

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**WEDNESDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 1887**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 2 November, 1887.

Question.—Messages from the Governor—Assent to Bills.—Maryborough and Urangan Railway—report from select committee.—Motion for Adjournment.—The Rabbit Question.—Message from the Legislative Council—British New Guinea (Queensland) Bill.—Questions without Notice.—Warwick to Thane's Creek Railway—further consideration in committee.

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

## QUESTION.

Mr. NORTON asked the Colonial Treasurer—

1. How much of the £95,000 voted for dredge plant, and included in the Loan Act No. 2, 1884, is still available?

2. Has any portion of the £12,000, provided for clam-shell or other small dredges in the same vote, been spent?—If so, upon what?

3. From what fund would payment have been made for the small dredges which the Chief Engineer of Harbours and Rivers was authorised to purchase in Great Britain or the United States during his late absence from the colony, had he obtained the kind of dredges he wanted?

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

1. About £15,000, all of which will be required to meet liabilities on existing contracts.

2. I assume that the hon. member refers to the sum of £10,000 referred to in Mr. Nisbet's report for 1884, as being intended to be applied out of the £95,000 for clam-shell dredges—depositing plant. The whole of this amount has been appropriated for the construction of dredge plant.

3. No provision was made for the payment of the cost of any dredges which the Chief Engineer might have been authorised to purchase in Great Britain or the United States. If he had recommended any such purchases, and they had been approved, provision would no doubt have been made for payment. He did not, however, make any such recommendation, and no authority was given him to incur any liability in respect of such purchases.

## MESSAGES FROM THE GOVERNOR.

## ASSENT TO BILLS.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of messages from His Excellency the Governor, intimating that His Excellency had, on behalf of Her Majesty, assented to the Local Government Act of 1878 Amendment Bill, and the Lady Bowen Lying-in Hospital Land Sale Bill.

## MARYBOROUGH AND URANGAN RAILWAY.

## REPORT FROM SELECT COMMITTEE.

Mr. FOXTON, as chairman, brought up the report of the select committee on the above Bill, and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

Mr. FOXTON moved that the second reading of the Bill stand an Order of the Day for tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

## MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

## THE RABBIT QUESTION.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to call the attention of the House to certain most misleading reports and misrepresentations appearing in the public journals with regard to the rabbit question, and shall conclude with the usual motion for adjournment. Yesterday afternoon we had the evils of this invasion fully shown and set forth by the hon. member for Barcoo and the hon. member for Darling

Downs (Mr. Allan), gentlemen who have seen what the damage is, and how it has affected other colonies. I myself had little to add on that occasion, although I also have gained a knowledge from my own observation and experience of the damage these wretched little creatures can do, and I can assure you, Mr. Speaker, that I have never seen such danger overshadowing the colony of Queensland, as well as the whole of Australia, as this rabbit invasion. I would call special attention to the misleading report of the proceedings, or the misleading commentary upon them, which appears in the *Courier* of this morning. It takes it for granted that this pest affects only one class of individuals—the squatters: simply, I suppose, because the squatters, who have the earliest information from the interior, are the first to move in the matter and to call the attention of the Government and the colony to it. But it is a matter which affects the vital interests of the whole colony. It is not simply a squatter's business—not by any means; but the *Courier* says, "The plague is coming, and, as Lord Palmerston said regarding the approach of cholera, they do nothing to clean out their own back yards." It is not simply the business of the squatter, it is the business of the country. The welfare of this country depends in a great way upon our checking the plague and doing something in order to protect ourselves. I see the great danger we are placed in now. The Government are on the eve of going out of office.

The PREMIER: Who told you so?

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Well, we are on the eve of going to the country; I have every reason to believe that we are on the eve of a dissolution. The Government may come in again, for all I know. I have not the slightest objection to them; I daresay they are as good as we are likely to get. In the meantime there will be a sort of interregnum and cessation of all business, and those strenuous steps will not be taken which might be taken, and no sufficient inducement is held out to the people to protect, not only themselves, but the best interests of the colony. This article further says:—

"If the squatters are to be ruined by the inroad of rabbits, should they not exert themselves to prevent that ruin instead of simply calling upon the Government to save them? Mr. Allan quoted the case of a pastoral lessee who had erected a fence on his own account in anticipation of the 'raid.'"

That last statement is untrue. I believe the hon. member for Darling Downs did say that one squatter intended to do so; but I should not like the country or this House to think for one moment that any squatter is at all likely to erect rabbit-proof fences on the resumed portion of his run. That is where the danger obtrudes itself most upon my attention. The article goes on to say:—

"If all Crown tenants who have been considerably favoured by the Land Act and its amendments had been equally energetic in their own interests, the danger might not at the present moment have been so imminent."

This article takes it for granted that the Land Act was to be for the special benefit of the pastoral lessees. It was not brought in with any such intention, nor has it turned out to be anything of the sort. Hon. members must understand distinctly that an Act which resumes one-half or one-third of a leasehold, and perhaps doubles or trebles the rental of the remaining portion, is not likely to be conducive to the stability of the squatter's position, more especially considering the seasons we have passed through, and the bad markets that have existed for the squatters. It becomes a question of the possibility of the squatter being able under the circumstances, and in his crippled position, to protect himself and the country generally from the inroads of such a scourge as this. I should

like to know if the Government will hold out any inducement to the squatters on the border, in the shape of a reduced rental, or an extension of time, to enable them to put up the fences themselves. The erection of these fences is not a mere bagatelle, as the Government have no doubt already learnt to their cost. I do not know the exact figures, but I believe it costs up to £150 a mile to erect a rabbit-proof fence.

The PREMIER: Over £170 a mile.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Very well. Hon. members may be certain that individuals are not likely to be found who will expend such a sum as that in erecting rabbit-proof fencing, on such a tenure as the squatters have, and without any hope of encouragement or concession from the Government, and more especially on the resumed portions of the runs. Those resumed portions are not being settled in the way the late Minister for Lands anticipated they would. If, as the hon. gentleman anticipated, we had hordes of gentlemen in top-boots taking up selections of 10,000 and 20,000 acres on the resumed portions of the runs, we might look to them to defend us from the incursions of this plague. Hon. members have only to look at the Lands Office report to see that that part of the scheme has fallen flat, and in that respect the Act is practically a dead letter and a failure. There have been a few of these selections taken up in some districts, principally by squatters who wish to retain the land for stock; but as to the additional inducement to settlement upon the land, I regret to say it has turned out a pretty considerable failure. We can therefore look for no assistance from men of that class, who would be of the greatest assistance if they were there in checking this invasion. If the Government could see their way to frame some regulations—I will not say before they go out of office, as that seems to be offensive to the Premier—but if they could see their way to frame regulations before the dissolution takes place, to encourage the pastoral lessees of the southern and western border to protect themselves and the country, they would be conferring a lasting boon and benefit upon the colony. Of course, the pastoral lessees will be the first to suffer from this scourge, but will not the farmers and selectors suffer afterwards just as much? They certainly will, unless some cure or preventive is discovered to check the pest. I am aware that some professor in Adelaide has discovered a means of infecting rabbits with a disease that will only affect themselves, but I look upon that as a pretty dangerous experiment, which may be a success or which may not. Only to-day I heard of some poison having been discovered which will kill the rabbits when placed near their burrows, if they only put their feet on it, and which will not harm animals with hard feet like sheep and cattle. From what we heard yesterday afternoon, we know that in two years the rabbits have passed over 250 miles of country, and it will not take them long at that rate to overrun the whole colony, and then millions of money will not suffice to pay the piper for the damage they will do. The matter is worthy the serious consideration of the Government. I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not quite see what is to be gained by having a debate upon the rabbit question every week in this House. The matter has been long under the attention of the Government, and the Government have given it very serious consideration, and are doing all they reasonably can be asked to do, and all they can do by law. They asked Parliament some time ago for appropriation for the erection of a rabbit-proof fence, and that was

rather hotly resisted by some pastoral tenants. The Government have ventured further than that, and have decided, in anticipation of parliamentary sanction, which will be asked during the present session, on the Supplementary Estimates, to extend the fence a considerable distance further to the eastward. The fence now extends from the extreme western corner of the colony away to the eastward nearly as far as the Warrego River, and the Government are carrying it now further eastward than that. They have done, I consider, all they can do. The hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hill, speaks of an alteration of the land laws and the framing of regulations, which the Government cannot do. He asks that a new tenure should be granted to lessees and so on, but he knows very well that cannot be done; and the Government do not intend to make any such proposal during the present session. The Government are very much impressed with the importance of the question, and are doing all they can do under the circumstances—all that the law allows them to do. To complain that they do not do what they cannot do, I do not think carries the matter further forward. The hon. member has spoken about the cost of the fence. I may inform him that the cost of the fence is £186 per mile. That of course is a very serious undertaking, and I think the proposal I made at an earlier period in the session—that the pastoral lessees should bear the cost—is a matter that will have to be brought under the consideration of this House, and probably agreed to.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I have no doubt that it is pretty wearisome to hon. members on the other side to hear this rabbit question discussed so frequently, but I think the necessities of the case demand that the subject should be brought prominently before the attention of the Government. Now, sir, I agree with a great deal that has fallen from the hon. the Premier, but he forgets one thing—that the Government in their efforts to prevent the invasion of this terrible pest were too late, through the inertness of the late Minister for Lands and the incompetence of the individual he sent down to report on the danger which most of us believed was impending to this colony. I think that if a competent man had been sent down instead of Mr. Golden—who, because he could not see the rabbits, would not believe that they existed—the Government would have taken prompt action to stop, or at any rate stay, this plague. The Government are not blameless in this matter; this danger has been brought much nearer to us, and is much more imminent now, than it would have been if decisive action had been taken at an earlier period.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. gentleman says this danger has arisen in consequence of the inactivity of the Government.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Inertness and incompetence.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When Mr. Golden was sent down to discover where the rabbits were in New South Wales, his opinion was that they were not more than 150 miles from the border. Mr. Humphry Davy, of whom I believe the hon. gentleman has a high opinion—I believe the hon. gentleman was one of those who recommended this man to the Government—when he was sent down, reported that they were not within 130 miles of the border. Now, they could both only get their information from the squatters in the neighbourhood, and my experience of the squatters in that district is, that they do not willingly give any information to enable the Government to determine where the rabbits are—either in their own colony or in this

colony. They are deterred by some absurd idea such as that referred to by the hon. member for Barcoo the other night, when he would not mention the name of the man on whose run the fifteen rabbits were killed, for fear it would do him an injury. I should like to know what would become of the hon. member's delicacy if he really had any earnestness on this question. The Government are as fully impressed as he is with the danger that may follow and has followed the incursion of rabbits.

