lying there; but there being no machinery, crushing has not been carried on: they cannot go on reducing the quartz to get the gold from it."

Now, he would quote from the evidence of Mr. Hutchison. That witness had stated that 10 oz. of gold to the ton was nothing at all startling in that particular locality.

Mr. MORGAN: Did he say that particular locality?

Mr. GROOM: Nothing startling in the locality. He was asked this question:—

"You told us there had been nothing startling about the gold-mining of the district. Do not you think that 11 oz. to the ton is a fair show in quartz reefing? Yes, but it is not sensational.

"How many tons crushed for 11 oz. to the ton? I mentioned ninety tons, which gave a return of 1,100 oz.

"Did the men who had that reef abandon it? Two of them went home. They had got £5,000 out of it. There were four Germans in it. Two of them went home, having got more money than they ever expected to have; and two of them went to Gympie, which, at that time, broke out."

Then Mr. E. B. Forrest, with that sagacious foresight for which they all gave him credit, asked:—

"What became of the reef? Did they take that with them?"

No wonder that question was put in the face of such evidence. The answer was—

"It stands. The workings fell into the hands of another party of men, who abandoned them afterwards. They tried to get into the old workings by sinking another shaft and making a cross-cut; but they could not. They got down ninety feet, and then the party broke up. Some men in Warwick were backing the party; but they did not go on any further.

"Where is the particular reef you speak of? It is on Talgai. But that was not the only good crushing. The whole line has been worked with good payable results; though, as a rule, the working was only superficial. There was another reason why this particular reef should not be worked; there was no crushing machinery on the field. It is a matter of more than £3,000 to put a quartz-crushing machine on the goldfield. It is no good for a party of men to go to work a reef, however rich, unless they can see their way to crushing the quartz.

"How was the 90 tons crushed? That was crushed by a machine put up there. It fell into the hands of the station-owner. You know that station-owners used to have a prejudice against mining being carried on on their land. They were opposed to Talgai being opened in the first instance. They did all they could to stop working there, and the most effectual way, they decided, was to buy the crushing plant, which they succeeded in doing. They shifted the engine to the washpool, and sold the stamps to go elsewhere; and they would not crush anybody's stone on that field.

"It was the squatters did this, was it? Yes; that is the place where the stone was crushed. I cannot vouch for it myself, because I did not see the gold; but I believe that only two tons of stone from that reef yielded 244 oz.; that is 122 oz. to the ton.

"You do not call that startling? That is what started Talgai. I know one of the men; he was working for me. He is now working at Mount Morgan. I have every reason to believe that statement is correct. Of course, the stone was selected.

"To your knowledge there are several reefs like that? Yes. Those reefs have been opened and worked to a certain depth. I know one reef that has been worked down to 190 odd feet by windlass, and the last crushing from it gave 24 dwt. to the ton. It is a soft stone and plenty of it; but it hardly pays to haul it up that way.

Of course, he knew there was gold there. Practical miners had worked it, and he had himself contributed towards the opening up of some of the workings. It was there without a doubt, and there was gold in a great many places. He believed in the extinct volcano at the foot of the Main Range—those little conical hills, hon. members would notice on a trip up the Main Range, near the One-tree Hill—there was more or less extremely fine gold; but it would not pay to work it, although it was close to a railway. He did not doubt what was said by the Rev. W. B. Clarke, that the whole of Australia was one goldfield. He had

quoted what he had to show the kind of evidence brought before the select committee, to induce them to bring up a favourable report for the construction of that railway, which, as he had previously said, committed the country to an expenditure of not less than from £2,000,000 to £3,000,000 of money. In regard to the general capabilities of the land through which the railway would pass, the first twenty-five miles was partly through agricultural land and partly through pastoral land, a great deal of it being fit for nothing but pastoral pursuits. Beyond Thane's Creek the evidence was fully borne out by the fact that at a Land Board inquiry, held in Brisbane some fifteen months ago, the question of Warroo Run being then under consideration, and Mr. Golden's estimate of the rent being called into question—the lessee, Mr. Frederick Bracker, appeared to give evidence, and what was the evidence as to the agricultural capabilities of that land? That it took ten acres to feed a beast. The Commissioners turned round to Mr. Golden and asked him whether that was a fair statement or not, and Mr. Golden had to confess that Mr. Bracker's evidence was quite correct, and the rent of the run was reduced correspondingly. There was no getting over that fact. If hon. members would turn to the evidence of Mr. Carmody, who was constantly travelling over that country with cattle for the New South Wales markets—

Mr. MORGAN: An advocate of another route.

Mr. GROOM: This was what Mr. Carmody said on page 22 of the evidence:—

"Have you any acquaintance with the country between Warwick, or, rather, say, Sandy Creek and Goondiwindi, and thence to St. George? Yes, I have. I am acquainted very well with the country—about that locality:

"How long have you known it? I have known it for some years; I am an old resident—say, twenty years.

"Have you travelled over the country generally—not confined exactly to the road—between the two places? Yes; I have crossed the route of the proposed railway in several places.

"Look at the large scale map on the wall. [Pointing out the tracing of the line.] Do you know Thane's Creek? I do.

"What is the character of the country from Thane's Creek to Goondiwindi? The character of the country you cross is very rough, and something like the country between Stanthorpe and Warwick—from Thane's Creek to near Goondiwindi; then it alters and it is low scrubby country, principally from Inglewood to Goondiwindi.

"What is its quality as pastoral land generally? On the pine flats it is very fair pastoral.

"On the route? The Macintyre Brook, where the railway line is;—it runs principally through a dense scrub. I have crossed it in three different directions, right through the scrub. It is about ten or fifteen miles through.

"Do I understand you to say it is principally scrub from Inglewood along the proposed route to Goondiwindi? Along the proposed route it is. That scrub extends for a great distance.

"On either side of the proposed route? About five miles on each side of it.

"What is the character of the pasture of the soil on that scrubby belt? On the east side of it it is fair grazing land, and on the north side it is very indifferent poor country. Wyaga and Billa Billa country is very poor. There is some what I would consider agricultural land between Inglewood and Goondiwindi.

"Is there any agricultural country on the north side of the route of the proposed railway—within twenty-five miles of it? There is none. It is the same class of country. The only patches that may be found would be between Inglewood and the Dividing Range; there is no agricultural land until after you pass Inglewood.

"What is the character of the soil? A very sandy loam, as a rule.

"Is it what we call the pipeclay sandy country? Well, you can scarcely call it pipeclay. It is a formation of sand and pipeclay, I should think.

"Is it what you term the boggy ridgy country in wet weather? It is the kind of country that in wet weather has no bottom to it. Stock in travelling over it go down into the spuey ground. In fact, we cannot travel over it in wet weather."

Now, Mr. Donnelly's evidence was of exactly the same character—and, in fact, the whole of the evidence was—as that which he had read. The hon. member for Darling Downs quoted Mr. Lalor's evidence; but he omitted a most important part of it, in his opinion, and when it was read that would be the opinion of the Committee also.

Mr. KATES: No.

Mr. GROOM: The hon. member might say "No," but he (Mr. Groom) would repeat, that it was the most important part of the evidence, and also the part which the taxpayers took the greatest interest in, and which he hoped hon. members as well would take a great interest in. Mr. Forrest asked the following question:—

"What do you think about the line paying, Mr. Lalor? The country is very sparsely populated. It will be some time before it will pay. I am very doubtful if it will pay."

Mr. MORGAN: That is the St. George line.

Mr. GROOM: Yes; and it was the St. George railway they were discussing. It was no use the hon. member trying to hoodwink the Committee and the country by saying that it was only a branch railway to Thane's Creek. If it were that they would be perfectly justified in raising a constitutional question, because if it were not the Warwick to St. George railway for which provision had already been made on the Loan Estimates, there was no money voted for it, and they were being asked to approve of the plans of a railway which was not in the Loan Act. It was no use hon. members trying to disguise that fact. They were asked to approve of that section of a railway, and to commit themselves irretrievably, whatever the cost might be. Mr. Stanley, the Chief Engineer, showed very clearly that the line from Rosewood to Warwick would cost £1,000,000 sterling. For some twenty or thirty miles it would be a work of a magnitude unsurpassed in any of the colonies. The place was so inaccessible at some of the mountain gorges that it would cost £10,000 to make a road for the navvies to reach the proposed line to carry on the work. If they adopted the resolution, he repeated, the colony would be committed to the whole of that scheme. It was no use disguising the fact, and trying to throw dust in their eyes, or hoodwink them in any direction. They were asked to commit themselves to the whole scheme. If not the Committee had no right to adopt the resolution, because the line was not provided for on the Loan Estimates. There was £500,000 on the Loan Estimates for a line from Rosewood to Warwick—the *via recta*, as it was called—and also £250,000 for a line of railway from Warwick towards St. George. They were asked now to sanction the construction of the first section of the railway from Warwick towards St. George, and if the *via recta* was to be dropped out of sight that railway would be a useless one, because St. George could be reached by a much shorter railway *via* Dalby or Yeulba. And there was no justification for the construction of the line from Warwick to Thane's Creek as a branch line. One of the reasons that might be urged in justification of the construction of branch lines was the existence of a large area of Crown lands in the vicinity of the railway which could be sold to pay the cost of construction. When the hon. member for Enoggera introduced a motion for a railway from Brisbane to Enoggera he informed the House that there was 9,000 acres which if sold after the railway

was constructed would realise sufficient to pay for the line. On the Cleveland line there was between 5,000 and 6,000 acres of Crown land which, even when tenders were called, would realise a sum sufficient to cover two-thirds of the cost of construction. Those were reasons justifying the construction of such lines. But what was the case with regard to the line under consideration? There was not a single acre of Crown land all the way from Warwick to Thane's Creek, as could be seen from the following evidence of Patrick Higgins, at page 29:—

"By the Chairman: You are not aware of the existence of any Crown lands of any extent between Warwick and Thane's Creek? No; not until you get seven or eight miles back from the line of railway and on both sides of it.

"By Mr. F. T. Gregory: Are you aware of a single inch of Crown land to the north of the proposed route and between Thane's Creek and Warwick? No; not one acre.

"Are you aware of a single acre of Crown lands within ten miles of the route proposed on the south side? There are no Crown lands within that distance.

"By the Chairman: What is the character of the land beyond that distance from the proposed route? It is good grazing and agricultural land."

Mr. KATES: There is good land on both sides, but it has been taken up.

Mr. GROOM said the hon. member knew as well as he did how it had been taken up, and that though the land was there, it was not in the hands of those who ought to have had it. If the land had been secured by those who ought to have had it, they would have put it to the use for which it was intended. The evidence he had just read showed that the Crown would not be recouped one iota so far as the sale of land was concerned; neither would it be recouped by any additional traffic. The late Colonial Treasurer, in an after-dinner speech, when people were supposed to look at things through a glass darkly, talked of the great border trade that would come over the line; but what was shown by the return called for by the hon. member for Warrego? If that return were carefully analysed it would be found that the border trade would be something like Micawber's halfpenny, which was left after he had spent 19s. 11½d. Then there was the evidence of Mr. Lucas, who, if anything, had a predilection in favour of the line, and he said that all the trade by the line of coaches he ran between Goondiwindi and Warwick only amounted to £1,200 a year. The population only amounted to about 1,200—men, women, and children—and he did not see how a border trade was to be produced where there was such a sparse population. Hon. members who supported the line need not think they were going to steal the border trade of New South Wales. It was alleged that there was a great border trade to New South Wales, but there was really very little; and anyone who read the evidence of Mr. Lucas would find that there was not a soul who got anything from New South Wales except himself, and he only got a few parcels from Sydney by way of Brisbane. At the present time the border trade was nothing; therefore, if the border trade was the only justification for making the line, no argument could be adduced to satisfy the Committee that the construction of the line was justifiable. He thought he had shown very clearly, from the evidence adduced before the select committee, that the evidence in favour of the construction of the line was misleading in almost every particular. Only two or three witnesses went before the committee to tell the truth, but several went with a thorough determination to mislead the committee, and to have a report adopted inconsistent with facts. So much was that the case that when the report came to be submitted to the committee for their

consideration it was very materially altered. The late Colonial Treasurer said that the only justification for the line was the border trade; and he would now read the first paragraph submitted to the committee:—

"The evidence taken shows that the construction of the proposed railway is sound public policy, because (a) it will retain within the colony the trade along the border of Southern Queensland which now passes to and from New South Wales; (b) because it will contribute to the settlement of a large population on the lands on and adjacent to the route; much of the lands in question being good agricultural soil, besides being well suited for grazing."