Mr. MURPHY: It is the first time you have ever acknowledged that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have never done otherwise than acknowledge it in this House. I have always regarded it as a serious danger; but I have always said, and I say now, that it is an open question how it should be dealt with. I never expressed my absolute confidence in fencing, though it was asserted over and over again, by those who were supposed to know something of the question, that the fence was the only method of dealing with it. The question had not been settled at that time in New South Wales. When this Government determined on fencing, the New South Wales Government were at their wits' end to know what to do. They were being advised in all directions. Some people advised them to fence, others to go on killing, others to use some quack remedies for destroying the rabbits—

Mr. MOREHEAD: And the hon. gentleman suggested that Providence would intervene.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I said, as I say now, that we were bound to adopt the best means for keeping the rabbits out, but I have very little confidence in the success of any means. I did not say we were to sit down and wait for Providence to deal with the question. The hon. member for Cook has brought up the question again, but the constant reiteration means nothing. Do those hon. gentlemen who are constantly bringing it up suppose that they are the only ones who know anything about the rabbits, or that they alone are possessed of the information which is available to anyone who reads on the subject? The members of the Government are quite as well aware of the difficulty and dangers that menace us from the rabbits as either of those hon. members, and the Government have the responsibility of determining how the danger is to be met. When one hon. member suggested that a second fence should be put up 20, or 50, or 100 miles inside the first, and if that did not do to put up a third, he did not say where the money was to come from. He says that the squatters are willing to do it, but he is only speaking for the squatters in his neighbourhood. How many other squatters are there who will not be willing to pay for two fences, and who certainly will object to pay even for one, because the possible danger to them is so very remote. I quite admit that where the damage is so serious as it is in the colony of New South Wales the fence is in the interests of everyone in the colony, no matter what their occupation may be. It is a very serious matter for the Government to determine how they shall meet the difficulty. They have already spent a great deal of money in their efforts to keep out the rabbits. The fence could not have been pushed along faster by anyone without an enormous expenditure. Of course it might have been forced on a little by spending £200 or £300 a mile, but that would have deterred the majority of members of this House from sanctioning the extension of the fence. The work has been retarded first by the

drought and then by continuous floods, but it has been pushed forward as fast as possible. Neither of the hon. members has offered any suggestion as to the manner of dealing with the question, except the suggestion of the hon. member for Cook, which he knows well is perfectly impracticable. Had he suggested anything that was possible or feasible, the Government would have been quite ready to take it up.

Mr. MURPHY said: Mr. Speaker,—I must apologise for rising to speak again on the rabbit question. I really thought I had dropped the subject last night. I did not know that the hon. member for Cook was going to bring the subject before the House again, until I met him in the lobby on my way into the Chamber after you had taken the chair this afternoon, so he has not acted in collusion with me. The speech made by the hon. the Minister for Works, which is on a par with all the speeches that hon. gentleman has ever made on any serious subject since I have been in the House, has brought me to my feet. The hon. gentleman says no blame is attributable to the Government for their action in regard to this pest. Now, I hold that they are primarily responsible for the rabbits being in the colony. If, instead of sending an incompetent, blind, and useless man like Mr. Golden down to make a report, they had written to the Governments of New South Wales and Victoria and asked them for a report on the rabbit question, they would have got it back in a week. But no; they must send some useless hanger-on of the Government down for the purpose of making an inspection of this country; and what does he do? The hon. Minister for Works says Mr. Golden reported that the rabbits were not within 150 miles of the border, but he forgets to tell us that that gentleman also reported that there was no danger whatever from the rabbits, that the Government of New South Wales were coping with them, and were getting them under. That is a lie on the face of it, and it is very disingenuous on the part of the hon. gentleman to come here and say that Mr. Golden reported that they were only 150 miles from the border, and that Mr. Davy reported that they were 130 miles from the border. Mr. Davy had his eyes open, and although he only followed the other gentleman by a few months he saw the magnitude of the danger impending over Queensland. But Mr. Golden either could not see it or, if he did see it, he wilfully suppressed the fact. The Minister for Works has asserted that this is entirely a matter in which the squatters are interested. I maintain that it does not affect squatters alone. I shall fence in my run. I only take it as a case in point, and I say that I shall fence in my run immediately with rabbit-proof fencing, but I shall not fence in the resumed part, as I have only a yearly lease of that. The resumed part is the property of the Crown. Are the Government going to fence in that with rabbit-proof netting, or are they going to allow their property to be destroyed? I cannot afford to fence in land for which I have only a yearly lease, and which is open to selection, and I shall leave that to the rabbits. Look at the vast areas of land under lease all over the colony, and under cattle. Is there a single cattle-owner in this country who could stand the expense of putting a wire-netting fence round his run? Would it be worth his while to do it? Are the profits from his run so great that he could afford to do it? Are there not also millions of acres of Crown lands that will require to be protected? And by whom are they to be protected? They are the property of the people, and ought therefore to be protected by the Government. Can every man who is looking for a farm afford to go to the expense of

£180 a mile for the purpose of putting wire netting round his holding? The contentions of the hon. gentleman are beneath contempt, as are most of the arguments I have heard from him on most other subjects.

The PREMIER: He does not talk nonsense.

Mr. MURPHY: I am not talking nonsense; I am talking about a subject that I have studied, and I know a great deal more about it than the Premier, notwithstanding that he does know a great deal about most things discussed in this House. I am satisfied, however, that the hon. gentleman realises the gravity of the position more than his colleague the Minister for Works, who has never yet been able to look deeply into anything. But I repeat that this is not a squatters' question only. As I said last night, I am quite satisfied that there are some squatters who will not, as the Minister for Works has said, agree to pay a tax to keep out the rabbit pest, and I believe that those squatters who will not consent to that are as short-sighted as the Minister for Works. The hon. gentleman said that the danger to some squatters is very remote; but if the rabbits have marched over 242 miles in two years, in another four years' time they will be at the Gulf of Carpentaria, or very near it. There is, therefore, not a single pastoral tenant who is safe from the ravages of the pest unless we take better measures than we are at present adopting to prevent it spreading in Queensland. The danger from the plague is not at all remote. I do not think there is one pastoral tenant in the country, or one landowner, or one farmer who is so shortsighted as to think that he is so far from this pest that he is absolutely safe. If the rabbits have spread from the seaboard in Victoria to the Bulloo in Queensland within a very few years, how long will it take them to go to the Gulf of Carpentaria? They have come a great deal more than half-way and will be there before very long.

Mr. ALLAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I had not intended to speak again on this question, but as the Minister for Works has stated that no practical or feasible method of any kind has been suggested by members on this side of the House for getting rid of this plague, I must point out that the hon. gentleman must not have heard, or if he did hear, must have forgotten, that a practical way by which the pest can be stopped was suggested last evening—that is, by the erection of six parallel lines of wire netting in the country which the rabbits are threatening. I admit that that is a serious question, and that the construction of such fences will involve a large expenditure; but the question is, nevertheless, one well worthy of careful consideration. If such a plan will achieve the desired object, it is certainly deserving of our most serious attention; and in view of the great importance of the subject, I do not mind repeating what I said last night, and reading a part of a letter which I then read as well as other parts which I left unread. It is from a squatter who is interested largely in Queensland, and much more largely in New South Wales. He is a native of that colony, and has been a squatter in the far West for many years—nearly thirty years, I think. I will give his name, so that no fault may be found on that score as has been done in other cases mentioned in the House. The letter is from Mr. A. W. Bucknell, of Yarawa, and is dated October 12. He proposes:—

"That six parallel lines of rabbit-proof netting be erected about four miles or thereabouts apart. The first line to be identical with the surveyed boundary of the colony, the other lines at intervals of four miles, or thereabouts, with cross-lines where deemed advisable, say, about every seven or ten miles."

"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 and erect lines of rabbit-proof netting shall have twenty-one years' leases granted them of the whole of their runs, resumed areas included. 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."

Then comes the point which I left out yesterday—namely:—

"Where any squatter refused to erect the netting on the terms proposed, the Government should take the work in hand and do it at once."

"If the above plan be at once adopted, Queensland will, in all human probability, be saved from the dreadful rabbit plague which statistics show cost New Zealand, in 1882, £1,800,000, and to effect this most desirable end will only have to lock up half a twenty-four-mile strip of country on her border for twenty-one years. (It is presumed half is already locked up in the leases.) Lock it up *from* the people in the meantime, to be vastly improved and kept *for* the people in the end."

That is, I think, a feasible and practical suggestion, and one well worthy of consideration. There are very few people in the House or in the country who would have any objection to assist the Legislature in coping with this terrible plague that is coming upon us. In another letter Mr. Bucknell writes:—

"There is not the slightest doubt, if your colony wants to keep itself free from the rabbits, it will have to run the fence where I say—on *this* side of the Barwon. By reference to the map you will see the course of the Barwon, where that river is the boundary between the two colonies, is a great deal to the north of east; and if it is attempted to follow the high ground on your side of the Barwon, and up the Weir, a great deal of poor, densely scrubbed country will have to be fenced through where it will be impossible to mend the fence. Whereas, on this side, somewhere by the route I recommend, the present wire fences might be used for the netting, and good high country could be chosen. I sincerely hope your people will take this into consideration. I see the matter has been before your Parliament in a prominent manner lately. Of course I do not agree with Mr. Thorn, that their natural enemies, cats, iguanas, etc., will keep down the rabbits in Queensland, nor do I believe in Mr. Dutton's trusting to Providence."

I have another letter from a gentleman who had seen Mr. Bucknell's letter, in which the writer says:—

"Mr. Bucknell's advice is sound. We must either adopt his suggestion, and run our fence in New South Wales, or, as you suggested, run it some distance within our border. Of the two, I think Bucknell's would give the greater security, because it could be attached to existing fences, and therefore could be put up at once, and also because it would protect the Barwon and McIntyre scrubs from an invasion of rabbits. But all the New South Wales men who have had experience of the pest are of most decided opinion that their greatest chance of protection is by running a fence from the eastern end of our border fence south into New South Wales, thus checking their advance eastwards."

I may remark here that in that case we should not only have the wire fence on the New South Wales side of the border, but the McIntyre, Barwon, and other rivers, which have nearly always water in them, as a second fence, before we come to our own country at all. I do not apologise for taking up the time of the House with this matter, because unless something is done at once in the way indicated it will eventually cost the colony far more money to keep out the pest, or even to keep it down. I am certain that of the pastoral tenants a very small minority,

if any, would object to be taxed to some extent for this purpose. They do not lose sight of the fact that the rabbits are marching at the rate of 200 miles a year, and that it is to their own interest to do all they can to assist the Government in carrying out any means which may have the effect of checking their advance. The fence now being erected will not be sufficient to check them. Last night I referred to a letter which I had received from a gentleman who lives between here and St. George, and it has been referred to again to-day by the hon. member for Cook, so I think I had better give his exact words. The writer, whose name I need not mention, says:—

"Rabbits are coming on, and we will all have to enclose with netting soon. I will erect some with the view of keeping these devils out. I do hope Government will bestir themselves, and act sensibly in the matter."

That is written from a property well within our own borders. The writer does not say the rabbits are there, but I am led to suppose, knowing the shrewdness of the writer, that he would not go to the expense of putting up the fence unless he thought the danger was very near. I believe the Government are alive to the gravity of the situation, and I believe that if they will attempt to legislate upon it, even at this late period of the session, they will have the majority of the House very heartily with them, and will have the thanks of the country in time to come. If it is postponed till next session, the question will have assumed enormous dimensions, and the pest will be far more difficult to cope with.

The HON. G. THORN said: Mr. Speaker,—I have a suggestion to make to the House as to the solution of this rabbit question. It seems to me to be the only solution, and I hope the pastoral lessees will not receive it unkindly. In my opinion the only solution of the question is population. If the Premier will only plant a number of families all along the border, giving each family 640 acres or 1,000 acres, with the sole condition that they keep down the rabbits, we shall hear no more about rabbits in Queensland. I do not believe that fencing will keep them out. It will always be getting knocked down—as was the case recently—allowing rabbits to get through in great numbers; and even if it is not, it will be insufficient. I hope the pastoral lessees will receive my remarks kindly, and that the Premier will go to work and plant some thousands of families along the border. If he does that, I am certain we shall never have a rabbit in the colony.

Mr. SCOTT said: Mr. Speaker,—The Minister for Works stated that no practical suggestion had been made by hon. members with regard to the rabbits. One very practical suggestion was made yesterday by the hon. member for Barcoo—namely, to run a fence along the Southern and Western Railway line. We have been told that the cost of putting up the border fence is about £180 a mile. A fence erected along the Southern and Western Railway would not cost one-half that amount, because the fence is already there, and there is nothing to be done but to place the wire netting upon it. The railway line now runs as far as Charleville, which is a very long stretch of country. The fence now under construction was evidently begun too late; the rabbits had entered the colony before it was begun; and a second line of fencing along the railway, and then extending to the South Australian border, would have the effect of preventing them from advancing very much further into the interior of the colony. The suggestion is well worthy the consideration of the Government.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I have very few words to say in reply on this motion for adjournment. I trust that the House

has not been wearied with hearing over and over again about these rabbits, because the amount of danger that is foreshadowing us now is something quite alarming to any people who know the damage that can be done by this fearful pest. The Minister for Works need not get angry and say that we have suggested no practical remedy. I consider that an extremely practical remedy was suggested by the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Allan, with regard to giving leases in fee-simple for twenty-one years to those who would put up this line of fence along the border. It may be that it interferes with the hon. gentleman's own ideas about his pet Land Act, which offers any number of loopholes to these rabbits to come in. It may be all very well for the hon. member for Barcoo to say that he will fence in his run and make it rabbit-proof. He may have the means and be able to do it, but there are hundreds of pastoral lessees who are not in a position to spend £180 a mile for that purpose, who could not raise the money to do it however anxious and willing they might be. To enclose even a leasehold in 100 miles of fence, which would not be a very long run, would require £15,000 to be stumped up at once, and many leaseholders are not in a position to do that. As for owners of cattle spending money for such a purpose it would be simply ridiculous to incur the expense. It would be throwing the money away. I dislike introducing my own private affairs into the House, but I may do so as illustration. If the rabbits invaded the small cattle station I have, the first thing I should do would be to simply get rid of the cattle as quickly as I could, and leave the run to the rabbits. I should not attempt to cope with them or fight them; I would give them best at once, because I know very well that they would beat me in the long run. I should be simply throwing away my money in trying to check them. It would be not only impossible, but would cost more than it was worth. The hon. member for Fassifern has made a very useful suggestion rather from a comical point of view—that we should put thousands of families along the border line. I should be very glad to see them there, but would like to know how they are going to live there unless they live on the rabbits themselves. However, it is a practical suggestion, and I think the Minister for Works need not say that nothing practical had been suggested. It behoves us in this extremity to suggest every possible means, and to impress upon the Government the importance of the subject for consideration especially at this time, just before a dissolution. The mere loss of six months may result in irretrievable damage, and although it is very hazardous to prophesy, I venture to predict that unless we take some better means than we are adopting now, and more vigorous action to stop this pest, in seven years time the whole colony will be overrun, and then it will be, "Who'd have thought it!" Whoever may be in Parliament seven years hence will not be able to say that the people of the country and the Government of the day had not been fully and fairly warned by people who knew what they were talking about, who took an interest in the subject, who had seen the damage done in other colonies and who were anxious to avert it from this colony or to mitigate its ill effects as much as they possibly could. It is with a sincere regard for the future welfare of the colony that the subject has been brought up over and over again in this House, and I join most heartily in doing all I possibly can, by lending my assistance and counsel, to avert an evil which I see intruding itself in the most hideous form upon us.

Question put and negatived.

## MESSAGE FROM THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

## BRITISH NEW GUINEA (QUEENSLAND) BILL.

The SPEAKER announced that he had received a message from the Legislative Council, intimating that that Chamber had passed a Bill to make provision for the indemnification by the colony of Queensland of Her Majesty's Imperial Government against the expenses of the government of British New Guinea, without amendment.

## QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

Mr. ANNEAR said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to ask the Minister for Works, without notice, if, when the department has done with the test timber sent down from Cairns, he will have any objection to have it accessible to inspection by hon. members?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Certainly I have no objection to make it accessible for inspection by hon. members. If it would be more accessible here than at the Works Office, it can be sent here. At present the department has not dealt with it.

Mr. NORTON: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to ask the Premier when the returns or papers in connection with the central sugar-mills are likely to be distributed amongst members? They are ordered to be printed.

The PREMIER: Speaking from general knowledge of how long it takes to print papers, I do not think they will take very long. I expect they will be ready in a day or two.

## WARWICK TO THANE'S CREEK RAILWAY.

## FURTHER CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE.

On this Order of the Day being read, the House went into 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.

Mr. W. BROOKES said he rose to resume the debate with a great deal of reluctance, because if he had consulted his own inclinations and feelings of personal friendship he would just as soon have kept out of the debate; but he had not been able to see his way to do that. Owing to certain circumstances he happened to share with the hon. the Premier the representation of North Brisbane, and he might say, without any disrespect, that the responsibility of that office had always overshadowed whatever honour was attached to the position, though he would not either over-estimate or under-estimate the honour of it. The constituents of North Brisbane certainly always expected that the Premier and he should work in harmony and unison, and he did not think the Premier would say that he had been a very refractory colleague; but as there were exceptions to all rules, he proposed on the present occasion to go on the other side. Now, that was an awkward position for him to take up, and had given him a great deal of thought, but still he was bound to preserve his own self-respect at all hazards, and that was just precisely the position in which he found himself. Now, he heard, and what he did not hear he read in *Hansard*, everything that was said yesterday on the subject of the proposed railway, and he must confess that the arguments against the pro-

posal before the Committee, weighed with the arguments in favour of it, in his humble opinion, were overwhelming. He proposed now to look at the political and financial aspect rather than to go over the ground which was so well travelled yesterday; and he might, in passing, say that the Committee was considerably indebted to the Upper House for having appointed a select committee to inquire into the railway, because the information given yesterday was information which otherwise would not be accessible to members who, like himself—and there were many of them—knew nothing whatever of the locality through which the line would run or the country beyond. So that, without the evidence given to the select committee, they would simply have had conflicting statements made by both sides, and they would have suspected each other of having been rather tinctured with local colouring. So far as he could judge, that which was said against the line yesterday remained unanswerable. As he saw the hon. the leader of the Opposition in his place, he must pay the hon. gentleman his small subscription of appreciation for the temperate and moderateness of all his speeches yesterday; and when they remembered the reserve of exasperating energy which lay within that hon. gentleman like a blacksmith's shop in a smouldering volcano they had great reason to thank him for having assumed so moderate a tone. He hoped they would maintain that tone to the end, because the moment they lost their tempers they lost reason and common sense, and no possible good could come out of it. But with reference to the political aspect of the question it seemed to him that if they looked at the history of a Parliament they would find it a very interesting study. In the first fresh political morning of a party just acceding to power after a general election they seemed to be omnipotent, and the Opposition seemed to be hardly worth considering, and so it went on merrily for a while, but then came a change over the spirit of the dream—a change such as had come during the present session. Two years ago he could have made quite sure that the present Government would have remained undisturbed until the end of their term, and have had an open career for themselves for another term, but a great change had come upon the House. It had been stated that the position the Opposition had taken up amounted to this: that the conduct of the government was taken into their hands, and they wished to govern the country. Now, he did not think so, and even if it were so, he could conceive of a state of things in which an immediate change of Government would be in the highest degree desirable. But they had not come to that yet. He believed the present Government remained firm in the confidence and respect of the people of the colony, and he wished it to be so, but he could not conceal from himself that they were playing the part of very bad practitioners. Now, let him look at the political position in which the Government had placed themselves. If it was not acknowledged it was certainly understood by the House, that on the passage of the Redistribution Bill, which was a very difficult Bill to prepare, and the Premier and Government deserved great credit for engineering it through the House—in its passage it was understood there would be no more disputative work.

The PREMIER: Who said so? Before the Bill was brought in?

Mr. DICKSON: That is quite a new light.

Mr. BROOKES: Then he would put it in another way. If the Premier said it was not so, his reply was that it ought to have been so. But let him remind hon. members that there was a known maxim of procedure laid down

and clearly defined in the authoritative books, that when a dissolution of Parliament or a general election was looming in the immediate distance the Ministry should do nothing except clear the way for themselves or for their successors after the general election.

The PREMIER: I should like to see that in a book.

Mr. BROOKES said if the debate was carried on into the small hours, as no doubt it would be, perhaps he might be able to read some long and very pertinent extracts to the hon. gentleman. It would enable him to refresh his memory. He did not, as a rule, like to inflict quotations upon hon. members, and he very seldom heard a request for them, but the Premier should certainly have his wish gratified if time allowed. He thought the Government were playing their cards very badly. While they had winning cards in their hands, they were just handing them over to the Opposition. He would propose that the Government should do what seemed so obviously their policy that he never doubted that it would be done. Their policy was to withdraw all contentious matters and go on with Supply, and let hon. members go about their business and take the opinion of the colony afresh. What would be the consequence of their doing so? He had said he believed, and still believed, that the present Government had the respect and confidence of the colony, and he wished them to make their political retirement a matter of peace and quietness. He did not want the House to be prorogued with all the members at loggerheads. A better and quieter, and, if he might use the term, a more respectable manner than that might be adopted. If the Premier would take a suggestion from so subordinate an individual as himself, he would let the House break up in peace and quietness and good fellowship all round, and let them go fair and square before the colony to either be returned or rejected as the case might be. That was his view of the political aspect of the question. The financial aspect of the question was also a very serious one. Though both the political and financial aspects of the question were touched upon on the previous day, they were to some extent set aside by the long extracts made from the select committee's report. With the leader of the Opposition, and some others who spoke in the same strain, he said they could not make too much of the financial aspect of the question. Ever since that £10,000,000 was borrowed they seemed to have contracted an imperial and almost oriental style of lavish expenditure. They did not hear so much about "land-grabbers" as they used to, but they had now a far worse species in the "railway-grabbers." Did not the whole colony and every member of the Committee know that there were people in that colony—whether in that Committee or not deponent would not say—who, if they only could put £400 or £500 into their own contemptible breeches' pockets, would advocate any railway in the world? They appeared to somewhat resemble a boy who had had a guinea given him by a fond parent, and who had spent 15s. of it, and was running about half crazy to spend the balance. The analogy failed, however, in one respect: instead of having borrowed from a fond parent they had borrowed from an English uncle, and from all he had heard, nursery tales and history all agreed that expectations of much tenderness in the bowels of an uncle would be disappointed. What were they going to do at a time when their finances were at least disturbed? He sometimes thought the leader of the Opposition drew too black a picture. He did not think they were embarrassed, and

of course he was desirous they should not be. The Government might well take advantage of that opportunity to look around and see what they could do in the way of retrenchment, and what engagements need not be fulfilled if the non-fulfilment of them could be honourably got through. When he was in New Zealand, two or three years ago, he saw in almost every town he visited the omen of what they now read of in the papers. He was not a bit surprised at what had overtaken New Zealand, and if great financial prudence was not exercised by the Government here they would soon not be far from being in a similar position. There was a little passage-at-arms of a mild character—and he hoped there would be none of any other character—between the Premier and the leader of the Opposition on the previous night. The leader of the Opposition put his case, he thought, very moderately, and he was reported to have said:—

"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."