The Hon. E. B. Forrest proposed the omission of the words "the proposed" and the insertion of the words "a border," and the committee agreed to the amendment. Was the late Colonial Treasurer aware of that? Could he justify his voting for the resolution to-night in the face of such evidence as had been read, and in the face of that recommendation as amended? Not only was the first paragraph amended, but the select committee went further, and struck out the following paragraph, on the motion of the Hon. F. T. Brentnall:—

"The evidence satisfies the committee that agriculture combined with grazing is likely to be successfully established on almost the whole distance to St. George; and the committee believe that wheat production to a great extent will, in that region, result from the establishment of railway communication."

They were of opinion that there was not a tittle of evidence to justify the insertion of such a paragraph in their report; yet in the face of that hon. members were now asked to commit the country to an enormous expenditure on evidence which the select committee refused to act upon. There was nothing to show that the colony would receive anything in return for the expenditure; and there was nothing to show that the border trade or the trade of Brisbane would be in any way increased. When railways of such magnitude were proposed, committing the colony to such enormous expenditure, some good statistical arguments should be adduced to show that there was a probability of there being sufficient traffic to justify the expenditure. He maintained that in that instance not a tittle of evidence had been adduced to show that such was the case. Even the Minister for Works introduced the resolutions in a half-hearted way, and that was not to be wondered at. It would be a difficult thing for any Minister to introduce such a proposal with all his heart and soul, especially in view of the present state of the public finances. The hon. gentleman did the very best he could with such a questionable proposal. It was a very wretched proposition. The strongest argument against it was the statement made by the acting Colonial Treasurer, when delivering his budget speech, that he would ask members not to urge the construction of railways at the present time, and the reason the hon. gentleman gave for doing so was, that in order to meet the deficiency in interest on the lines already constructed, the general taxpayers had to pay £399,000 per annum. With such a statement as that, which had not been qualified since by any subsequent statement, there was nothing whatever to justify the Committee in approving of that line from Warwick to Thane's Creek. He would further draw the attention of hon. members to the fact that the Treasurer anticipated there would be an increase in the railway receipts for 1887-8 of £142,000. What did the returns for last week show? They were the most favourable returns that had been published for the current financial year, and they showed an increase on the corresponding period for last year of £5,717. Taking the average increase of each week to be £2,000, it was quite clear that the anticipated revenue from railways would fall short of the

estimate by at least £40,000. So that the general taxpayer would be called upon to pay a further sum for interest. Some interesting information was furnished in a speech recently made by the Commissioner for Railways. It was not often that gentleman made a speech in public, but when he did it was well worth listening to, and well worth reading when it was well reported, and on that occasion his remarks were well reported by the *Brisbane Courier*. And what did that gentleman say? He stated that just now the colony was being over-railwayed by railway proposals. He also stated that last year there were open for traffic 1,555 miles of railway, which carried 1,579,658 passengers. Of those, 1,317,456, or five-sixths of the whole, were carried on 676 miles of the Southern and Western Railway, while the other 879 miles carried 262,202, or only one-sixth of the whole. Seven lines were worked at a loss.

Mr. DONALDSON: How many at a profit?

Mr. GROOM said that was not stated. Two of these, the Mackay and Clermont lines, had cost £28,812 to earn £13,682. The number of miles on the branches and the loss on working was 57 on the Southern and Western Railway, and on the others 225. The loss on the former was £2,910, and on the latter £17,878. In the southern and western part of the colony there were 300 persons to the mile, and the net earnings of the railway for the financial year were £149,112. The point he wished to direct particular attention to was that the interest on that line was £255,696, giving a loss of £106,584. The rest of the colony had a mile of railway for every 150 persons, and the net earnings then were £67,010; the interest was £204,694, showing a loss of £137,684. Those figures were very suggestive at the present time, when they were asked to sanction the expenditure of such a large sum of money for the line under discussion. Was that the time to ask the general taxpayers of the colony to increase their burdens by constructing that line when there was a deficit of half-a-million of money? He opposed the line on the ground that they were not justified in doing so in the face of their financial position. Talk about a land tax being insufficient to meet the present deficit, they would have a land tax of 3d. in the £1, an income tax, and various other taxes if those lines were to be forced upon them in the way in which they were being forced. He contended that there was nothing in the evidence given before the select committee to justify the Committee or the country giving their sanction to the construction of that line—no reason why they should commit themselves to the construction of the *via recta*. Whatever justification there might have been for putting that line on the Loan Estimates of 1884, there was nothing in the circumstances of the colony at the present time to justify the proposal. What was the trade between Queensland and New South Wales now that they had completed the line to the border of New South Wales? It was nothing to justify the Government putting on even an extra train to catch the mail-train from New South Wales. Frequently the train from Stanthorpe to Wallangarra travelled with only two or three passengers. He remembered that when he travelled over the line four months ago the only persons in the train were Mr. Bernays, the engineer in charge of the line, and himself; and when he came back again there were only three passengers. Then, how many travelled free? When he went there were only two of them, and they were both dead-heads. He repeated that there was nothing whatever in the trade between New South Wales and Queensland to justify them in going to the expenditure which the construction of that line would involve. On the

occasion he referred to he stopped at Glen Innes, and had a conversation with some merchants there with regard to the probability of a trade being established between that town and Brisbane. How did they look at it? What did they say about the matter? They simply said, "How can you people expect the trade from here? We get our goods shipped direct to Sydney, and there sent on to Newcastle direct from the Orient steamers. The ships come right down to the wharf, and our goods are loaded on to the railway trucks and sent here by rail. If we go to Brisbane we shall have to have our goods transhipped to Brisbane, unloaded there and carted from the wharf to the railway, then loaded on the trucks, and probably be detained we do not know how many days on the road." Of course they did not go to all that trouble, and they laughed at the very idea of a trade being established between that town and Brisbane. As to the intermediate trade between Glen Innes and Wallangarra, any member who had ridden over that country in the coaching days must know that it was nothing but sour grass and cold granite country; and how could a population be settled there to create a border trade for Queensland? The thing was utterly absurd. He certainly did not think that, when the colony was in such a financial position as it was in now, that was a proper time to ask the Committee to commit itself to the very large expenditure that would be involved in the construction of the *via recta*. His contention was that if the Committee sanctioned that branch line they were committed to the *via recta*, which would necessitate an expenditure of between two and three millions of money. He had given his reasons for opposing the resolution. He was sorry he had been so long, but he thought it his duty to the country and to his constituency to explain why he opposed the line and why he would oppose it, as the hon. member for Aubigny put it, "to the bitter end." He hoped the hon. members for Darling Downs and Warwick would not allow their difference on that particular question to interfere with their private friendship. He esteemed both the hon. member for Warwick and the member for Darling Downs very highly. He had a great respect for the member for Warwick, and considered him an acquisition to the House, but he had a duty to discharge to his constituency and to the country, and must therefore oppose the line. If it were a branch line for the benefit of selectors along the route, and had appeared as such upon the original Loan Estimates, he had no doubt it would have passed long ago and perhaps have been constructed by that time; but it was part and parcel of the Warwick and St. George Railway. It was part and parcel of the *via recta*, and by sanctioning the line they would commit themselves irretrievably to the expenditure of over £2,000,000. Looking, therefore, at the financial position of the colony, and in view of the fact that the construction of the line must necessitate additional taxation, he should do everything he possibly could to prevent the resolution being carried.

Mr. MORGAN said he was very much obliged indeed to the hon. gentleman who had just sat down for his opinion of him, and he hoped that as long as he remained in the House he would justify the confidence which the hon. member had expressed in him, and prove that he was an acquisition to the House. The hon. member's opinion of him notwithstanding, he must say that he had not a very exalted opinion of the motives which actuated the hon. member in his opposition of the branch line of railway from Warwick to Thane's Creek; and he thought before he sat down he would be able to show that the hon. member had not always entertained the same opinion of the line as he would now lead the Committee to

believe. It was not so long ago—it was when that £10,000,000 loan, which the hon. member said had had such a demoralising effect upon the colony, was introduced—it was just at that time that there appeared in a paper edited by the member for Toowoomba—

Mr. GROOM: I have already repudiated that.

Mr. MORGAN: There appeared in that paper a leading article which expressly approved of the border line from Warwick to St. George.

Mr. GROOM: Which I did not write.

Mr. MORGAN: It appeared in the hon. gentleman's paper, a paper which bore his imprint, and for the contents of which he was responsible entirely.

Mr. GROOM: I was in Townsville when that was written.

Mr. MORGAN said he had no doubt the hon. gentleman's amanuensis knew perfectly well his opinion on the question, and he was quite certain that a statement of that kind would not have been published in the *Toowoomba Chronicle* unless that hon. gentleman approved of it.

Mr. GROOM: You know I did not approve of it.

Mr. MORGAN: A long leading article appeared, on the schedule appended to the Loan Bill, in which the various items were detailed one by one. There was a long commentary written in the style peculiar to the *Toowoomba Chronicle*, and which he was justified in believing was written by the Hon. W. H. Groom. It stated that the Government had introduced that rather formidable loan, which was quite justified, in the interests of the country districts, and it also held up in approbation the proposal to build a line along the southern border to St. George. Now, that was just at the outset of the career of the present Government. That £10,000,000 loan had just been foreshadowed; it was absolutely necessary, in order that the Government might retain office, that that £10,000,000 loan should be swallowed by the people, and as the hon. member for Toowoomba was interested, to the extent of £1,000 a year, in keeping the Liberal Government in power, of course the hon. member found it to his interest—though, as he said now, he always disapproved of the line—to conceal his real views on that occasion. It was found necessary to do so in order to enable him to delude the public into the opinion that that £10,000,000 loan was justified, and that that portion of it which it was proposed to allocate to the construction of a line from Warwick to St. George was justified also. Now, he did not see how the hon. member, in his desire to protect the purse of the colony, could reconcile his conduct of a few years ago with his speech of that night. They were utterly irreconcilable. The hon. gentleman got up and posed as a patriot who was determined to protect the public against a Government that desired to saddle an unjustifiable and costly work like that upon the people. He was afraid the hon. gentleman's action during the last twelve months had not been consistent with the preaching they had heard from him that night. Why, it was not more than twelve months since he (Mr. Morgan) occupied a position in the lobby of the House when a discussion was taking place on a proposed work which would cost £500,000. He alluded to the Valley extension. He approved of the Valley extension, as he believed in that line, and he believed the House was perfectly justified in giving its sanction to that line, because if not built now it would have to be, less than ten years hence, when they would have to pay twice as much to construct it. For that reason he thought the wiser policy was to build it now. The hon. member for Toowoomba,

Mr. Groom, and his colleagues held other views, as they considered the line was totally indefensible—that it was a squandering of the public money; that the line was totally indefensible and ought not to be allowed to pass that Chamber. How did they act? The hon. junior member for Toowoomba, Mr. Aland, and the hon. member for Aubigny acted courageously, and voted according to their convictions. But how did the senior member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, the Speaker, act? Why, he went out on to the veranda and declined to vote; and allowed the colony—to quote the hon. member's words—to be “fleeced” to the tune of £500,000. That gentleman, who had allowed the colony to be plundered of £500,000, according to his own opinion, now posed as a patriot; but his patriotism would suffer a very severe downfall when those facts were remembered. It was necessary for the hon. gentleman, however, to maintain the Government in their place. It was essential to the maintenance of his position and £1,000 a year, which he (Mr. Morgan) had no doubt had reconciled him to many extraordinary votes. Of course whenever the position of the Government was assailed he gave a vote so as to assist in keeping them in power. Now, however, that the Government had nearly reached its allotted span, and were not making the present question a party one, the hon. member could act with some independence, and he came down to that Committee and posed as a patriot; but he (Mr. Morgan) thought that his patriotism was not of that quality which would lead the country and the Committee to believe in it. The hon. member had delivered a speech that evening more remarkable for length than for anything else. That speech had proved—to him, at any rate—that he (Mr. Morgan) knew more about the line under discussion than the hon. gentleman did. It proved that he knew nothing of the country through which it would pass. If he did he had carefully concealed the fact. The hon. gentleman had quoted evidence to show that the line would pass through country the whole of which had been alienated, and that being so he contended the line was not justified, as no land could be sold to pay the cost. The hon. gentleman instanced the case of the Samford line, advocated the other day by the hon. member for Enoggera, Mr. Dickson, who said that the land contiguous thereto could be sold to defray the cost of the line, and asserted that if it could be shown that the Thane's Creek line would pass through unalienated land they might be justified in constructing the line as a branch line. The hon. gentleman quoted the evidence of Mr. Patrick Higgins particularly to show there was not an acre of unalienated land along the line. Mr. Higgins's evidence might have been as quoted, but it did not prove that no land was available there, or that there might not shortly be some available. The facts of the case were that the country along that line was already well settled. The line would pass through the remnants of a run, the lease of which would very soon fall due, and the land would then be available for settlement by the people. He alluded to the South Toolburra Run. The leader of the Opposition smiled—

Mr. MOREHEAD: How much good land will be available?

Mr. MORGAN said there would be about forty-five square miles left, and he would tell the hon. gentleman how much good land there would be. He had heard the hon. gentleman interject a derisive laugh when his hon. friend the member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, was speaking about the area of land under cultivation and mentioned the fact that there was one block of land of 800 acres under cultivation.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I was not here when the hon. member for Darling Downs spoke.

Mr. MORGAN said he accepted the hon. gentleman's statement, but certainly an hon. member occupying a place near where the hon. leader of the Opposition was sitting, laughed when that statement was made.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I suppose a member may laugh, even though the member for Warwick objects.

Mr. MORGAN said the hon. member laughed as though the statement made was open to serious question; but he could tell the Committee that on the North British Company's South Toolburra estate there were 800 acres under cultivation. He knew that from personal knowledge of the place, and he could bring outside proof in support of his assertion.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Lucerne land?

Mr. MORGAN: Under lucerne cultivation.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Is that what you call a farm?

Mr. MORGAN said it was agriculture in the truest sense of the word. It was not carried on certainly by an individual farmer, but by a British company. He did not know how many shareholders there were in the company, but they had an extensive capital, and some of it had been devoted to the purchase of a very costly steam ploughing plant, which had been brought from England, and had been employed in breaking up the very fine flats in the South Toolburra estate for the purpose of laying them down in lucerne. They were now producing very fine crops of lucerne, which was not sold at £1 a ton, as the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, had said, but was converted into mutton and sent down to market in that form, and thus put to very good and profitable use. He was saying that an hon. member who sat where the leader of the Opposition usually sat, laughed at the statement that there were 800 acres of land under cultivation on one estate. He had also said that he could get outside proof to confirm that statement, and the outside proof he spoke of was furnished by the hon. leader of the Opposition, whose firm issued an advertisement through the *Queenslander* to the effect that Messrs. B. D. Morehead and Company had received instructions from the North British Company to sell the Rosenthal and South Toolburra Runs.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Quote it as it appeared.

Mr. MORGAN said the hon. member would find the advertisement in the *Queenslander* of the 25th September, 1886. The advertisement stated that there were 15,000 acres freehold, and seventy-five square miles leasehold with ten years' lease to run. There were now less than nine years of the lease to run. It was stated to be a fine estate twelve miles from Warwick, and the country was granite and slate formation, with alluvial flats on watercourses, well watered and admirably adapted for growing fine wool. Hon. members no doubt knew that the Darling Downs clips of wool usually topped the market, and the St. Clair brand, which was the brand of the South Toolburra run, was set forth in the advertisement as always holding a leading position amongst the best wools of the Downs; and the statement was also made that in 1885 that clip brought from 12d. to 12½d. in the grease, in London, before the rise took place, after the terrible fall sustained in the previous season. The advertisement further set forth that there were numerous cultivation paddocks, including 800 acres under lucerne. That certainly bore out the statements of the hon. member for

Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, and it showed also that the country was not that barren currant-bush country which the hon. member for Aubigny said it was the other night.

Mr. CAMPBELL: The land described in the advertisement is only two miles from Warwick.

Mr. MORGAN said that if the hon. member for Aubigny would keep his mouth shut people would imagine that he knew something about the matter, but the moment he opened his mouth he proved that he knew nothing about it. The nearest point on South Toolburra to Warwick was thirteen miles distant from Warwick. The hon. member said it was two miles, but he might take a tape line or a chain when he had any leisure time and mark off the distance, and if it was under thirteen miles he (Mr. Morgan) would return the hon. member the new hat he had won from him. When that railway was before the Committee last year he had himself heard great complaint made by hon. members, as a justification for the position they took up, that they had been supplied with no information as to the character of the country through which the line would pass, as to the kind of settlement, the stock, and the quantity of traffic that were likely to be secured by it. He proposed before sitting down to give the Committee a few facts on those subjects. What he would state to the Committee was what he had gathered from personal observation, as he had been all over that country, and he would state nothing but what was true, and he could challenge anyone to disprove what he stated. The line would be a very great benefit to the people in that part of the colony.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: When they get it.

Mr. MORGAN said that it would come, the opposition of the hon. member for Cook notwithstanding. If it did not come now, it would probably come next year, when possibly the hon. member for Cook would not be a member of the Committee. It would come probably when that hon. member had gone back among his turnips and his muttons. As he had said, the line would be a very great benefit to that stretch of country through which it would pass. It was thickly settled all along the line with an industrious farming population, whose one drawback was that they had not adequate means for getting their produce to market with rapidity, and thereby production was kept in check, and the district and the whole colony indirectly suffered. He did hope, notwithstanding the prospect of obstruction, that hon. members would consider the line upon its merits, and that those who did not know anything about the country would listen to those who did, and fashion their opinions on the subject upon the evidence of those who did know it, and not of those people who opposed the construction of the line on local grounds. He was prepared to take the word of members for different districts about lines in which they were interested, and had no reason to express any doubt of their word as to the character of the country. He asked that the same treatment might be extended to them. The proposed line was twenty-six miles in length, and he would briefly describe the nature of the country through which it ran. On leaving Warwick it took a course somewhat south of the town, passing through land for which very little would have to be paid as compensation. It then stretched away principally through reserves, to the Sandy Creek settlement, seven miles from Warwick. He might explain to hon. members who had looked at the tracings and noted the apparent absence of settlement alongside the line, that it passed through commons and reserves all the way to Sandy Creek. There was settled there a very

industrious population of agriculturists, with one or two of the best vineyards, possibly, in the whole of Queensland, which sufficiently proved the character of the country. The hon. member, Mr. Kates, quoted the actual figures of settlement there twelve or thirteen months ago, but since that time there had been a considerable increase, which would grow to still larger proportions as the land was made available. After passing Sandy Creek, they came to the South Toolburra paddocks, which the leader of the Opposition had described so eulogistically, and where, as he had said before, there were 800 acres under cultivation, principally under lucerne, worked by expensive steam machinery, imported for the purpose. Those people were not likely to invest some thousands of pounds in steam cultivating machinery to cultivate barren, stony ridges. Passing on, the line then went to the settlement surrounding the township of Pratten, where there was a very large population, through Greymare Creek to Thane's Creek, where, as had been very properly said, there was very little settlement at present of an agricultural nature, but where there were many people round about making a living by mining and the timber industry. Touching that timber industry, he would point out that when the Pittsworth extension was before the select committee of the other Chamber, Mr. Donnelly, a gentleman whose evidence had been quoted by the hon. member for Toowoomba that evening, gave evidence as to the grounds, if any, that existed to justify the construction of that railway. Mr. Donnelly gave evidence chiefly as to the timber resources of the Beauraraba district. He was asked by Mr. Pettigrew whether there was any timber in the Beauraraba district of a useful kind; and he replied that the timber was simply grand; that there was no such timber anywhere else in Australia; that he had seen many fine forests in most of the colonies, but nothing like those to be found at Beauraraba. They could ascertain how much truth there was in that statement from the fact, as had already been stated, that the bulk of the timber used in the construction of the Beauraraba line was drawn from the forests intersected by the proposed line from Warwick to Thane's Creek. Mr. Donnelly reappeared last year as a witness when the Warwick to Thane's Creek line was before the select committee of the Upper House, having been brought down by the gentlemen who appeared as advocates of the Pittsworth route. Mr. Donnelly was examined as to the nature of the country, not between Warwick and St. George, but between Pittsworth and Goondiwindi—the rival route set up by the hon. members for Toowoomba in opposition to the route from Warwick. That gentleman, who gave such reliable testimony before the Beauraraba committee, said the country about Goondiwindi was so poor and worthless that it would hardly feed a mouse. Since then, that very same gentleman had taken up a selection of 20,000 acres on a run which he told the committee was subject to frequent floods, and his brother had settled alongside him on another 20,000-acre block. If those gentlemen believed that that land was subject to frequent inundations, as they tried to lead the select committee of the Upper House to believe, or that it was unfit for cultivation, was it likely that they would have gone there to spend money and time in taking up the land and fulfilling the conditions?

Mr. DONALDSON: That is stock-grazing land, remember.

Mr. MORGAN said it was grazing land which produced wool that realised almost every year a very high price in the London market.

Mr. MURPHY: What price does it realise?

Mr. MORGAN said he was not in possession of the figures, but he need hardly inform the hon. member that the price of wool fluctuated very much in the London market, but the Welltown wool also brought a comparatively high price. Returning to the terminus at Thane's Creek, he was saying that there was a considerable number of settlers there engaged in timber-getting and the search for gold. The mineral resources had been alluded to by the hon. member for Toowoomba, who seemed to set up his opinion as to the mineral wealth of Thane's Creek, Canal Creek, and Talgai, in opposition to that of Mr. Rands, the Government Geologist. Mr. Rands's opinion was that the promise there of a payable goldfield was amply sufficient to justify further research; the hon. member for Toowoomba thought otherwise. When the question was before the Chamber a fortnight ago, the hon. member for Barcoo, referring to the evidence given before the select committee of the Upper House by Mr. Kenneth Hutchison, cast a great deal of doubt—an example which had been followed that evening by the hon. member for Toowoomba—upon a statement made by that gentleman with respect to a certain crushing of 90 tons of quartz which yielded 11 oz. per ton. At question 683, page 26 of the evidence, he was asked:—

"Did what was worked produce gold? Yes. I myself have sent over £20,000 worth of gold away. I know of one crushing of ninety tons of stone that gave a return of 1,100 oz. odd of gold. That reef belonged to four working men: two of them went home to Germany, the third went to Gympie, and the other broke his leg. I crushed myself some few tons of stone that gave 11 oz. to the ton."