They were all accustomed to have to retrench—to have to sell this and that they would like to have retained, and do without other things they would like to have. The Government and the Premier did not agree to that at all. The Premier told them the Government took a loftier view of the matter. He confessed, in his journey through life, he had had at times a suspicion of persons actuated by very lofty motives, and he generally found them lead to disaster in some way or another. He had been contented to go along steadily in money matters.

The PREMIER: Do you call keeping your word a lofty view?

Mr. MOREHEAD: Whose money are you going to pay your debts with to keep your word?

Mr. BROOKES said the Premier, in reply to the leader of the Opposition, said:—

"He 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."

Let them see whether that point was not arguable. Because the Government, under a set of entirely different circumstances, put a railway—not the present railway—down on the Loan vote, they considered they were bound to keep that promise made under entirely different circumstances. The £10,000,000 was nearly all expended.

The PREMIER: No, no!

Mr. BROOKES said there would be very little remaining for carrying out "loftier views."

The PREMIER: There will be nearly £5,000,000 at the end of the year.

Mr. BROOKES said he did not think there would. But about that promise. He supposed the Premier meant that the promise was made by merely putting that line on the Loan vote.

The PREMIER: No; I said distinctly in this House that this matter would be brought forward this session.

Mr. BROOKES said that did not come exactly within his definition of a promise. Supposing a promise was then made, the Government were going about gaining their end very badly. They were disingratiating themselves with everybody in proposing that railway at a time when they hardly knew how to make both ends meet. That state of things would run away with money, and if their English creditors saw that they were so anxious to spend the remains of the £10,000,000



loan on such doubtful and such stoutly opposed propositions, they would think they did not know how to manage their own money affairs, and so the credit of the colony would not receive any benefit, but would, as he thought, receive a good deal of damage. He very seriously thought that there was some little subterfuge about that Thane's Creek railway. It was not the railway put down in the Loan Bill; it was only 10 per cent. of the total cost, and they must have the whole or nothing. It was intended to entrap them into accepting a small part, and then their acceptance of the remainder would be impossible to get out of. If he voted for that proposal, then next year, if they were asked to vote a very much larger sum for a continuation of the line, he should feel that he could not well get out of it. He was very sanguine that the Government would not push the matter to the bitter and vexatious end. He trusted that they would take the counsel of those who were not at all disinclined to see them retain office for another term. He was quite certain that nothing would so damage them in the eyes of business men and in the eyes of the English creditors, as to push on and gain their end. It would be like that ancient victory when the victor said that if he had another like it, he would prefer a defeat. It would be a victory about which there could be no glory; but it was not won yet, and he trusted that the Government would see that the opposition was not a mere appearance, or a part of a political apparatus, very good to talk about but of little use for real work.

Mr. DICKSON said that, if there was any foundation for the gloomy picture drawn by the hon. member who had just sat down of the financial position of the colony, he (Mr. Dickson) could understand the force of the hon. member's arguments, and would say that not only railway construction, but all public works throughout the colony, should be slackened off if not stopped for the present. He (Mr. Dickson) did not believe in that policy, but he quite understood an hon. member, who many years ago joined in a cry of rest and caution which would have brought the colony into a state of stagnation, being permeated with that view. He had no hesitation in expressing his conviction that the £10,000,000 loan policy was an excellent policy for the country, and had relieved the country from a stagnation and depression which would have paralysed many industries and been most disastrous to a great many of those who had made this country their home. He did not think that any right-thinking man who reflected upon the natural causes which had conducted to the depression during the last four years would regret the action of the Government in entering upon a large loan policy. Although some of the public works to which the country had been committed were not yet productive, he had not the slightest doubt that they would become largely productive, and in the meantime they tended to advance and maintain the credit of the colony. If the hon. member's views were correct, then it was incumbent on the Government to discontinue railway construction altogether, and for a time to nurse the resources of the country until the tide of prosperity turned. But he (Mr. Dickson) maintained that the money had been borrowed from the public creditors for the purpose of expending it on public works. They had not borrowed it to let it lie in banks; and while he agreed with the Premier that it was desirable not to expend the loan money more rapidly than was judicious, he did not think there was anything in the proposal before the Committee to justify any apprehension whatever that in the past their sanction had been unwisely obtained for that

proposal. He had listened with great attention to the speech of the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, on the previous day, and there were some points in it with which he entirely coincided, though he did not agree with the hon. gentleman in his conclusions. The hon. gentleman had pointed out very correctly the true position of the present section of the line, and he (Mr. Dickson) distinctly advocated the line, not as a line to Thane's Creek, but as a section of the southern border line, which they were justified in constructing for the conservation of the commercial interests and prosperity of the colony. He did not desire to see the Government act ungenerously to New South Wales and try to filch her trade, but they had a right to see that their own trade was not filched by the New South Wales railway that was approaching their southern border.

Mr. DONALDSON: Where is the trade?

Mr. DICKSON said the Border Customs returns annually showed an increased importation of goods purchased in Sydney, and carried on New South Wales railways to supply the Western and Southern interior. They were actually being deprived of that trade to foster the trade of Sydney. They were increasing the revenue of the New South Wales railways, and starving their own. It was a notorious fact that many merchants of Brisbane were desirous of shipping goods to Sydney to be sent by the New South Wales railway to Bourke, and thence to Cunnamulla, to supply the southern part of the colony, because the goods could be sent at a lower rate *via* Sydney than *via* Yeulba or Roma. If the line before them was an agricultural line solely, a branch line—

Mr. NORTON: That is what we are told it is.

Mr. DICKSON: If it was, in fact, any line short of what he considered a section of a national policy, he would not at the present time give his support to it. He contended that that line, which was originally considered by the Government as being essential to the conservation of the trade of the country—that was, the line along the southern border of the colony of which the proposed railway now under discussion was but a moderate section—had previously received the approval of the Committee, and he could not see what had occurred since it was first brought forward to weaken its claims to public recognition which were so confidently asserted by hon. members who spoke on a previous occasion. As to the amount of £100,000 being an extravagant outlay at the present time, and very likely to lead them into financial embarrassments, that seemed to him a totally absurd contention. They had other lines before them that would absorb several hundreds of thousands of pounds, and if they were in the position that £100,000, of which only £15,000 or £20,000 was likely to be expended during the balance of the present financial year, would lead them into embarrassment, then it was high time that they should reconsider their whole railway construction, and, if compelled, desist from proceeding with any further railways. That would be an alternative which he should very much regret to see indeed, because he considered that the lines which appeared on the Loan Estimates of 1884 were fully weighed and considered, and the honour of the Government was committed to the earliest construction of those lines consistent with the financial position of the country.

Mr. ALAND: Then why do they appropriate one of those votes for another railway?

Mr. DICKSON said he had already expressed his opinion about the appropriation of a vote to another purpose than that for which it was originally intended. In a motion that had yet to come on, that question would arise, and he

should then have something to say with respect to any interference with parliamentary appropriation. However, that had nothing to do with the present subject. The parliamentary appropriation in that particular instance was not for a railway from Warwick to St. George, but for a railway from Warwick towards St. George. It was particularly on the ground that the line would be a southern border commercial fence that he advocated it; and as that part of it comprised in the resolution was merely a section of the line, and its construction would be unattended with any heavy outlay at the present time, he maintained that it should receive the favourable consideration accorded to other lines in the loan policy of the Government. That railway would become historic from the contending views which had been presented to them by the members representing Toowoomba and Warwick. Some of the members of that Committee would, he hoped, be allowed to take a general view of the welfare of the colony in considering that question. He might say that he did not look at it in the light of endangering Toowoomba, or of endangering or benefiting Warwick. It was something, to his mind, far wider than that, and he must express his great surprise that the hon. junior member for North Brisbane, Mr. W. Brookes, who represented a large commercial section of the colony, should be so blind to the advantages of that work to the colony generally, and to the metropolis in particular. Surely the hon. member, representing as he did so important a constituency, could not have reflected upon the disadvantages that would result to the whole of the Southern trade of the colony if that line was not prosecuted, and prosecuted as early as possible. He (Mr. Dickson) regretted to see that the views merely of two sections of the community had been imported into what he conceived to be a discussion having a much wider scope; and he felt that it was dangerous to interfere with the appropriation of the Loan Estimates of 1884. If they attacked the vote for one line which had been well considered by the Government, there was no reason why other lines should not be attacked, and they might have to commence *de novo* the consideration of the whole parliamentary appropriation. Undoubtedly the report of the select committee appointed to take evidence concerning that line was not encouraging. He frankly admitted that if the arguments in favour of the railway were based upon that report only, there might not be a justification for the construction of the line; but he went beyond that report.

Mr. DONALDSON: Give us something beyond the report.

Mr. DICKSON said he would give the hon. member some information. It was but a very few years ago that the traffic on the Brisbane and Ipswich road could hardly maintain a coach, and to his knowledge, ten years ago a coach could not be maintained on the Sandgate road; there was only a public conveyance once or twice a week between Brisbane and Sandgate. But what did they find now? On the Brisbane and Ipswich road, where a coach in former years only intermittently journeyed, there was, at the present time, a continuous trade, and it was the same on the line to Sandgate. What would have been said twenty or fifteen, or even ten years ago, if anyone had then stated that there would be a necessity to-day for two or three trains a day to convey passengers and goods between Brisbane and Toowoomba? And did they not know how confidently it was affirmed that there would not be sufficient traffic on the line between Maryborough and Gympie to pay for lubricating the wheels of the carriages? Yet that railway had been largely taken advan-

tage of. They must recognise the fact that railways opened up and developed traffic and carried settlement along with them. He believed that large areas of land along the proposed line would be closely settled with cultivation and grazing, but if the country were much less fertile than it was represented to be, the direction of the railway was such that it would secure and maintain and consolidate the trade of the southern portion of the colony. On that ground he most strongly advocated it, and in that light he desired to see it constructed. It seemed to him that in the warmth of feeling that had been introduced into the matter the really national character of the line had been lost sight of. There was a rivalry between Toowoomba and Warwick in regard to it, and hon. members opposite appeared to think that because the measure was introduced by the present Government they were bound to oppose it. He certainly could not see that anything had been alleged which would justify the Government in retreating from the position they had taken up in connection with that railway, and he was very glad indeed to hear the emphatic assurance of the Premier that they intended to proceed with the line, because he had half a suspicion that the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, had received inspiration to throw cold water on the line with a view to its being withdrawn. However, he (Mr. Dickson) acquitted the hon. member of any such injurious suspicion, though it did seem to him at first that the hon. member was endeavouring to disparage the line in such a manner that the Government would be induced to recede from the position they had taken up. He (Mr. Dickson) thought that that line and others which were to come before them should be favourably considered. If that line was not considered favourably he did not think there was any justification for the Government proceeding with any further railway propositions this session. That was the position which, in his opinion, ought to be taken up by the Government. If there was any soundness in the constitutional view taken by the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. W. Brookes, that the Government should not proceed with any other work but the Estimates, after passing the Redistribution Bill, then, of course, the sanction of the Committee ought not to be asked for that line or for any other line, because they all stood in the same category. The House had already affirmed that line in principle. It was a section of the railway from Warwick to St. George, for which money was voted in the Loan Act.

Mr. NORTON: We are told that this is only a branch line.