The hon. member for Barcoo had read that extract from the evidence the other evening, pausing every now and then to get a little encouraging laughter from those who thought such a statement was all moonshine. But he (Mr. Morgan) now proposed to give something in the way of corroborative evidence. His hon. friend, Mr. Allan, had said in reply to the hon. member for Barcoo on that evening that he would vouch that what Mr. Hutchison had said on the point was true. He (Mr. Morgan) felt very much inclined to say the same thing, but it having been said before he did not think it necessary to repeat it. But he knew Mr. Hutchison well enough to state that he was above making any statement devoid of truth and palming it off as fact; and he was sure that if the hon. member for Barcoo knew that gentleman he would give him credit for having truth on his side. He certainly thought that it was most unfair that men who came there to give evidence before select committees of either House should have doubts thrown upon their evidence by men who had not a shadow of evidence to adduce in disproof of it. If that sort of thing were continued they would find that no man would come there to give evidence before select committees. The statement was made by Mr. Hutchison that 90 tons of quartz from a reef in that district, immediately contiguous to the proposed terminus of the line, had crushed 11 oz. of gold to the ton. Mr. Hutchison having read the comments of the hon. member for Barcoo upon that statement, at once telegraphed upon the subject to the man who crushed the stone, who was working in the neighbourhood of Mount Morgan, a practical miner and machine manager. He (Mr. Morgan) would suppress the name of the reef mentioned in the telegram, because Mr. Hutchison had still an interest in it, and was desirous that the name should be kept secret, but if any hon. member doubted the name of the reef or wished to see the telegram, he (Mr. Morgan) would show it to him privately. Mr. Hutchison telegraphed as followed:—"Give number tons and ounces per ton from — reef

Talgai." He had not the date of that telegram, but the reply was dated Rockhampton, 25th of last month, and ran as followed:—"Nearly two hundred tons and eleven per ton."

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Pennyweights! Eleven what?

Mr. MORGAN said if the hon. gentleman had patience he would hear. The next day Mr. Hutchison, noticing the defect—that a word was omitted from the reply—wired on the 26th October, 1887: "Wire received. Was the return 11 oz. gold per ton?" The answer came dated October 31: "11 oz. gold per ton, over £4 per oz." If the hon. member for Barcoo wished to see those telegrams he might do so now. He (Mr. Morgan) thought that evidence showed that Mr. Hutchison had ample warranty for the statement he made with regard to that crushing. If the hon. member for Blackall, Mr. Pattison, was in his place, and saw those telegrams, he would be able to tell the hon. member for Barcoo that he might believe them—that the information was true. Possibly the stone was picked; he (Mr. Morgan) did not say it was not; but the evidence was sufficient to prove the auriferous wealth of the district, and the fact that it had not been developed was due mainly to the fact that the population around Warwick was an agricultural population, and did not believe much in speculating in hidden treasure which they might not discover. As further proof of the gold yield of that district, he might say that on his weekly journey down to Brisbane he was frequently requested by the manager of a bank in Warwick to bring down considerable parcels of gold. Last night he was entrusted with a parcel of fifty ounces, and he could refer to the hon. member for Gympie in proof of it, as he saw the precious metal that morning. In fact, he was frequently asked by one of the banks in Warwick to bring down parcels of gold ranging from thirty to fifty ounces—about once every five or six weeks. He did not know where the gold came from, but he assumed that it came from the fields about Thane's Creek and Talgai. That was only the produce of the goldfields sent down by one of four local banks. He knew one of the business firms established in Warwick, which had two houses in the town, and one branch sent down annually over £2,000 worth of gold. He thought that was sufficient evidence to show that gold did exist there, and if further evidence were required he could inform the Committee that a company had been formed by the late member for Warwick, who had been alluded to in such high terms by the hon. member for Toowoomba, and who, they all knew, was a very honest man. A company had been started in London by Mr. Horwitz, and he was bringing out machinery to place upon that field to develop its mineral resources; so that even some of their own capitalists had faith in that field, and he was satisfied that before long it would be demonstrated that gold did exist there in payable quantities, and that they would have a very considerable population settled upon the field. The hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, had spoken to the effect that there was very little traffic from Warwick westward. He did not know where the hon. gentleman got his information from, but he could tell him that there was very considerable traffic there; in fact, it took three coaches per week to accommodate the traffic that came from as far west as the Macintyre and Goondiwindi. Confining himself, however, more particularly to the twenty-six miles of the proposed branch line, he would point out that there were nearly 4,000 acres under cultivation there, that there was a considerable population, and that the amount of production was sufficient to guarantee that a

very considerable amount of traffic would pass over the proposed line—quite sufficient, he thought, to pay the interest on the £90,000 it would cost.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Will it pay for the grease of the wheels?

Mr. MORGAN said the hon. member for Cook, who always interrupted him when he was at a loss for a word, asked whether it would pay for the grease of the wheels. That reminded him that quite recently, when the hon. member was speaking on the subject, he described the country as wretchedly poor. He (Mr. Morgan) asked him for his authority, and he said it was a gentleman who knew the country well. He (Mr. Morgan) thought he knew the hon. gentleman's authority. He believed it was one of that class which the hon. member for Stanley, Mr. White, had such a particular liking for—he meant one of the runholders on the route westward from Warwick. It was a singular thing that whenever this line, which would benefit the people, was seriously proposed by Parliament or the representatives of the colony generally, it was opposed by those gentlemen, who did all they possibly could to discredit it. He meant the runholders on the surveyed line from Warwick westward, who held their land under lease from the Crown. They opposed it for the plain reason that they knew that the construction of the line would bring their land within easy communication of a market, that settlement would follow, and their lands would be selected. They all knew how the Crown lessees liked settlement—at a distance. That was the reason why they opposed that line. He supposed he was playing the game of the opponents of the line by speaking so long, as he was relieving them of their duty. He quite expected that the discussion was going to last a considerable time. He believed that if the line were taken on its merits hon. members would see that the line, which would do a very great benefit to a not unimportant portion of the colony, and which was but a tardy measure of justice, ought to be allowed to pass. He understood that they were to encounter obstruction, but he sincerely hoped not. The friends of the line were quite prepared to take the decision of the Committee, and if it went against them they would abide by it. At any rate, they asked that the majority should be allowed to rule.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he had been opposed to the line right through, from what he had seen of the country, from what he had heard of it, and from the facts which came out before the select committee appointed to inquire into it by the Council last year. He looked upon the new sort of baptism the line had received as an insidious attempt to palm off the *via recta* backside foremost. He had heard accounts of the country from intelligent unprejudiced gentlemen, and with the exception of a few acres in the neighbourhood of Warwick, which had been alienated, and had become part of the estates of South Toolburra and Rosenthal, it was about as poor country as could be imagined, very similar to the country between Warwick and Stanthorpe, with which he was familiar. At the best it was only capable, after considerable expense, of being made fair grazing country. As for the statement that the land would be turned to better account when the railway went there, they had ample evidence that on the line from Toowoomba to Warwick, and from Toowoomba to Dalby, where they had first-class agricultural country, an infinitesimal portion of it only was appropriated to agricultural purposes; because it paid better under present conditions, and with the present price of labour, which, he was glad to say, was pretty high, to keep it devoted to pastoral purposes. However much they

might rejoice to see agriculture spread, they must admit that it was a very poorly paid occupation. The competition from other parts of the world was very great, and the farmer here had no protection for the fruits of his industry, so he had to take a very low rate of wage. For that reason, though the railways had opened up a very large extent of the very best lands which had been alienated from the Crown, those lands were still devoted to depasturing sheep and cattle. Could the members for the district say that the lands to be opened up by that branch line, being still farther away from market, were likely to be diverted from their present purpose and turned into agricultural districts? There was no possibility of such a thing happening. He believed that any line passed in their present financial situation should only go through on a general consensus of opinion; the line should be carried by a majority of at least three to one. He regretted that lines of that sort should have been used as levers to get votes and a certain amount of political support, and that members should go round touting both inside and outside the House, saying "If you do not vote for my railway, I shall not vote for yours." He did not see why the members for Toowoomba should be charged with interested motives in opposing the line. They knew the character of the country better than the majority of the members did; and what harm could it do the inhabitants of Toowoomba if the line did open up good profitable country? If the line were likely to be immediately remunerative, he would gladly vote for it; but they had no evidence that the line was at all likely to pay, and they had a great deal of evidence to show that it could not. As for the fabulous crushings they had heard of, even if the men had gone to Germany, or broken their legs or anything else, why on earth was the work not gone on with? He thought the opinion of the senior member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, was really more valuable than even that of the Government Geologist; because he had paid, and many gentlemen on the Darling Downs also had paid, heavily for their information in regard to the gold reefs at Talgai and at Thane's Creek. The hon. member for Warwick said that the Warwick people were an agricultural race, and were not going to develop the hidden treasure; but that was a little too thin. There was no difficulty in getting machinery there, and there was no difficulty in getting any amount of labour; so that if the metal were there, it could speedily become one of the first gold-fields in the whole of the Australian colonies. He did not believe the gold was there; if it was, it would be worked, and worked at a profit, and would be, as he should be glad to see it, a great source of wealth to the colony as a whole. As to the great amount of agriculture that was going on in the immediate vicinity of Warwick, which his hon. friend, Mr. Kates, made such a lot of, a paltry 3,500 acres, or under 4,000 acres, was all there was under agriculture. He could not see how the hon. member could make so much of that, especially when the bulk of it was lucerne, which was principally devoted to feeding stock upon. He hoped that the line would be thrown out. He never thought that the *via recta* would be in any sense of the word the *via recta* to Sydney. He had always considered that the *via recta* to Sydney should go from South Brisbane, down by Beaudesert, and *via* Casino. Last time he was speaking on the subject, he pointed out that the route was by Taylor's Gap; but he was speaking from memory. He ought to have said by the Richmond Gap and *via* Casino. From Brisbane to Sydney by that route was 671 miles, or a saving of 100 miles or more. The distance to the boundary of the colony by that line was only

76 miles, and when they adopted the New South Wales gauge of 4 feet 8½ inches, which he hoped they would, they would only have to construct 76 miles of line, instead of by the present route over 200 miles, to Wallangarra. It was a matter for the Chairman, as a member for the most important constituency of South Brisbane, and for his colleague, the Minister for Lands, to say whether they would, by their votes, assist in making the *via recta* to North Brisbane, or endeavour to benefit their constituencies by taking it to South Brisbane. He could only express his hope in the meantime that the resolution, whether it was for the so-called *via recta*, or for a simple branch line to Thane's Creek, and an ostensibly agricultural line, would not be passed. Last session it was carried by a majority of one, and a week or two ago it was carried in a thin House, when the outside independent members had had to go away and leave the business of the country to itself, by a majority of four or five. He supposed the supporters of the line thought they were getting on better, because they secured a slightly larger majority the other night; but under no circumstances in the present financial position of the colony should a line—carried by such a bare majority, in the face of such arguments as had been brought against it—be constructed, and the country be committed to the cost of it.

Mr. ADAMS said he had not the slightest doubt, from what had fallen from the hon. member for Warwick, that that hon. gentleman considered he had made out a very fair case. He was really in hopes that he would have made out such a good case that he would have been able to help him; but when he came to talk about the mineral resources of Thane's Creek he saw that the hon. member was labouring under a very grave difficulty. Last year the line was termed the *via recta*; but that night it was called the "Thane's Creek branch line." If it were a branch line, he would like to know where the money was to come from to construct it. There was nothing for it on the Loan Estimates, and the consequence was that the branch line to Thane's Creek would stand in the same position as the line to Croydon—the money would have to be taken from some other vote. They were told that the line was to be a branch line to Thane's Creek, and that at some future time it could be carried further down towards the border. Then they were to turn round and go from Warwick to Ipswich. They were also told that that line from Ipswich *via* Warwick to the border would cost something like three millions of money. That was proved in the Committee last year, and he did not see where the money was to come from, and would like to know what part of the colony would have to suffer for its expenditure in one particular spot. He had not been very long in the House, but since he had been there it appeared to him that some hon. members wanted to do all they possibly could to bring everything to a centre, and that centre was Brisbane. No matter how any other part of the colony suffered, everything must be done for the benefit of Brisbane. They had been told that there was railway communication right through from Brisbane to Newcastle, but that the New South Wales Government refused to run their trains over fifteen miles of the distance. Now, if the New South Wales Government did not think it worth their while, in order to get the border trade, to run their trains over fifteen miles of railway already constructed, it was pretty evident to his mind that there was nothing to warrant the construction of a line from Warwick to get that trade. It had been shown conclusively by the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, that all the land of any

value on both sides of the proposed line had been taken up. If that was so, and if the land was likely to be closely settled by an agricultural population, it would not matter very much. But how much land was under cultivation between Warwick and Thane's Creek? Very little; but that little had, no doubt, been put to very good use. They had heard a great deal about Kenneth Hutchison's evidence, and it had been hinted that if evidence given by a gentleman of his standing was to be criticised, by-and-by no one would consent to give evidence before a select committee. He would, however, take a little of that gentleman's evidence in regard to the agricultural land in the locality:—

"By Mr. E. B. Forrest: You spoke, Mr. Hutchison, about there being a large area of land quite equal to anything on the Darling Downs, fit for wheat-growing, on the Macintyre. Can you give us an idea of what area? I should say, thousands of acres."

He did not say whether it was 1,000 or 50,000; but the Committee had been informed that night that the quantity was about 800 acres.

"Better than land on Darling Downs, for wheat-growing? Yes."

"Where is it on the Macintyre? On Macintyre Brook, on the Macintyre River, and in different localities about."

He was prepared to show from the evidence that it was impossible to find more than 200 acres in one block of fair agricultural land. Further on the following evidence occurred:—

"In the neighbourhood of the line, I mean? Yes; as far as I know where the line is going to be. Yes, I have been along the route a good deal; and there is good land in many places."

"This wheat-growing land will be within the influence of the railway? Yes."

"And there are thousands of acres? Yes. At Warroo, too, there is a lot of land which I consider very suitable for wheat-growing."

That was evidence given by a man who was supposed to have been on stations in the district for some considerable time. He would now go a little further, and read some of the evidence of Patrick Higgins:—

"Is there much settlement along the route? There is. Part of it is thickly settled—Sandy Creek, Darkey Flat, Grey-mare Creek, Lagoon Creek, and Thane's Creek."

"You say you are a farmer, Mr. Higgins. You must have had a great deal of practical experience of the producing capabilities of the soil in the neighbourhood of where you live? Yes. I am there about twenty-five years. I went to Warwick in 1861, and I have been in the district ever since, and I have been farming all the time, with the exception of two seasons, and part of a third season that I went shearing."

"What crops do you raise on your farm? Well, till about seven years ago, I used to grow wheat; but rust gave me such a sickener of growing wheat on the flat country that I had cultivated, that I turned to maize, and lucerne, and potatoes."

A great deal had been said about the district being suited for wheat-growing; but there was the evidence of a man who had been there several years and had produced crops since 1861, with the exception of two seasons. The country the line was going to pass through was of such a character that it sickened him to grow wheat upon it. He (Mr. Adams) was of opinion that in order to make the land productive the farmers in almost every district of the colony would have to go in for tropical agriculture. They would have to plant something that would be sure to grow; and it had been proved pretty plainly that in many localities the farmers were unable to produce wheat. In 1865 he sowed half-a-bushel of wheat in the Wide Bay district and reaped thirty-seven bushels. He thought that was very good, and began to think his fortune was nearly made, and that he was going to become a great wheat-grower; but after

that he produced none. He distributed his wheat amongst his neighbours, but from that time till now not a bit of wheat had been grown in the district so as to be remunerative. That pretty well proved that they need not expect so much progress from the locality in question as to warrant the construction of a railway there, particularly when its construction would cause injustice to other parts of the colony. It was pretty well proved that there was not sufficient traffic, and would not be for a considerable time, to justify the construction of the line. They were told that the line would suit the public admirably, and that there was a magnificent—almost fabulous—goldfield in the district; he said almost fabulous because he believed he would be able to prove that from evidence given before the select committee. It was a wonderful thing that a man, after sending away £20,000 worth of gold, should go away to Gympie. And was it not strange that last year, when the railway was debated, they heard nothing about machinery going on to that country? Was it not strange that although that gold-mine was known in 1866 there was no machinery on the ground in 1887; They were told that evening that machinery was on the road to develop the goldfield. It was remarkable that no one had had sufficient confidence in the mine to obtain machinery for its development before the present time, and it was just possible that if that railway passed, the machinery of which they had heard would never arrive on the field. He thought he would be able to prove that that was the intention. The witness from whose evidence he had quoted was further asked:—

"To what extent has gold-mining been carried on at Talgai Gold Field and Thane's Creek? There has been a good deal of work done there on the surface. All the surface of the reefs has been pretty well worked out; Talgai is a very old field. It suffered from the fact of Gympie having been discovered; when the surface was worked out the miners rushed away to Gympie.

"Do you know of any gold-bearing reefs? Yes. I know of many. I suppose if I know one I know of fifty.

"Have the reefs been worked to any extent? Not the deeper levels; only the surface, in most cases. In fact, to go to a depth of reef below fifty feet requires the aid of capital. Machinery is wanted for pumping and winding. There has been no capital put into the reefs on any of those goldfields.

"Did what was worked produce gold? Yes. I myself have sent over £20,000 worth of gold away. I know of one crushing of ninety tons of stone that gave a return of 1,100 oz. odd of gold. That reef belonged to four working men: two of them went home to Germany, the third went to Gympie, and the other broke his leg. I crushed myself some few tons of stone that gave 11 oz. to the ton. On Thane's Creek I crushed only 1,000 tons for over an ounce to the ton—as near as I recollect, some 21 dwt. to the ton."

That gentleman distinctly told them that the reef could not be developed because they had not the necessary machinery, and, in the same breath, he stated that a certain number of tons of stone were crushed for a certain number of ounces of gold. How could they reconcile those statements, the one with the other? Was it likely, as he said before, that if there was a reef which would give 11 oz. to the ton, sufficient capital could not be obtained, even in the neighbourhood, to develop the reef?

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. ADAMS said he would like to know whether hon. members could be expected to swallow the statement that they got 11 oz. of gold to the ton? He could go on to show pretty plainly that the agricultural resources of the country were not such as would warrant the Committee in entertaining any idea of constructing that railway, but he had not yet done with

the mining industry. He said that he would be able to prove that the amount of gold got there was something almost fabulous. He would now quote from another portion of the evidence given before the select committee, which he believed hon. members on both sides of the Committee would regard as an almost fabulous statement. Mr. Hutchison was asked:—

"How was the 90 tons crushed? That was crushed by a machine put up there. It fell into the hands of the station-owner. You know that station-owners used to have a prejudice against mining being carried on on their land. They were opposed to Talgai being opened in the first instance. They did all they could to stop working there, and the most effectual way, they decided, was to buy the crushing plant, which they succeeded in doing. They shifted the engine to the washpool and sold the stampers to go elsewhere; and they would not crush anybody's stone on that field.

"It was the squatters who did this, was it? Yes; that is the place where the stone was crushed. I cannot vouch for it myself, because I did not see the gold; but I believe that only two tons of stone from that reef yielded 244 oz.; that is 122 oz. to the ton."

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

Quorum formed.

"Yes; that is the place where the stone was crushed. I cannot vouch for it myself, because I did not see the gold; but I believe that only two tons of stone from that reef yielded 244 oz."

Now, he would ask if that was not fabulous? 122 oz. of gold to the ton, and yet the reef had been abandoned. One man went home, one to Gympie, and another broke his leg. They were told the squatters did all they could to get the people off the land. Now that would be a fair tale to tell thirty-five years ago. He remembered thirty-five years ago, when the squatters were against prospectors coming upon their land, but they soon found out that when a goldfield was discovered, a large market was created for their stock by the large population, and they had not to send any of their cattle to the southern markets. But the cry of squatterdom had perished; and did any hon. gentleman believe that if a squatter was able to get 122 oz. of gold to the ton he would prefer to graze cattle on his land instead of reaping the benefits of such a large and profitable field? He was perfectly satisfied there was not a gentleman, either inside or outside the Committee, who would believe any such thing—that the squatter would still prefer his land to the 122 oz. of gold to the ton. Taking everything into consideration, he was extremely sorry that he was not able to support the line. He was perfectly satisfied in his own mind that if he did he should be committing an injustice to the country. There was no doubt that if they passed the resolution they would commit themselves to an expenditure of £3,000,000 for one railway, and other parts of the colony must suffer, and go without their railways. For that and the other reasons he had given, he should do all in his power to prevent the passage of the resolution. He had plenty of evidence to quote from, from that night for a week onward, and it was his intention, as he had told hon. gentlemen the other night, to oppose all further legislation. The Estimates alone should be proceeded with, and they should then go to the country.

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. ALLAN said he had travelled over the route which had been so much canvassed by hon. members. He had also travelled over the alternative routes that had been spoken of: that from Dalby, from Yeulba, and from Thane's Creek. At one time or another he had travelled over one or other of those routes a hundred times, and at the present moment he had

two lots of stock on one route and had travelled them over all the routes mentioned, and in his opinion the route proposed to be adopted for the line was very much the best in every way. He carried his belief into practice by invariably using that route. He was very glad the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, had said that the proposed railway was a remarkably good one. The hon. member had said that he had no doubt that if the line had been brought forward in 1884 it would have been carried at once, and he thereby admitted that it was a remarkably good line. He noticed that the hon. gentleman had taken exception to an article from the *Toowoomba Chronicle* which had been read by the hon. member for Warwick, Mr. Morgan, advocating this line, and the hon. gentleman had since said that it had not been written with his approval; however, he (Mr. Allan) had in his hand Groom's Darling Downs Almanac for 1885, and he found in it the following paragraph which had appeared for two or three years past under the head of "Goondiwindi":—

"It is probable that at no distant date a line of railway will pass through Goondiwindi for the purpose of connecting St. George and the south-western interior with the seaboard, and if this very desirable purpose be carried into effect, there is no doubt the prosperity of the Goondiwindi district will be greatly increased, and the resources of that large country very materially developed."

That was Mr. Groom's opinion in 1885. That was his opinion in 1884, and he confirmed that opinion by telling them that had the line been brought forward in 1884 it would have been agreed to without any cavil. And now the hon. gentleman came forward and endeavoured to pick holes in the evidence which had been given in favour of the line in question. Probably when the hon. gentleman found that the views he had expressed in his almanac were not in accordance with the views held by his constituents he would excise that paragraph from the Goondiwindi department.

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. ALLAN said the hon. member for Toowoomba had more than once spoken in laudatory terms of the evidence given by the late member for Warwick, Mr. Horwitz, and he (Mr. Allan) could also endorse what had been said with reference to that gentleman's evidence, but the hon. member for Toowoomba only quoted the evidence as it suited him. He only quoted one or two small pieces which suited his view of the case, but he (Mr. Allan) found, on turning to the evidence, that Mr. Horwitz, question 202, speaking of the production in that part of the colony, spoke very distinctly. He was a man who had large interests in farming and was a large wheat buyer and miller, and had every opportunity of judging whether that country was suited for agriculture and especially for wheat-growing, and what part of it produced that particular grain which was best suited for his business. He was asked at question 202:—

"Is there a large supply of hardwood in the vicinity? Yes; a great deal, at Grey-mare Creek, which is well populated with settlers, who occupy holdings from 100 to 3,000 acres. A great many of these settlers are growing wheat. It is a fine locality for wheat-growing, though the soil is not so heavy as the soil near Warwick. As I am well acquainted with the class of wheat grown there, I can speak from experience to the committee. The wheat which is grown there, on a lighter soil than we have near Warwick, is of a yellow bright colour, with a thin skin, while the Warwick wheat, grown on a rather heavy soil, has a thicker skin, and, when ground, does not produce as much flour as we get from the other, but we get more bran. In fact, the difference is very important, as I wish to point out to the committee. I have tried my best for years past to persuade the people living in that locality to grow the

superior wheat; and I always pay 6d. a bushel more for that which they grow than I do for the Warwick wheat."