Mr. DICKSON: It is a section of the line towards St. George.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: Then who tells the truth?

Mr. DICKSON said he knew the late Minister for Works intended it to be a section of the line towards St. George. However, he would not debate the matter on a mere quibble.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: The quibble is on your part.

Mr. DICKSON said he took his stand, in advocating the line, on the ground that it was a section of the line from Warwick to St. George. He would not advocate it as a branch line, or an agricultural line, or a Thane's Creek line. That would be a new policy.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: But the Government say it is a Thane's Creek line, an agricultural line, and a branch line.

Mr. DICKSON said it was an essential part of a railway to St. George. If he were labouring under a gross delusion, and that it was not a line

connected with a railway towards St. George, he should oppose it. But if it was, as he conceived it to be, a section of the line towards St. George, he was bound, as he had done on previous occasions, and as he should continue to do while he had a seat in the House, to consistently and persistently advocate it in the commercial interests of the southern portion of the colony. There was a point made yesterday by the hon. member for Toowoomba in connection with the border trade to New South Wales. The hon. member said he had conversed with merchants and men of business in Glen Innes who said they preferred having their goods shipped from Sydney to Newcastle, and then sent on by the New South Wales railway to their doors. But the trade with Sydney over the border went much further west than that. He had no desire to filch trade from New South Wales, but he considered they had every right to protect the carrying trade they had going south and west from their ports, and they ought to endeavour, therefore, to make their railways as profitable as possible. He hoped hon. members would see that the question would have to be faced sooner or later, and he would say to his Toowoomba and Warwick friends that the sooner it was settled the better it would be for them, because it would remove all those differences between them which at present existed. There was no disguising the fact that, whether the present Government carried the line or not, it would be carried in the early future; and no doubt if the hon. member for Townsville were on that side he would approve of a line in that direction. His Toowoomba friends might consider that by getting the line shelved on the present occasion it was being postponed indefinitely; but he was certain the line would be made, and that when it was made it would not militate against the prosperity of Toowoomba. Therefore he trusted that the hon. members for Toowoomba, who appeared to take a very deep interest in the construction of that railway, would take a wider view of the question, and considering that the public interests really required the line, withdraw their opposition to it—an opposition which seemed to him to be based entirely upon local jealousies and prejudices.

Mr. DONALDSON said it was a matter for regret that an hon. member like the late Colonial Treasurer should get up in his place to advocate any scheme and to try to answer the arguments of previous speakers without arming himself with some facts and figures. That hon. member had not only occupied a prominent position in the present Ministry, but had long occupied a prominent position in the House, which he trusted he would occupy for many years to come. While a member of a Ministry he could understand that, owing to the exigencies of the Government, the hon. member might waive his own opinions and advocate a matter that he did not thoroughly believe in; but as a private member, advocating a measure in a very warm manner, the hon. member ought to have come prepared to answer some of the arguments that had been previously adduced against it. With one of the hon. member's remarks he thoroughly agreed—namely, that it was the duty of the merchants of Brisbane, as well as of those representing them there, to secure all the trade they could for the colony. At the same time, they could not shut their eyes to the fact that a good deal of the trade of the south-western portion of the colony was done with New South Wales, and must always be. And yet, in order to secure that trade, the hon. member advocated the expenditure of £3,000,000 or £4,000,000.

Mr. DICKSON: Nonsense!  
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Mr. DONALDSON said there was not the slightest nonsense about it. He was speaking quite coolly, and he was perfectly satisfied that what he had stated was the fact. It was a trade that could not be greatly increased in the future, because the country was not an agricultural country, nor was it one capable of carrying a very large population. The trade, therefore, was not a sufficient inducement for constructing a railway at such a large expense as that advocated by the hon. member for Enoggera. Only a few nights ago he read certain figures to the House with regard to the trade that was done across the border. The hon. member had just now stated that the statistics showed that there was a large annual increase in the returns. If such was the case, why did he not bring forward some figures to prove that there had been that increase? From the hon. member's late official position he would know where to lay his hands upon those returns. If he had asked at the Treasury he could have obtained them.

Mr. DICKSON: They are in the statistical returns of the Registrar-General, on the table of the House.

Mr. DONALDSON said he had not yet had an opportunity of seeing the very latest returns, but he was confident that the increase there shown was very slight indeed, taking one year with another, for several years past. An increase might probably be shown immediately after a revival of trade following upon a drought. There might be an apparent increase under those circumstances, but taking the average for the last five or six years the increase was almost infinitesimal. It was all very well to make assertions, but it was another thing to prove them. Was the hon. member, from his own knowledge of the country, able to prove that any of it from Warwick to Cunnamulla was capable of carrying a large population? Had he been over the country himself, or had he got his information from gentlemen who could be relied upon, and who had given him that information for the purpose of bringing his facts before that Committee? If the hon. gentleman had got the information he had very carefully concealed it. The warmest advocates of the line last night, even the Premier himself, only spoke of the extension to Thane's Creek on its merits. He did not go further; he knew there was a weak point beyond that, and he did not advocate the construction of the remainder of the line towards St. George. The hon. gentleman knew very well, and so did most members of the Committee who were not blinded by their own interests, that the country was not capable of carrying either a large population or a large number of stock, and that it could not possibly have any trade in the future that would pay the working expenses of the line, let alone return the interest upon such a large outlay.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: That is what you say.

Mr. DONALDSON: That was what he said, and it was true. He had not the slightest personal feeling in the matter. If there were fifty railways in that direction none of them would do him an injury; probably they would do him good. He had no interest at stake; therefore he was not swayed in the slightest degree. His whole desire was for the good of the country.

Mr. MORGAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. DONALDSON said he was glad to hear the hon. member say "Hear, hear," because he could not get up and truthfully make the same remarks that he (Mr. Donaldson) had made. Warwick and Warwick pressure no doubt overcame many of the hon. member's private opinions. He did not like to take up the time of the

Committee by reiterating arguments he had used before, but if no attention was paid to those arguments, and hon. members, like the late Treasurer, tried to ignore them, he (Mr. Donaldson) had no option but to bring them forward again. He should, therefore, read portions of the speech he made the other night, and the hon. member would have an opportunity at a later part of that debate to bring forward his facts regarding the annual increase that was taking place in the trade over the border. In answering the hon. member with regard to the leakage that he stated was going over the border, he said:—

"He not only on a previous occasion, but last night, referred to the fact that it was very necessary to construct this line to stop a certain amount of leakage in the Customs going away from this colony. Now, if the hon. gentleman had only looked at a return I called for, and which was furnished to this House last year, he would have been able to give the information as to the amount of leakage going from this colony. It is for hon. gentlemen to judge whether we should spend £3,000,000 or £1,000,000 in stopping this leakage. I say this line is only a portion of the scheme for the construction of the line from Warwick to St. George in the future. That is the idea of the Government. Last year they intended to make this line much longer, and it appears to me that the action of the Opposition in preventing it then is now fully verified, because they have come down with a different scheme this year. I will read the return of duties collected borderwise during the years 1885 and 1886, on goods coming from New South Wales into this colony. At Swan Creek, the amount of duty collected during the year ended the 30th June, 1885, was £33 2s. 6d."—

A nice little sum to build a railway for, and stop the leakage!

"on an estimated value of the goods of £350."

He was sure it would fatten the merchants of Brisbane if they could get the whole of that trade.

"During the year ended the 30th June, 1886, the amount of duty collected there was £257, and the estimated value of the goods was £2,247. At Stanthorpe—which, as we are all aware, has a railway, so that this line, or any extension of this line, would not have the effect of saving the trade there—the amount of duty collected up to the same date in 1885 was £251 19s. 1d., and the estimated value of the goods £3,944; in 1886 the amount of duty collected was £348 9s. 7d., and the estimated value of the goods was £4,199. At Texas the amount of duty collected in 1885 was £3 13s. 6d."—

Another very important amount—

"on an estimated goods value of £50; and in 1886 the amount of duty collected was £10 10s. 6d. on an estimated goods value of £119."

Another nice little saving of trade to Brisbane.

"The Texas trade might be saved by the construction of this line. At Goondiwindi the amount of duty collected in 1885 was £20 19s. 4d., and the estimated value of the goods was £344; in 1886, the amount of duty collected was £63 6s. 6d., and the estimated value of the goods was £457. At Mungindi the amount of duty collected in 1885 was £2,153 14s. 11d., and the estimated value of the goods was £9,599; in 1886 the amount of duty collected was £965 3s. 6d., and the estimated value of the goods was £2,972. At Hebel (formerly Curriwillingham) the amount of duty collected in 1885 was £2,184 8s. 9d., and the estimated value of the goods was £8,608; and in 1886 the amount of duty collected was £1,001 3s. 8d., and the estimated value of the goods was £3,026."

That was all the duty that could be saved between here and St. George. He had not added up the amount, but certainly it did not amount to much. After leaving St. George there was very little good country, and there was ninety miles of a desert to go through not occupied at the present time for even pastoral purposes.

Mr. ALLAN: Where?

Mr. DONALDSON: On the other side of St. George.

Mr. ALLAN: I am within forty miles,

Mr. DONALDSON said, at any rate between Bollon and Cunnamulla—when they got within forty miles of Cunnamulla the country was almost valueless.

Mr. ALLAN: Why, Fernlee is one of the best runs in the country.

Mr. DONALDSON: Had the hon. member ever been to Cunnamulla?

Mr. ALLAN: No.

Mr. DONALDSON said he thought not, or he would not have made the assertion he did.

Mr. ALLAN: I have been beyond Bollon.

Mr. DONALDSON: Not far.

Mr. ALLAN: Yes; I own country there now.

Mr. DONALDSON: On the border?

Mr. ALLAN: No; it is not on the border. What about Wild Horse Plains?

Mr. DONALDSON said he still asserted that about ninety miles between Bollon and Cunnamulla was almost valueless. Only the other day the Government took off the mail coach there, because there was not even traffic enough to justify keeping it on, and called for tenders for a horse mail. He was astonished to hear the late Treasurer refer to Ipswich as a parallel case, and say it was only a few years since the traffic between here and Ipswich did not pay for a coach. But they had water carriage, and fifty years was only a trifle in the history of a nation. Fifty years ago there was hardly any population here, but now they had a large and an increasing population, and the trade between here and Toowoomba would be very large in the future. He was confident of that, because along the line and at the other end of it there was a large amount of good land. On that land there must be population, but it was quite different with regard to the pastoral districts. It was impossible to increase the quantity of stock beyond what could be carried by country, and where country was so poor it was not likely that any action would be taken to try and improve it for grazing purposes, and certainly not for agriculture. Now, they had heard a good deal said about the suitability of the country about Thane's Creek for agriculture. They were told it was only ten miles from Warwick, and that grain grown there fetched 6d. a bushel more than grain grown at Warwick. If so he was surprised there had not been more cultivation. There was a large portion of Victoria where grain was grown at a much higher cost, and where the carriage to market was high, and yet apparently they made it pay, and he was sure of this: that if the country around Thane's Creek was good agricultural country they would see the want of a railway would not prevent farming from being engaged in. However, that was only a portion of the line. There might be some argument in favour of constructing a branch line to Thane's Creek. That was a question he was not going to deal with, because he would accept the statement of the hon. member for Enoggera that the proposed railway was a portion of the whole scheme, and that was the scheme to which he should confine his remarks. He was certain that if the hon. gentleman travelled over the country, instead of looking at the map and seeing a nice red line running along to the border, he would alter his views. As a practical and careful man in the expenditure of money he would see that the scheme was a wild one. The hon. gentleman had interjected that the construction of the line would preserve the trade of the south-west—the trade that went by Cunnamulla and the crossing at Hungerford. Did he understand the hon. gentleman aright?