Sixpence a bushel, as hon. members knew, made a great deal of difference in the price of wheat. What was more remarkable was that the wheat grown there was free from rust, which was the curse of the wheat-farmer. As the hon. member for Warwick pointed out, the only reason they did not largely grow wheat there was because of their distance from the mills and the want of sufficient means of communication. The wheat grown in that part of the district was very different from that grown on the black soil, and would take the place which was taken now by the Adelaide wheat, in assisting the gristing of the wheat grown around Warwick. That was the evidence given by Mr. Horwitz in respect of the capabilities of the district for wheat-growing. Evidence was also given by other gentlemen with regard to the farming capabilities of the district, and he would refer the Committee to Mr. Dickson's evidence, where he was asked at question 316:—

"What proportion of agricultural land do you think is there, generally, in the country that you are acquainted with between Thane's Creek and Goondiwindi, in relation to the proportion of pastoral land or worthless land? It is all agricultural land almost anywhere between Thane's Creek and Inglewood."

Mr. Dickson was a gentleman who had been a grazier in that part of the country for many years. Mr. Hutchison's evidence had also been quoted largely, and he would refer the Committee to the evidence he gave in answer to question 674:—

"Is there any land suitable for agriculture? Yes; there is. Some of the land that I have seen, especially on the Condamine River and the McIntyre Brook, is, I consider, better fitted for wheat-growing than any land on the Downs—taking the soil and the climate combined."

Still keeping to the evidence given as to farming, they came to Mr. Higgins's evidence at question 719, where he was asked:—

"Do you know the country along the route of the proposed railway from Warwick towards St. George? I do, as far as Inglewood, thoroughly well."

"What is your opinion of the nature of the country between Warwick and Inglewood? I consider it is very good agricultural and pastoral country. In fact, the greater part of it could be made agricultural country."

"Is there much settlement along the route? There is. Part of it is thickly settled—Sandy Creek, Darkey Flat, Grey-mare Creek, Lagoon Creek, and Thane's Creek."

"You say you are a farmer, Mr. Higgins. You must have had a great deal of practical experience of the producing capabilities of the soil in the neighbourhood of where you live? Yes. I am there about twenty-five years. I went to Warwick in 1861, and I have been in the district ever since, and I have been farming all the time, with the exception of two seasons, and part of a third season that I went shearing."

He had known Mr. Higgins for many years, and he was a man who had raised himself from the position of an ordinary working man—a shearer—to that of one of the largest farmers in the district. He gave evidence to show that he turned in about £2,000 a year, and he was a man who had a wife and fourteen children to keep. He went on to tell of his successes in farming, and that he had now 1,300 acres at Sandy Creek, and kept on adding 200 or 300 acres every year. Further on, at question 739, he was asked:—

"I do not know whether you have mentioned anything about the timber on the line. Is there any timber there suitable for building or railway purposes? Yes; I believe it is the finest timber in the colony. I know the piles used on the line from Toowoomba to Warwick were cut in the Canal Creek scrub, and those used for Glengallan swamp cut in the same scrub were from fifty to sixty feet in length."

"Do you think there is any country other than that at the places you have mentioned—Darkey Flat, Sandy Creek, and Grey-mare Creek—suitable for the growing

of wheat? My opinion is that it is the best wheat-growing country in Queensland. There are long yellow ridges of it on the banks of Grey-mare Creek, Thane's Creek, Canal Creek, and on to Inglewood and up the Macintyre, and I think it is there the wheat of Queensland will be grown and not in the blacksoil plains, though it may be a little more expensive at first, and that is an opinion I formed twelve years ago."

Mr. Higgins also gave good reasons for his statement that if the line for ten miles on either side of the proposed line were thrown open for selection it could be sold at from 15s. to £1 per acre, and thereby showed that three times the amount of money could be got from the sale of that land that would be required for the construction of the line. At question 932, Mr. John McEwan was asked:—

"Will you describe the country between Inglewood and Thane's Creek? About twenty-five miles from Inglewood towards Warwick there is first-class agricultural land, which, I believe, will be the garden of the colony for wheat. I have been growing wheat up there for the last four years or so, and I have seen no sign of rust there; all vegetation is good there, as the land is first-class.

"How wide is that strip of country for that five-and-twenty miles? It is of different widths on the Macintyre Brook and on the several creeks running into it. Then you come to what is called the 'unavailable' country, which is scrub land, and which is some of the finest land I ever saw for agricultural purposes."

A good deal had been said about the scrub land being unavailable, but he had himself seen scrub land at Killarney, which was out of sight the very best agricultural land he had ever seen in his life anywhere. He would not further take up the time of the Committee in dealing with the evidence as to the capabilities of the district for agriculture; but what he had quoted showed that the consensus of opinion of those who had lived longest in that part of the country, and knew most about it was, that it was admirably suited for agricultural purposes, and especially for wheat-growing. Mr. Lalor's evidence had been referred to, and he referred to it again, because that gentleman, although he voted against the line, gave his evidence in a clear, distinct, straightforward manner.

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. ALLAN said Mr. Lalor was asked by Mr. F. T. Gregory as follows:—

"From the terminus of portion now immediately before us that is proposed to be constructed onwards towards Goondiwindi, do you know the country well? I do.

"Can you give us some idea of the general character of it? You mean with regard to the ease of constructing the line?

"As regards its suitability for the construction of a railway? I can speak of the road as the best bush road that I have seen in any part of the colonies, and the best that I ever travelled over. It is a hard road. And, I think, with regard to material for a railway, there is abundance. There is plenty of ironbark and lots of ballast.

"What is your idea with regard to its capabilities for the construction of a railway, taking into consideration both the grades and the liability to inundation? From what I know of that country, for about thirty-eight years, I do not think there is any liability to inundation.

"Not even near Goondiwindi? No; not even near Goondiwindi. I have, as I said, known it for thirty-eight years—very few know it longer—and I have no personal knowledge of any serious inundation. I do not think there is any liability to serious floods."

Such was the opinion of Mr. Lalor, a gentleman who had been thirty-eight years in that part of the country, and who was known to every hon. member as a thoroughly upright man, whose word could not be doubted. He (Mr. Allan) might say for himself that he had been travelling stock in that country three or four times a year for the last ten or twelve years. He had had

stock there during the heaviest floods ever known within the memory of the oldest inhabitant, and had never lost a single hoof. The worst thing that ever happened to him was being stuck for ten days at a creek. Further on Mr. Lalor was asked:—

"By Mr. Brentnall: So far as you know the country, and you know something of it, from Yandilla on, say, the suggested direct route to St. George; and the country which you know between Warwick and Goondiwindi;—which would be most likely country for close settlement? Between Warwick and Goondiwindi.

"By the Chairman: 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 Beauraraba to St. George, or from Beauraraba *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."

He would not occupy the time of the Committee further than to refer to the evidence of Mr. Kenneth Hutchison with reference to the mineral resources of the district. But before doing so he would read a corroborative passage from the evidence of the late member for Warwick, Mr. Jacob Horwitz. In answer to a question Mr. Horwitz said:—

"Likewise, there is a goldfield of thirty miles, from Pikedale straight across Canal Creek way. We have been buying gold from that locality for the last twenty years. There is alluvial gold; and there are also plenty of reefs there."

And a little further on he was asked:—

"Can you afford us any estimate of the average annual yield of gold? Of course, I am prepared to prove to the Committee by all the receipts, which we hold from the gold-miners, that we bought on an average about 1,000 oz. a year; besides what Benjamin bought, what the late Mr. Nunn bought, likewise what the banks bought. We do not buy all the gold. There are other business people in Warwick who buy gold, as well as we do, from the locality I speak of. There is more than 3,000 oz. a year produced; and we buy 1,000 oz. per annum."

A good deal of doubt, by innuendo, if not directly, had been thrown upon Mr. Kenneth Hutchison's evidence—why, he did not know. He did not suppose there was any person in the colony with a larger experience in general colonial products than Mr. Hutchison. That gentleman had been connected with pastoral properties for many years in co-partnership with the late Mr. Wildash; he had been engaged in mining and reefing; had been an engine proprietor at Thane's Creek, and at present at Surface Hill; and had for years been the managing partner of a very large cedar mill plant beyond Killarney. He was also an intelligent, cultivated gentleman, whose word was thoroughly to be depended upon. And yet, because he had given some rather astonishing evidence about those mines, his evidence was to be discredited. Mr. Hutchison was asked, question 675:—

"You say you have had experience in mining? Yes. I have been twelve years engaged in mining in that locality.

"What is your opinion of the mineral resources in that part of the country? I think that in future they will be proved to be very great. There are several goldfields in the district; and there are many mineral deposits of different kinds. I suppose that mineral bearing country extends for fifty miles; that is as regards length.

"Can you name the particular localities where minerals are found? Gold has been found on several fields. I will mention those closest to Warwick—Rosenthal,

Pikedale, Thane's Creek, Talgai, Canal Creek, and about Leyburn. Those have been proclaimed goldfields. Copper, of course, has been found, and tin. Copper has been found at Pikedale and Warroo, and attempts have been made to work it. The ore is sufficiently rich to pay if properly gone into, the expensive carriage less."

Then he was asked at question 681 :—

"Do you know of any gold-bearing reefs? Yes; I know of many. I suppose if I know of one I know of fifty."

He said further on :—

"There are coal and iron also in the district. I know one place where there is a large ironstone lode, very close to a coal-seam. It has not been worked. It would not pay to work it at present; it would never pay to truck by teams all the way to the market. It will be worked in the future. There is a lot of coal about in different places, especially beyond Inglewood."

He was glad to see the hon. member for Barcoo present, because he (Mr. Allan) had in his hand a letter from Mr. Hutchison referring to some remarks made respecting him by that hon. member, in which he said :—

"I have to thank you very much for vindicating my name from the unwarranted aspersions cast upon it by men who were either lamentably ignorant of the subject or were wilfully misrepresenting facts and traducing one's character merely to serve their private interests." Mr. Murphy says the goldfields are deserted. I have been to the warden's office for information, and am informed that so far for the present year 191 miners' rights had been issued."

Mr. MURPHY rose to a point of order. He wished to know if the hon. member was in order in reading a letter reflecting upon the character or conduct of an hon. member?

The CHAIRMAN said the hon. member was quite out of order in doing so.

Mr. ALLAN said he would submit if he was out of order, but he regretted it, because he was simply anxious to vindicate a gentleman's character.

Mr. MOREHEAD: At the expense of another gentleman's.

Mr. ALLAN said the other gentleman was present and could defend himself.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the hon. member for Barcoo himself did exactly the same thing the other night when he read a letter reflecting upon his (Mr. Hill's) character.

Mr. MOREHEAD said, speaking to the point of order, when the hon. member for Barcoo read the letter referred to he gave the hon. member for Cook an opportunity, not only of defending himself, but of speaking in plain unvarnished English with regard to the writer of that letter.

Mr. ALLAN said as he could not read the letter he would refer to another matter that had been made a good deal of. Mr. Hutchison had told them in his evidence that he himself had sent down over £20,000 worth of gold from the Thane's Creek district. Of course he sent down gold belonging to other people, which went through his hands.

Mr. STEVENSON: How far does the field extend?