Mr. DICKSON: Yes.

Mr. DONALDSON said it might not be generally known that the railway would be at Charleville soon, a place, say, about 120 miles distant from Cunnamulla. Now, if it was so very desirable to preserve that trade, the construction further south-west of the Charleville railway would save the bulk of that trade. He was not going to advocate the construction of that line, but he had spoken of it because the construction of railways to the interior was held by many people to be an experiment to be tested before they went any further. He was quite willing to accept that opinion and let the railway remain at Charleville for some years until it could be ascertained whether there was sufficient trade to make the line pay; if there was, the inference was that if it were extended further it would continue to pay. To his own knowledge there was a large amount of good country in that district—country that would be occupied by sheep if the wool could be got to market at a reasonable price; but, at the present time, most of the country was only stocked with cattle, because wool could not be profitably grown there. If, however, the trade was sufficient to induce a Government to expend three or four millions of money in that country, would it not be wiser to extend the railway from Charleville 100 miles, at a cost of £300,000, instead of spending that sum on a line that could not possibly pay or benefit the country, or ever be looked upon as a great national success? On that point he was perfectly certain he was quite right. He had a certain local knowledge of the country that assisted him in arriving at that conclusion. He had no personal interests to serve whatever, but he was convinced that that line would be one of the hugest blunders that any Government ever perpetrated. It would be looked upon within a few years as a piece of folly that would condemn any Government or Parliament that sanctioned its construction. He had been very much surprised to hear some of the arguments brought forward in favour of the construction of the line, but since the present resolution had been brought in he found hon. members were very guarded in their opinions as to whether it should go beyond Thane's Creek. With the exception of the ex-Treasurer, who knew nothing of the country, no hon. member had advocated the continuation to St. George, or beyond that point. The chief trade, as he had already pointed out, was from New South Wales across the border by Hungerford, but it was almost impossible to secure that trade in the future, because Sydney was the nearest port. Then, at the present time, they had the disadvantage of more than 100 miles of land carriage against them, and the rates on the New South Wales railways were so low that they were sending and delivering goods on stations in Queensland at a much lower rate than they could be sent from Brisbane for. He had on several occasions tried to get differential rates adopted so as to intercept the trade, but he had been unsuccessful. A map of New South Wales and Queensland would be very useful to have in the Chamber, because a reference to them would show that New South Wales was able to send her railways right up to their border, and was thus able to filch their trade. The late Treasurer had said that he would be sorry to be a party to filching trade from New South Wales, but he (Mr. Donaldson) thought that that was a piece of maudlin sentimentality. If they were able to take away any New South Wales trade they were quite justified in constructing railways to do so. New South Wales did not hesitate to send railways to the border to take away the trade of other colonies. Victoria did not hesitate in tapping the border of New South Wales so as to filch

her trade. The term "filch" was not a fair term to use, but he thought the extension of railways to obtain trade was quite justifiable. If, however, they were to have a war of tariffs between the different railways, and the rates were brought so low as not to pay, that would not be justifiable. That was an act of administration, and lay with the Government and not the House to deal with. But the policy of constructing railways was a matter that was within their province. He was perfectly satisfied that by the construction of that railway they would not be able to secure any trade from New South Wales, nor would they be able to secure the far south-western trade even of this colony, because the distance to Hungerford would be about 600 miles. He had not measured the distance, and made that statement subject to correction; but knowing the sparse population and poor nature of the country there, he asked, was there any justification for the construction of a line of such a length to preserve such a poor trade? Hon. members had too much sense to say there was. He hoped better counsels would prevail, and that the proposed line would be relegated to the future. If irrigation in the future could be successfully utilised to enable the cultivation of those lands, which were now only used for pastoral purposes, then would be the time for the Parliament of the colony to consider the advisability of constructing a railway to that country; but in the meantime it would turn out to be a great national loss. There were many parts of the colony that would be benefited by the construction of a railway, and they should devote their attention to them, and try by all means to do what they could for the further development of the colony by the construction of such railways; but do not let them commit themselves to such a mad scheme as that involved in the proposition before them, which would in the future commit them to an enormous and unjustifiable expenditure, which would fall very heavily upon the taxpayers of the colony. Let them consider the colony as a whole, and not the little particular part that might be benefited by that line.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: You would like to prevent settlement.

Mr. DONALDSON said that remark gave him an opportunity to spin out his speech. Any member who charged him with a desire to prevent settlement made an untrue charge. He yielded to no member of the Committee in his desire to see the rapid settlement of the colony. Although he had been and was still a squatter, he yielded to no man in his desire to see the lands of the colony profitably used, and put to a better purpose than pastoral purposes. His actions in that House already had shown that on every occasion, when he had had an opportunity to do so, he had advocated the framing of their land laws in a way to secure settlement upon the land. His views upon the land question in the other colonies and in this colony had always been thoroughly liberal. He believed in the greatest good for the greatest number. The time would come, no doubt, when the squatters would have to give way for closer settlement. He had seen that in the other colonies, and they would have to do the same here. In the future, if irrigation was successful, the lands belonging to the Crown in the district to which they had referred that evening might be dealt with for closer settlement. It might not occur in his time, but should such a question arise during the time he was a member of the House, he would give every support to the closer settlement of the land. The charge that he wished to prevent settlement was groundless and unfair. Before the debate concluded he supposed he would have an opportunity to deal

with the returns of the border trade. He had had to reply to the remarks of the hon. member for Enoggera rather hurriedly, and had he been earlier at the House he would have had an opportunity to deal with that hon. gentleman's remarks in regard to the increase of trade across the border. He had looked over the returns for the past few years, and had failed to see the increase, and he predicted that there would not be a large increase in the next few years, because there would not be a large addition to the population there; and without that there could not be a large increase in the trade. An hon. member had said he did not take any notice of the wool that crossed the border, or of the flour that came in; but a return of the flour was not furnished, and when he tried also to get a return of the quantity of wool that crossed the border he found that it had not been furnished.

Mr. KATES : It is the principal trade.

Mr. DONALDSON said he was aware of that. At the same time there could not be many thousand bales carried by teams into New South Wales, because the returns given by the hon. member for Toowoomba gave the number of sheep in those districts, and they knew that sheep only produced a certain quantity of wool. One hon. gentleman held the idea that wool of certain value was grown in that district, but when he (Mr. Donaldson) asked him what was the weight of the fleece per sheep he did not give that information. He thought, if the hon. member had it even, he would be very chary about giving it, as anyone who had experience knew that it was upon the good lands that heavy fleeces were grown. It did not follow that the heaviest fleece brought the highest price, and, in fact, his experience was that a light fleece of peculiarly fine wool brought the highest price. He did not care to refer to the owners of those stations by name, but he was sure they would admit that it was not as profitable to grow a small quantity of wool at a high price as to grow a large quantity of wool at a lower price. Before the division took place he would no doubt have an opportunity of referring to the border returns he had spoken of, and the remarks made upon the subject by the hon. member for Enoggera.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that, if he understood the hon. member for Enoggera, that hon. gentleman said that if he discovered that the proposed railway was only a branch line and not part of the main line, he would not support it.

Mr. DICKSON : Yes, if it was not a section of the railway to St. George.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it had been distinctly stated by the Premier that it was not a portion of that line. The Premier stated last night that it was a branch line, and how that branch line was going to be constructed without a special Act of Parliament, such as that proposed for the Croydon line, puzzled him. The proposed line must be one thing or the other. It must be either a portion of the Warwick to St. George line, or it must be a separate line. The hon. member for Enoggera seemed to have as much doubt about it as other hon. members, and he was sorry the hon. member had not listened carefully to the Premier when that gentleman distinctly stated it was a branch line. The Premier was no doubt taking a little rest to prepare for the troubles of the night, but he wished he was present to hear the speech of the gentleman whom he considered a recalcitrant Minister, and who, he said, left him in the hour of tribulation. He was very much struck with the speech of the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, and was glad to find that that hon. member shared, to a considerable extent, the opinions

expressed by hon. members of the Opposition, particularly in respect to the £10,000,000 loan. The hon. member had drawn a very good illustration of the action of the Government with regard to the loan, by instancing the case of a schoolboy who had spent 15s. out of a guinea, and was very anxious to get rid of the remaining 6s. as soon as possible; but a still more apt illustration had been supplied to him (Mr. Morehead). He wished he had found it out himself, because he would certainly have patented it. The illustration had reference to a debate that took place in the House of Commons last session in England. There was an African potentate—his name, he thought, was Jah Jah—who announced to the British resident his intention of declaring war against a neighbouring tribe. The British resident said, "Why, Jah Jah, I thought you were on most friendly terms with your neighbour." "Yes," said Jah Jah, "I am on friendly terms with him; we are getting along capitally." "Then why do you wish to go to war with him?" "Well, the fact is, I have had a present made to me of two barrels of gunpowder." Now, the £10,000,000 loan had come to the Government very much like those two barrels of gunpowder to Jah Jah, and they were very anxious to get rid of it in any direction whatever. The hon. member for Enoggera had sneered at what he was pleased to term the "rest and caution policy" advocated by the hon. member for North Brisbane. Now, there was a time in the career of a State, as in the life of an individual, when rest and caution became necessary. Neither the State nor the individual could always work at high pressure. The policy advocated by the hon. the ex-Treasurer might not inaptly be termed the skyrocket policy. The skyrocket went up, up, up, until the powder was expended; then there was a small fizz, a few stars, and the stick fell to the ground. Now, whatever opprobrium might attach to the term, he (Mr. Morehead) at the present moment was a "rest and caution" man, and any reasonable man in charge of the finances of the colony at the present time would be a rest and caution man. It was not uninteresting to remember that the surplus the present Government were playing skittles with, and the surplus the previous Liberal Government played skittles with, were accumulated by the rest and caution Governments; and he thought it would be admitted that the rest and caution Governments had not been the worst friends to the people of Queensland. The words "rest and caution" used by the hon. member for Enoggera were synonymous with judicious economy. Judicious economy and proper expenditure, where the progress of the colony required it, formed the policy which the hon. member was pleased to term "rest and caution." Rest and caution had kept this colony in a highly prosperous condition for many years, and the highly progressive policy of the great Liberal party had landed it in debt and disaster. That was the policy the hon. the ex-Treasurer, who had very materially assisted in that direction, wished to see persevered in. That hon. gentleman advocated no increase of taxation, but increased expenditure. He (Mr. Morehead) thought at one time that the hon. gentleman was prepared to prune any expenditure that could be saved without injury to the State, but they found him now advocating the same inordinate expenditure that was going on when he left the Government. He (Mr. Morehead) admitted that he was very much astonished at the hon. member's sneer at the hon. member for North Brisbane, who, whatever his political leanings might be, had expressed very much sounder views on that question than those expressed by the late Colonial Treasurer.

Mr. CAMPBELL said the hon. members for Toowoomba ought to be very thankful to the hon. member for Enoggera for throwing oil on the troubled waters and for the kind advice which he had given them, but he did not think they were likely to accept that advice. The hon. member had administered a mild censure to the hon. member for North Brisbane, and had expressed surprise that that hon. member would vote against the commercial men of Brisbane. That implied that the hon. member for Enoggera thought Brisbane was Queensland—that there was no other place in Queensland than Brisbane. With reference to the line before them, he (Mr. Campbell) was surprised that the Minister for Works had not had the courage to lay the whole matter fairly before the Committee. It was clear that the hon. gentleman was half-hearted about it. The hon. gentleman had laid down a precedent the other day which he might fairly follow in the present case. Last session the hon. members for Stanley had differed with reference to the Laidley line, and the hon. Minister for Works undertook to inspect the route and carry out the line according to his own views, irrespective of the difference of opinion. Last Saturday week the hon. gentleman made a personal inspection of that line; and he (Mr. Campbell) thought it would be a fair thing, seeing that the line under discussion was causing so much unpleasantness and such a diversity of opinion throughout the colony, if the proposed line were withdrawn now, and if, during the recess, the Minister for Works were to make a personal inspection of it.

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. CAMPBELL said that before the adjournment for tea he stated that he thought it would be better, for various reasons, that the Minister for Works should withdraw the line and in the meantime inspect the route. There was a difference of opinion as to the class of country that it would traverse, and also as to whether it was a proper line to construct. Last year the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, advocated the line as the commencement of a great national undertaking which was to cost between two and three millions of money. This year the hon. member was very reticent on that point, and said it was a little paltry line for the benefit of the farming population, which could be constructed at a cost of £100,000. His colleague, Mr. Allan, had the frankness to admit that it was not simply a branch line, but that it was part of the great national undertaking of which so much had been heard in that Committee. The hon. member for Warwick had kept very quiet on the point, and had not committed himself in any way. He (Mr. Campbell) maintained that if it was an agricultural line as the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, asserted, it started from the wrong point to benefit the farming population of North and South Toolburra, Sandy Creek, and Darkey Flat, particularly South Toolburra. If it was to benefit the farmers of that district it should start something like three miles east of Warwick, but that did not suit the people of Warwick. They did not care to what expense the country was put so long as the traffic was brought into Warwick. If the railway started from the point proposed it would not benefit nearly so many farmers as it would if it was taken east of Rosedale. The previous evening the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, read a long list of names of persons who held land in the vicinity of the line. He (Mr. Campbell) was free to admit that a considerable number of those persons resided in that locality, but a great many of them would be

more benefited by a railway starting north-east of Warwick, than by the line proposed by the Government. If there had been so much cultivation along the route as had been stated, he would like to know what had become of the produce. Certainly it had not come down the line, and if it went up to Inglewood and Goondiwindi, that proved conclusively that the country up there was not fit for settlement; that it was not agricultural land. He had taken notice of the evidence given by a Mr. McEwan. That gentleman stated that maize had been produced near Inglewood, and when asked where they sent the maize, he replied "to Goondiwindi, that is our market." It was very strange that they had to send maize to Goondiwindi to get a market when they spoke so loudly of the agricultural lands of that district. Last evening the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, lauded the hon. member for Maranoa, Mr. Lalor, up to the skies. He (Mr. Campbell) thought every member of the Committee would endorse all that hon. member said about the hon. member for Maranoa. That hon. member was a straightforward conscientious man, and that was saying a great deal of any man. It was said that he knew very much about the country and gave very favourable evidence in support of the line. All that he (Mr. Campbell) could find in his evidence was that the hon. member said it was a good road. He (Mr. Campbell) was free to admit that. The road from Warwick towards Warra was one of the best bush roads he knew in the colony. He had left Warwick at 7 o'clock in the morning and driven into Mrs. Bracker's yard, a distance of seventy-five miles, at sunset. That proved conclusively that it was a good road. But it did not follow that because it was a good hard road it was a good place to build a railway. Indeed it was rather the reverse, because they had to travel over thirty-five or forty miles of barren ridgy country. There was not the slightest doubt that the contractors would be able to get all the ballast they required, but it was a granite country, and the line would be a most expensive one to make. Some of the witnesses called before the select committee spoke of the country as being covered with ironbark and spotted gum. They might have added dogwood and pine. Hon. members who were acquainted with the country would know that country which produced those timbers was very little fitted for settlement. Wherever spotted gum and dogwood were found the land was barren. So bad was the land that if the line were built it would be one of the most serious evils that could befall the colony. It should also be borne in mind that most of the men who were brought down to give evidence before the select committee were interested in the line from the simple reason that they were property holders upon it, and that, consequently, as soon as the construction of it was sanctioned by the House their land would be enhanced very considerably in value. There was a gentleman named Mr. Higgins—better known to hon. members as "Dear Pat"—who gave evidence—a very respectable man, and a man who had been fairly successful as a farmer. Two years ago, when it was an understood thing that the line was to be brought forward, that gentleman tried very hard to purchase a piece of property adjoining his own from a Mr. Murray, and when he found he could not purchase it he took it on lease, with an undertaking to lay down 200 acres in lucerne. But he never would have paid such a rental as he undertook to pay, had he not believed that that line would be carried through it. And there were many more in that locality who had the same object in view. He would now refer briefly to the evidence given by a Mr. Alexander, who



stated that he was a carrier on the road between St. George and Goondiwindi, and who, he believed, did once carry a load of furniture for Mr. Allan, of Braeside. That witness was asked :—

"What are you? An overseer.

"Where do you reside? At Chiverton, Sandy Creek, Warwick.

"How long have you been a resident of that district? For the last seven years.

"How long have you been connected with grazing pursuits? Nearly ten years.

"Do you know the route of the proposed line of railway from Warwick to Goondiwindi and Thane's Creek and Inglewood? I do."

Further on he was asked :—

"How is the country watered? It is well watered with small creeks running into the Severn. I might say the only scrubby part is between Canal Creek and Inglewood, and it is a good useful scrub. There is a great deal of wattle there, which would be very useful for tanning purposes, and through the wattle there is plenty of ironbark.

"Have you been at Bodumba Creek? I cannot say; I do not know the names of all the creeks there.

"Have you been at Mosquito Creek, which runs into Canning Creek? I know Canning Creek.

"What sort of a creek is that;—is there plenty of water in it? Yes."

That proved conclusively that the witness knew nothing about the road. A man who had carried on the road for years, as he stated he had done, would know every creek and watercourse on the road by name, and the fact of his not knowing the name of Bodumba Creek showed how very little his evidence was worth, more especially as there was as much water in Bodumba Creek in one mile as there was in Canning Creek in ten miles. The examination continued :—

"Is there any traffic either way between that part of Queensland on the immediate border of New South Wales and our Southern and Western Railway at any point? No.

"Then no traffic at all from those districts goes to our railways? Not that I am aware of.

"And you have been carrying on those roads for years? Yes. I was carrying on the Warwick and Goondiwindi road in 1879.

"There was a traffic then between Warwick and Goondiwindi? Yes.

"What did you carry? I took furniture from St. George to Braeside for Mr. William Allan."

Such was the extent of that gentleman's carrying; and his reply to the next question was that he was then a drover on the road. That was the kind of evidence on which they were asked to make a line which, taking it in its whole length, from Warwick to St. George, and from Rosewood to Warwick, would cost the country between £2,000,000 and £3,000,000. If such a thing was even contemplated it was high time, in his opinion, that someone else took the reins of government, and prevented that wilful and extravagant waste of money. A good deal had been made out of the fact that most of the timber used for the Beauaraba branch line had come from the neighbourhood of Thane's Creek. He could explain that to the Committee. A Mr. Donnelly, in giving evidence before the select committee, stated that there was an abundance of splendid timber in the Pittsworth district. That statement was perfectly correct, and the reason why Mr. Garget did not get his timber there was that most of the timber land was private property, and the owners asked such an exorbitant price for the standing timber that he decided to go somewhere else for it; and he got the bulk of it in the neighbourhood of Thane's Creek. That was the sole reason; the owners asked such an exorbitant price for the standing timber. Returning to Mr. Alexander, that gentleman must be a very reliable witness indeed; he stated that he had

never seen a flood on the land between Goondiwindi and St. George; and perhaps he had not, if he only went over the road once carrying furniture to Braeside. The witness said he had never seen a flood of any consequence, only at certain crossings of creeks between those two places. He (Mr. Campbell) might inform hon. members that people living in the district knew that the floods had been 20 feet high on some of those flats; and it was well known that Mr. Wyndham, down the river, always kept men on the lookout for the river coming down, and had a bridge specially built that he might rush his sheep on to high country. That was Mr. Wyndham's custom for many years, and it was no doubt carried on at the same place still. Last night, when the hon. member for Warwick, Mr. Morgan, was speaking, he (Mr. Campbell) interjected that certain land that he was speaking of was only two miles from Warwick. He was reading the evidence at the time, and did not quite follow the hon. member, who had passed on from the Rosenthal property he had been speaking of to South Toolburra. The hon. member then told him that if he kept his mouth closed he would not have shown that he knew nothing about the place. He thought the hon. member was justified in saying that, because he (Mr. Campbell) was wrong, and the hon. member was perfectly correct in saying that the land he was speaking of at the time was six or seven miles from Warwick.

Mr. MORGAN: Thirteen.

Mr. CAMPBELL said he should like to tell the Committee that there was not nearly the quantity of land there available for agriculture that had been stated. The line followed close upon the ridges, and there was only a small strip of land between that and the river on the right side, which he was sure would not produce one-fiftieth part of what a railway should carry. He certainly hoped, as he had said before, that as the Minister for Works had laid it down as a precedent that all lines should be inspected by him, the hon. gentleman would inspect that line. The hon. gentleman on last Saturday inspected the line in dispute between the hon. member for Stanley and others, and had, he supposed, arrived at a conclusion as to who was right and who was wrong; and as the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, would not admit that the proposed line was part of a great national undertaking, which was to cost an enormous sum of money, but insisted that it was a small line which was to cost only about £100,000, which it was not worth while cavilling about, he thought the Minister for Works should inspect the line before it went any further. He should like to hear from that hon. gentleman whether he would consent to inspect the line. Another matter that struck him was that if the members for the districts studied their own interests, after all the discussion that had taken place upon that line, and the fight they had made for it, the best thing they could do would be to go to their constituents upon it. If they did so, and that line was kept dangling before the eyes of the public in and around Warwick, there was nothing surer than that those three members would come back to that House with flying colours. If, on the other hand, the line was carried now, and they had nothing to go upon when they went to their constituents, he knew what the result would be. There would be a dead struggle between the two members who now represented Darling Downs proper for the seat of Carnarvon, and so sure as the line was carried so sure would the hon. member who sat on the Opposition side defeat the member who sat on the Government side, and he would then go for the



seat of his next-door neighbour, Mr. Foxton. It was pretty well understood that the hon. member would go for that electorate, and if he did not succeed in that he would go for the seat of the hon. member for Warwick.

Mr. KATES : Aubigny.

Mr. CAMPBELL said he was not game to go there. Therefore the very best thing those hon. members could do was to go before their constituents with that railway dangling before them. It would keep them quiet for another twelve months. He would not take up the time of the Committee longer, especially as he thought the Minister for Works wanted to say a word or two. As he should have plenty of time to speak again before to-morrow morning, he would not detain the Committee longer.