Mr. ALLAN said it was a proclaimed goldfield. That statement of Mr. Hutchison had been laughed at and chaffed at, but that gentleman was prepared at any moment to come before a committee of that House, and bring his receipts which would show that, so far from having over-estimated, he had very much under-estimated the amount when he stated £20,000 worth. Another matter to which he would refer before closing, upon which also some little doubt had been thrown, was the evidence given with regard to the timber along that line. He would not go into any great detail about it, but he could state that he had a letter from a man he knew at

Sandy Creek, about five miles from Warwick, to the effect that one-half the sleepers that were cut for the Beauraba line came from within ten miles of Warwick, along the proposed line—Mrs. Tilley's paddocks—and that there was a sufficient quantity of timber to make half-a-dozen more lines still there. He would also refer to the evidence of Mr. J. Keleher, whom he knew very well, and who was a thoroughly reliable man in every way. Before doing so he might mention that they had also the evidence of Mr. Horwitz, Mr. Kates, Mr. Dickson, Mr. Alexander, and many others, showing that, in their experience, there was no part of the colony which bore such grand timber as that district did—ironbark, spotted gum, cypress pine, and box, all of the very finest character. But he would leave that, and take the evidence of a practical man, who for eleven years had been a sawmill proprietor at Darkey Flat. He was asked by the chairman :—

"What is your name? John Keleher.

"What are you? A sawmill proprietor.

"Where do you reside? At Darkey Flat.

"How long have you been in the Darling Downs district? Nineteen years.

"By Mr. Macansh: You know all the country between Warwick and Thane's Creek? Yes.

"What is your opinion of the timber there as to its suitability for building purposes and for the construction of a railway? I believe it is equal to anything I have seen on the Darling Downs.

"What description of timber grows there? Ironbark and spotted gum principally.

"Is there a very large quantity of it there? Yes.

"Do you think if a line of railway was built there that much of it would be sent to market? I am sure it would.

"How far is Darkey Flat from Warwick? Twenty-one miles.

"Have you any objection to tell the committee what is about the average output of timber from your mill? The average output of timber from my mill for the past eleven years is about 200,000 superficial feet a year.

"Of hardwood? Yes.

"What weight would that be in tons? About 600 tons, taking 335 superficial feet to the ton.

"Where is your market for that timber? Principally at Warwick, Allora, Leyburn, and Stanthorpe.

"If a railway was constructed there would you be able to supply a larger quantity of timber? I would, because I would enlarge my sawmill plant.

"What is about the size of the forest where this timber grows? I have been through the forest twice. I believe it is about twenty-five miles long with an average width of about five miles. I have felled ironbark timber in it eighty feet in length without a limb.

"Do you know that timber is being cut from that forest for the construction of the line of railway to Beauraba? Not from that forest, but it is being cut from the vicinity of the present survey of the Warwick to St. George railway. However, timber was cut from that forest for the construction of the railway from Allora to Warwick years ago.

"I understand from your answer that although timber has not been cut from that forest for the Beauraba railway, you know that it is cut for that railway from the neighbourhood of the proposed line from Warwick? Yes."

He did not wish to take up time by reading any more, but that showed on the authority of a gentleman who had been largely interested there for the last eleven years that there were enormous forests of beautiful timber in that locality. That reminded him that the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, in reading Mr. Horwitz's evidence, had led them to believe that Mr. Horwitz had stated that there was only about 500 tons of produce of every kind to go on that line if it were constructed; but here they saw one sawmill alone producing 600 tons, and that had gone on for the last eleven years. He considered from the evidence that the construction of that line would be thoroughly sound policy, and he hoped

it would go to the vote, and that the majority would be allowed to rule in that matter as in all others.

Mr. ALAND said he was only going to say a few words, because the Minister for Works was waiting to move the Chairman out of the chair. He was sure that hon. gentleman had come to the conclusion that that railway was not going to pass that session. The leader of the Opposition had given out no uncertain sound a few nights since, and he was sure that everybody concerned must have long ago come to the conclusion that the proposed line was one of those works that the majority of the Committee believed ought at any rate to stand over for the present. An hon. member said "No." Well he believed there was a great deal to be considered in the remark that fell from his hon. colleague, Mr. Groom, about the demoralising influence of that £10,000,000 loan vote. That influence was not yet eliminated from the minds of some hon. members, and it would still cause them perchance to vote for the present motion, supposing it went to the vote. Speaking on the subject of votes, he would say he thought it was very unfair of the Government to bring down that railway at so late a period in the session. The Government might look upon it as a stroke of wise policy; but he did not regard it in that light, and he was sure a large number of members did not regard it in that light either. What did they find? Why, that some half-dozen members who were opposed to the line had been obliged to leave the House. That line last year was only carried by one vote, and he believed that if all the hon. members were present now it would be rejected by one or more votes. He believed also that the Government knew full well that that would be the case when they kept the line so late in the session. After all there had been nothing said in favour of the line that had not been heard before, and he did not know that there had been any objection to it which had not been taken on previous occasions. There was really nothing to say in commendation of the line, but there was a great deal to be said—and a great deal had been said—against it. He considered the speech of his hon. colleague, Mr. Groom, was a really able one. The hon. member for Warwick had promised a little time ago that he would hunt up the records of the House, and oblige them with old speeches that had been delivered over and over again on the subject. The hon. member had not done that, but he had refreshed their memories with the old story about a certain leading article in the *Toowoomba Chronicle*; and another hon. member had referred to the extract from the *Toowoomba almanac*. Well, his hon. colleague had explained that matter as fully as it was possible for him to explain it. Was every newspaper proprietor personally responsible—unfortunately he was, in a law court—for every article that appeared in his paper? His hon. colleague had stated over and over again that he was 800 or 900 miles from the place where his paper was published when that article appeared. It was written by a gentleman in Brisbane, and was accepted without question by those in charge, as they knew that gentleman had been requested to write leading articles for the paper. The insinuations thrown out by the hon. member for Warwick were really unworthy of him; but, as the hon. member, Mr. Groom, was now on the floor of the Committee, he would leave him to take notice of the insinuations if he chose. Anyone who knew Mr. Groom knew that he was above the insinuations which the hon. member for Warwick had cast up. The hon. member for Warwick had again referred to the old cry that the members for Drayton and Toowoomba were opposed to this line, because they wanted the line to St. George taken from Beauraraba. Well, he would

ask whether either his colleague, Mr. Groom, the member for Aubigny, Mr. Campbell, or he had ever spoken in favour of a line from St. George to Beauraraba. If there were any necessity for a line to St. George, the proper thing for the Government to do would be to take the shortest route. He based the argument for that on the following grounds:—At the present time loading was carried from Dalby to St. George at 60s. a ton, and he would ask whether, from the experience they had of the management of their railways, it was likely that the Government would build a railway 230 and odd miles to carry loading on it at the rate of 60s. a ton. If they wanted to carry the trade that now went on with St. George, let them take the shortest route, and they would then, at all events, be able to compete on more favourable terms with the teamsters that were now taking that traffic. It had been stated that the line had been brought in by the Government under false pretences, and he really thought that such was the case. Last year the line was brought down as the "Warwick to St. George" line, but now it was brought down as the "Line to Thane's Creek," and anyone who had listened to the speech of the hon. Minister for Works must have noticed that he did not speak of it in connection with the main trunk line to St. George. What were the arguments in favour of the line to Thane's Creek? The evidence regarding it had been read by members for and against the railway, and it amounted to this: that there were some farmers living on the route from Warwick to Thane's Creek, that there was some timber at Thane's Creek, and that at Thane's Creek there were some worked-out or unused gold diggings, which, from all accounts, must have been very prosperous at one time. He did not think that the absence of a railway was the cause of those mines not being worked at present. He did not see that mining could be carried on at Thane's Creek profitably, just because the Government proposed to build a railway there. Where were those mines principally situated? Those mines which were paying the best dividends, but which were producing a very much less quantity of gold than was said to have been raised at Thane's Creek, were not situated within twenty-five miles of a railway. They were a considerable distance further off than that. It required no railway to Thane's Creek to develop the gold which was said to be there. So far as the farmers were concerned, wheat used to be grown upon the Darling Downs before they had a railway, even within a very long distance, and it had paid them to grow it then; and surely it would pay those people in the neighbourhood of Thane's Creek to grow it whether the railway went to their doors or not. The hon. member for Warwick said they did grow it, but it appeared that it was only within a few miles of Warwick that it was really carried on profitably. He knew that in the immediate neighbourhood of Warwick farming was more flourishing than anywhere else. But those people were within a short distance of railway communication. None of them were at a very great distance from the town of Warwick or from the Killarney Railway, so that he did not see what necessity there was for the proposed line. If the line had been placed upon the paper as an agricultural line when the loan vote was first brought down, no doubt it would have received that consideration which such lines always did receive, and, as had been already said, it might have been one of the lines which were now completed. It had been stated that Toowoomba had secured its line, and that the members for that place should not oppose the construction of the line towards St. George. That was a piece of log-rolling that he did not understand. He did not vote for

the Pittsworth line because it was a Toowoomba line. He had heard it said that Toowoomba lost trade by that line. He did not know whether that was the case or not; he supported it on its merits—the same as he had consistently opposed others, on account of their demerits. The line before them was not the only one on the programme that he had opposed, nor the only one which he should continue to oppose; so that the charge made against the Toowoomba members showed very bad taste on the part of those hon. members who used it. He thought that the Government were anxious that they should get away home, and therefore he simply wished to endorse the remark which was made by his colleague—that a promise was made by the late Minister for Works, that the Drayton deviation should be laid on the table of the House that session. He believed that the opposition of the Toowoomba members to the *via recta* and the Warwick to St. George line had cost them the Drayton deviation. If such was the case he was content to accept the position, and he believed his constituents would be content to accept the position too. Seeing that the Government were in the last year of office he did not see why they should have brought forward only a part of the remainder of their programme. If they brought forward one part, they should have brought forth the whole of it.

The PREMIER said the hon. member who had just sat down had referred, as had his colleague, to a promise said to have been made by Mr. Miles, the late Minister for Works, in respect to the Drayton deviation. When the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, said that, he (the Premier) interjected "When did he make that promise?" and it appeared it was made during a conversation in a railway train a few days before Mr. Miles's death. He really failed to see why a private conversation with Mr. Miles in a railway train a few days before his death, and of which he (the Premier) had never heard till that evening, should be brought forward in support of a statement that the Government had broken faith with anybody. He never heard of that promise before. He had never heard of Mr. Miles's promise to lay the plans on the table that session. It was a statement which ought not to have been made in the Committee by either of the hon. members for Toowoomba. The hon. member who had just sat down asked why had not the Government brought forward during that, the last session of the present Parliament, all the lines for which money had been voted? Of course the answer to that was obvious, they could not make all the lines at once. They could not have all their railways made at once and then suddenly stop. They must be made by degrees and spread over a proper period of time, and the Government proposed to go on with those which appeared most likely to pay. There was one thing more he would say. Of course there was nearly always a controversy in regard to railways, although now and then they were fortunate enough to bring forward a line that everybody agreed with. Such lines were generally situated in other parts of the colony, and not in the southern part. It was always found that when a line was proposed in the southern part of the colony a large section of hon. members determinedly opposed it; but when a similar rule was applied, even by a single member, to a line in any other part of the colony, he became the subject of fiery denunciations, and hon. members in favour of the line talked about the selfish desire for aggrandisement on the part of the South. He wished there was more fair play in matters of that kind. The line ought to be dealt with on its merits. If it was a good line

it ought to be carried; if it was not a good line it ought to be rejected. The Government only desired that it should be dealt with on that principle. He thought the greater part of the opposition to the line had been condemned by the opponents of it themselves. Two of its most conspicuous opponents had told the Committee that if it were simply a line from Warwick to Thane's Creek there would be nothing to be said against it, and that it would have passed practically without opposition. Both the hon. members for Toowoomba said that in effect. That was exactly what the line was. If it was desirable to make a line from Warwick to Thane's Creek as an agricultural line, and if there was no opposition to that line on its merits, why should there be any opposition to it, because some day it might be proposed to extend that line farther? The proposition seemed to him as absurd as to oppose, say, the line from Normanton to Croydon on the ground that it might some day be extended to Cairns or to Townsville. The line itself was admittedly good, but some day it might be extended further, and therefore it was not good. He wondered hon. members did not see the fallacy of their position. They had, in fact, surrendered the only serious ground they had for opposing the line. If the arguments against the line preponderated over those in favour of the line it ought to be thrown out, but the statements made—which he believed—as to the quality of the land, the extent under cultivation, the probability of further cultivation if there were means of access—if those things were true, there was a good case in favour of the line, and he thought it had been shown that the financial condition of the colony was not such as to justify any objection to the line on that ground. Another argument he heard was that the line would be of no use to the people along the line unless it were continued from Warwick to Ipswich in a straight line. Why should not an agricultural line from Warwick westward be as useful to the people along the line as a line from Warwick eastward? He had never heard that the Killarney line would be useless unless continued in a straight line to Ipswich. He confessed that he had never been able to understand the objections to the line.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Simply because it won't pay.

The PREMIER said that did not account for the heat thrown into the discussion. It seemed to him to be just as simple and plain a proposition to expend money for the purpose referred to in the motion as for any other line—the Isis branch railway, the Beauaraba branch, or any other.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: There is no heat.

The PREMIER said there unfortunately was heat. They could not shut their eyes to the fact that there had been all sorts of threats as to what would happen if the motion were carried, or if the motion were not carried—all sorts of terrible things were going to happen. He wished every hon. member would regard the question as he did—simply as a proposition to spend £100,000 on an agricultural line. If that was not a proper line to make, the motion should be negatived; but if sufficient reason had been shown for the expenditure, let it be carried. It was a great pity to endeavour to mix up other questions with the simple question of making an agricultural line from Warwick to Thane's Creek.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the Premier wished the Committee to look upon the motion as one for the construction of a branch agricultural line; but the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, had clearly shown that the Committee had no power to deal with any such proposition—that they had only power to deal

with the lines proposed under the Loan Act. Under that Act they had no power to deal with the construction of a branch line to Thane's Creek; but that contention of the hon. member for Toowoomba was altogether thrown aside by the Premier. As he had said before, they could not in the present financial condition of the colony deal with any further railway extensions, unless some exceptional reasons were shown; and no exceptional reasons had been shown in the present instance. They had not the money to spend, and they would be imperilling the credit of the colony if they agreed to the construction of such a line. Parliament was admittedly on its last legs financially, and, looking at some hon. members, he might say bodily. They were almost mentally and physically incapable of going on with any more important measures, and no good would be done by the Premier attempting to press the motion. He could have no hope of carrying it, and he had done what he conceived to be his duty. Different men had different ideas as to duty. Some men in the position of the Premier would have refused to make the line; he would have told those who wanted it that in more prosperous times he would have been willing to propose its construction, but they must take the rough with the smooth, that they had received their share of the smooth in the past, and now they must take a little of the rough. The Premier, however, did not seem to take up that position, which was a far higher one than the hon. member took up in regard to the question. If the hon. member insisted on attempting to force the motion he must be defeated—there was no use in mincing matters—because an organised body of men who were determined, feeling that they were right and that they had public opinion with them, were bound to carry the day against a dying Ministry in a dying Parliament. He thought—he was now expressing his individual opinion—that the Government would be very much wiser if they abandoned the railways that stood at the top of the paper, and went on with the line from Normanton to Croydon. The hon. member for Bulimba might laugh, but how far outside the narrow electorate he represented was the hon. member acquainted with the colony?

Mr. BUCKLAND: I know perhaps as much about the colony as you.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. member had, he supposed, gone up and down twice in the steamer, but he thought his knowledge, both personally and otherwise, was more extensive than that of the hon. member for Bulimba. But it was competent for every member of the Committee to know the importance and progress of such a place as Croydon. Any one who had read the newspapers they had brought before them every morning must see that one of the greatest goldfields that had ever been discovered in Australia had been discovered in the North. It was their bounden duty, whether such a goldfield sprang into existence in the north, south, east, or west of the colony, to consider its demands for railway communication. The claim of Croydon for a railway was a claim of exigency. It was a sudden claim, and a railway there would not be like the deviation of the South Brisbane line to Melbourne street. That and the line to Thane's Creek might possibly be necessary at some time, but they could wait at present. He did not, however, think that because the necessities of the State demanded that no such inordinate expenditure should be entered into with regard to two particular railways, that that railway should, therefore, be denied to the

North. If the Premier tied the three together, and said, unless they agreed to the line which a considerable section of the Committee were determined should not be granted at the present time, they should not have the railway to Croydon, the minority must, of course, bow to the majority. At the same time the minority were in a position that they could and would say that that improper expenditure should never be entered into by the Government so far as regarded the Thane's Creek railway and the South Brisbane extension. He did trust that the Government, feeling, as they must, that the two railways to which they were apparently wedded, were luxuries, would see that they could be left until the colony was in a position to pay for luxuries. On the other hand, the railway to Croydon was a necessity, and he hoped they would see their way to grant the money for it. If a good case could be made out in future for the expenditure on the other two lines it would no doubt be granted. He had put the case fairly and fully before the Committee. That was the position assumed by the Opposition. It was not a position taken up with any intention of improperly obstructing the Government. They were quite prepared to accept the inevitable if the Government did not fall in with their views, if they would not give them the Croydon railway, save and except they passed the other lines, and were quite willing to pass the Estimates, after due consideration, and go to the country on the issue.

The PREMIER said the hon. member had made one or two statements with respect to which he would like to say a word. The hon. member said that it was a complete answer to his (the Premier's) arguments that the money with which it was proposed to construct that railway was voted for a line from Warwick to St. George. If that line was a part of the road from Warwick to St. George, and it was not considered desirable to construct the whole of the line at the present time, why should they not construct part of it? It was the merest quibble he had ever heard come from the hon. member. It seemed to be too absurd. Parliament had voted a sum of money to construct a line of railway 200 miles in length, but, according to the contention of the hon. member, that did not authorise them to construct twenty-five miles of that line. Another thing the hon. member said was that the Government should take a higher and loftier position, and that they should tell members on that side of the Committee "Really we cannot afford to attend to you." He (the Premier) thought the Government had taken a higher view. He took the view that the Government, having given their word, were bound to keep it. That he considered was a much higher view than the one suggested by the leader of the Opposition. What the hon. member suggested was in effect that they should say, "Oh! I gave you my word, but it is not now convenient to keep my promise." That was a position which he (the Premier) could not take up.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Do you say the question is, whether we should construct a branch line?

The PREMIER said the matter for their consideration was a branch line. The hon. gentleman was endeavouring to make another quibble, but it was a very transparent one. He meant to suggest that the Government had pledged themselves to construct a line from Warwick to St. George. But the Government had not pledged themselves to bring forward a line from Warwick to St. George during the present session. The hon. member also endeavoured to put the Government in the position of "bunching" those three lines together, so that, if the

Committee did not accept them all, they should not get any. The Government had never taken up such a position, nor did they for one moment desire to do so. Although he had once been a party to "bunching" some lines, as he believed a great many members on both sides of the House had been, he thought that was a mistake, and that every matter of that kind should be considered entirely on its merits. He desired that the extension to South Brisbane and the line to Croydon should be considered independently on their merits; and that was the desire of the Government. If the members on the other side of the Committee prevented them doing that, he could not help it; that was what the Government desired, and what they would secure if they could. He had not the slightest desire to bunch them altogether. He did not think it was any use going any further that evening, and he would move that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Mr. GROOM said that before the question was put he wished to set himself right with regard to what had fallen from the Premier. The hon. gentleman stated that he (Mr. Groom) had affirmed that if it was a branch line from Warwick to Thane's Creek he would have supported it; but what he did say was that if in 1884, in place of £300,000 for the *via recta* and £250,000 for the line from Warwick to St. George, £100,000 had been proposed for a line from Warwick to Thane's Creek, it possibly would have been carried. That was what he said, to all intents and purposes, but it did not alter the fact that the proposed line was part of the *via recta*, pure and simple, and that that railway would involve an expenditure of from two to three millions of money. With regard to the personal insinuations thrown out by the hon. member for Warwick, he would say that he did not intend to take the slightest notice of them. As to his not having voted on the occasion referred to by the hon. member, there were good and sufficient reasons for his not doing so. He believed he was competent to discharge his duty to his constituents in that Committee, and he did so to the best of his ability, and was responsible to them for any vote he might or might not have recorded. If the hon. member had been a wiser man—a wiser and an older member of the House than he was and knew a little more about political and parliamentary subjects—he probably would not have referred to it. It would have been much better if the hon. member had left out personal insinuations altogether. However, he would say this, which might be of use to the hon. member in future: that if he wished to produce any effect, as a member of that House, or any effect on the country outside of it, imputing dishonourable motives to members was not the way to attain it. And making personal insinuations of an unworthy character was certainly not the way to achieve a parliamentary reputation, nor to command the attention of hon. members of that House. Abuse was not argument. In all his (Mr. Groom's) remarks on that question he had never once alluded personally to any member of the Committee or to any constituency, but had directed his observations to what he believed to be sound arguments, and he expected to have been replied to in the same way; but instead of that he had had base and unworthy motives imputed to him when his only motive had been the fulfilment of the duty he owed to his constituents. The hon. member also charged him with having written articles in his paper advocating one opinion, and then going to the House and advocating another. Now, the speech delivered by the late Minister for Works was delivered when he was at Townsville; and he employed a gentleman in Brisbane, whose speciality was leader-writing, to

contribute leading articles to his paper during his absence. That gentleman wrote a leader on the Emu Vale banquet, which leader he (Mr. Groom) strongly condemned upon his return to Brisbane. The hon. member for Warwick had had sufficient journalistic experience to know that the editor of a newspaper did not necessarily write all leading articles. He ought to know that leader-writing was a speciality, and that a gentleman who might write the best leading articles on subjects with which he was familiar might be entirely at sea when writing ordinary paragraphs. As a case in point he might mention that a gentleman who was in charge of his paper during his absence in Brisbane recently wrote an article which was entirely at variance with his views, to which his attention had been called by a member of the House, and he immediately wrote to him calling his attention to the fact, and stating that so long as he was connected with that paper he must adopt the views uniformly held by it. He mentioned that to show that a newspaper proprietor ought not always to be held responsible for what appeared in his paper, and that it was unfair to introduce into that Committee a member's private business. What had it to do with the matter under consideration? He had already explained his views to the Committee, and it showed the utter wretchedness of the arguments in favour of the line when it was necessary to look up articles which appeared in newspapers years ago, in order to make out a case. He had endeavoured to fulfil the duty entrusted to him, and he would say again, that in the best interests of the country and of his constituents, it was his duty to oppose the construction of the proposed line. When the general election took place in 1883 that line of railway was not part of the then Opposition programme. The constituencies were never appealed to or asked anything about it, and he would repeat that they were not justified in spending between two and three millions of money on a particular line without first asking their constituents whether they were in favour of that money being so expended. If they said "yes," he would give way; but until that opinion was authoritatively declared it was his duty to give the resolution his most persistent opposition.

Mr. MORGAN said he was obliged to the hon. gentleman for the lecture he had read him, but notwithstanding what he had said, and notwithstanding that he was a very young member of the Assembly, he claimed the right to review the general political actions of the hon. gentleman, without reference to him. If he saw the hon. gentleman speaking in one way and acting in another, he would not fail to draw attention to it. He would repeat that the hon. gentleman's words and actions had been frequently and repeatedly at variance. As to his not being responsible for articles appearing in his paper, they knew the hon. gentleman was editor of the paper, and they had a right to take notice of articles on political matters appearing in his paper.

Question put and passed.

The CHAIRMAN left the chair, reported progress, and obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn. The business for to-morrow will stand in the same order as to-day.

Question put and passed.

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