Mr. JESSOP said he had a few words to say before the question was put, and no doubt it would be found that a great deal would be said before it was put. He did not expect that it would be put before 12 o'clock that night or 12 o'clock to-morrow, as far as he could judge from the feeling of hon. members. He had listened attentively to the several speeches that had been made, some of which had enlightened him a good deal. He was very glad to hear the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. W. Brookes, speak as he did, and take the stand he did, which he was sure would remain to his credit the longest day he lived. It was a stand he never expected that hon. member to take, and he was satisfied that it would be a good thing for him when he went before his constituents. He was convinced that the people of Brisbane did not want that line extended in the present financial condition of the colony. He believed that if a vote were taken of the people of Brisbane, 90 out of every 100 would vote against that railway, which had been brought forward under somewhat peculiar circumstances. They all knew that some years ago a promise was made by the late Minister for Works that the line should be made, and he believed that the Government had introduced it with the view of carrying out that promise made by the late Hon. W. Miles, when electioneering in that district. But he would ask, was it fair that the country should be put to such an enormous expense on account of a promise made during an electioneering tour? They were only asked to authorise the expenditure of £100,000 now, but that was only the initiatory step in the work, which would cost £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 before it was finished. A great deal had been said with reference to that being a branch line, but he would show that it was not a branch line but really the thin end of the wedge initiating the *via recta* and Warwick to St. George line. The hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, had paid a high compliment to the Legislative Council for referring the matter to a select committee, which, he said, had brought out evidence he had never expected to hear, and facts which a great many members were not aware of. In fact, he (Mr. Jessop) believed that three-fourths of hon. members were not yet aware of all the facts brought out in the evidence of that committee, and the best thing he could do would be to read it. However, he would not do so then, although he might do so later on. He would now content himself with referring to the evidence given by Mr. Hunter, which, perhaps, some hon. members who so warmly supported the motion, did not know the full effect of it. The statistics quoted last night by the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, which had appeared in that morning's *Hansard*, proved to the Committee that Mr. Hunter's evidence was totally unreliable and misleading. Mr. Hunter had come down with a great flourish of trumpets,

and had put the colony to great expense, bringing down witnesses with him. He (Mr. Jessop) had thought some time ago of moving for a return showing the expenses Mr. Hunter had incurred by bringing those people down. He knew that Mr. Hunter's bill was over £40, and some of the others charged about £40, and when they came down they simply made misleading statements about the country between Warwick and Goondiwindi. Those witnesses plainly stated that the line was to be a Warwick to St. George line, and they naturally were in favour of that and the *via recta*. That evidence showed that the present motion was misleading, as it was only the initiatory step in the line from Warwick to St. George. All the men brought down by Mr. Hunter, who had given evidence, were interested in the construction of the line, and he (Mr. Jessop) would endeavour to show that the whole thing was a fiasco from one end to the other. He had been told that Mr. Hunter picked up his samples of produce as he came along; and some of the things that he stated he got in Goondiwindi were grown by a Chinaman in his garden. That was what they called the great agricultural district of Goondiwindi. On page 36 of the evidence, at question 1018, in answer to the Hon. J. D. Macansh, Mr. Hunter said:—

"Do you think it would be very costly to construct the line of railway from, say, Thane's Creek westward towards St. George? It would be the most cheaply constructed railway in the whole of Queensland—and I speak from experience in railway-making—I paid the first man on the first railway made in Victoria. There are no engineering difficulties on the proposed route whatever, and it should be made for about £1,500 a mile. It would cost from £500 to £400 per mile without rolling-stock."

Now, that question implied that it was not a branch line, but the first section of the line to St. George. Mr. Macansh, who put that question, was an advocate for that line, and in that question he assumed that it was not a branch line for the benefit of the farmers; that was quite enough in itself to prove to him that it was meant to be the beginning of the line to St. George. Then, as to Mr. Hunter's reply, how could that gentleman know anything about railway construction? He said he spoke from his experience of railway-making. To his (Mr. Jessop's) knowledge, Mr. Hunter had no experience in Queensland of the construction of railways; but yet he informed the committee that that would be the cheapest line ever built in Queensland; and he said, in answer to question 1015, he had been in that district about sixteen years. Therefore, in answer to question 1018, he made a statement with regard to a subject he knew nothing whatever about. He said, "I paid the first man on the first railway made in Victoria." There was a foot-note to that:—

"I paid the first men under Cornish and Bruce on the Mount Alexander Railway."

That was the railway from Melbourne to Bendigo—now called Sandhurst; and he contended that Mr. Hunter was not in a position to give a correct answer to a question as to the probable cost of the line. He also said there were no engineering difficulties on the proposed route, and it could be made for £1,500 per mile. Could a line be made for anything like £1,500 a mile? And he went on to say that without rolling-stock it would only cost from £500 to £600 a mile. Why, even with Mr. Phillips's patent steel sleepers it could not be made for that, and it was strange that a man could make such a statement, even to have a railway made to his own door, seeing they all knew so much better. They had only to look at the returns of the cost of their railways to see what actually was the cost, and it was impossible for any man to make such a statement without knowing that he was making a

statement which was misleading and contrary to all experience. In any important matter like that, it was necessary to obtain all the information they could, and the members of the select committee, both those in favour of the line and those against it, had, no doubt, listened attentively to the evidence; but it was a pity that there had not been more time taken, so that more witnesses could have been examined, when possibly more light might have been thrown on the subject. He believed that the evidence given by the people brought down by Mr. Hunter was decidedly one-sided, and, to say the least, misleading. He would therefore read some evidence given by Mr. Carmody. There were two sides to every question, and it was only fair that the Committee should know them. He believed that a good many of the hon. members in that Committee had not read the evidence, or they would never sit still and allow the statements to be made that had been made. The hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, had quoted from Mr. Carmody's evidence, but he thought the hon. gentleman hardly went far enough, so he (Mr. Jessop) would give the Committee the benefit of some more of it, in order that they might be able to put this and that together. He knew Mr. Carmody, and knew that he was a good judge of the country, as he had travelled over it again and again in all kinds of weather. Unfortunately he was a heavy loser through the late floods, having lost a large number of stock. The evidence was:—

"There is no marketable timber in the vicinity of the railway? That is what I mean.

"Has the country any grazing capacity? Very little. It would take a number of acres of that kind of country to support an animal.

"Having experience of twenty years' duration, are you able to give the committee your views as to what would be the carrying capacity of that country? Yes. Throughout this river frontage I consider that the capabilities are good; while some of it is unavailable altogether. That portion which is available, one season with another, would, I daresay, take from eighty to a hundred acres to keep a full-grown beast—a horse or a bullock."

After evidence like that, from a man of Mr. Carmody's character and well-known knowledge of the colony, was there sufficient inducement to make a railway to that place? To continue, Mr. Carmody was asked:—

"Is it sheep country? Only the immediate frontage. As a rule, sheep could not be run over that country. I know of two or three instances in which the holders had to abandon sheep-grazing altogether in that neighbourhood.

"Are you well acquainted with the country between Goondiwindi and St. George? I am fairly well acquainted with it.

"Is there much agricultural land between these two points, having in view the proposed route of the railway? [*Referring to the map.*] No; there is no agricultural land at all."

Yet they had been told that there was a great deal of agricultural land there, and that it was the finest agricultural land in Australia.

"What is the extent of good pastoral land between those two townships? Well, you very soon get out of it; when you get on the Yambacollie Run you are out of it altogether. There is no agricultural land. It is fair grazing for a few miles out of Goondiwindi.

"It is fair grazing country for some miles out of Goondiwindi—how many miles, roughly speaking? Roughly speaking, I should say that this belt of country that I have been speaking about all along—

"No. How many miles of fair grazing country, going towards St. George from Goondiwindi? About six miles.

"Thence, what is the character of the country? On to the next—to the Weir—is about ten or fifteen miles more; it is the ordinary country—something like the country I have been referring to on the north of the

route between Inglewood and Goondiwindi. The country, after you cross the Weir, is principally unoccupied; it is of no value for grazing purposes at all."

He had been on the Weir; and the country beyond that was not fit to be occupied at all.

"Then from the Moonie to St. George, what is its character? Well, from the Moonie to St. George, it is fair grazing country.

"Have you paid any attention at all to the traffic of that region, either with Warwick or any other part of the Southern and Western Railway system, to or from? Yes; I have taken notice of the traffic.

"Can you give the committee any information as to its existence? After you pass Inglewood there is very little or no traffic; there is very little population in that tract of country.

"Is there any traffic from Southwater to any point of the Southern and Western Railway that you know of? Not in connection with our railway system. There is no traffic at all.

"There is no traffic between that part of the border and our railway system? None, I believe, sir. There may be a little from Texas; but that is above. Immediately opposite we are speaking of, there is no traffic at all carried on between New South Wales and Queensland.

"Can you inform the committee whether any traffic passes from Queensland to New South Wales—from Inglewood to Goondiwindi, from St. George to Goondiwindi, and the stations southward of St. George and the proposed railway route? No. The principal portion of the traffic that comes in from St. George comes in direct; not between St. George and Goondiwindi and Inglewood. I know all the crossings. There are only two—one at Goondiwindi and one at Texas. I mean that any traffic from New South Wales into Queensland, and from Queensland into New South Wales, is confined to the route due south of St. George, and there is no traffic easterly of that route.

"By Mr. P. T. Gregory: Then we may understand from your observations that the principal, if not the only crossing—there are three—from New South Wales into Queensland, are Texas, Goondiwindi, and Murrumbidgee. Yes.

"By the Chairman: Mr. Carmody, assuming the proposed railway to be complete to Goondiwindi and St. George, what amount of local traffic do you think that that railway would obtain from the country on both sides of the line—right to and including the possible trade from the border of New South Wales, and north of the line to the points where the traffic would turn to the Southern and Western Railway to Roma? [*Map referred to.*] Very little. You start from Thane's Creek: you pass through a country that is very thinly populated indeed; and it is pretty well all the same class of country till you come to Inglewood. Then there is a little population there. From Inglewood to Goondiwindi the country is almost uninhabited. There are large tracts that there is not a hoof of stock on at all. From Goondiwindi it is fairly stocked—one or two stations—Callandoon, Yambacollie, and Gooda."

The gentleman who gave that evidence had no interest in making his statements. He came down to state what he knew about it. He arrived in Brisbane at 11 o'clock one night, and was in the committee-room giving evidence early next morning. He (Mr. Jessop) knew what Mr. Carmody had stated to be facts, and yet hon. members would be led to believe, if they only heard one side of the question, that the place referred to was thickly populated, and with hundreds of acres under cultivation. But if they looked at the statistics they would find that that was not the case at all:—

"Now, give us your opinion of the country generally, knowing it as you do, for twenty-five or fifty miles round from where you are, or for a considerable distance—is it likely to be more closely populated or to be more heavily stocked than at present, or than it has been during the last ten or fifteen years? The country is certainly not fit for close stocking; it has a very light soil, and yields a very light crop of grass; but, in very good seasons, it may carry a little more stock than in the past. It has been partially unoccupied for years.

"By Mr. F. T. Gregory: What route do you generally bring stock—or do the people residing in that district bring stock—by, from the border to Toowoomba? There are, as I said, two routes—the Texas and the Goondiwindi route; and the Doondimerton Creek route.

"By which of these routes is stock brought principally, in the first instance, to Toowoomba? Texas, I think.

"And stock coming into market to Toowoomba from the west of Goondiwindi, towards St. George, what route would they take? They come by Wyaga, Western Creek, and Leyburn; that is the route they take if they come in from further west.

"What stock generally comes from the border up to Warwick—what route do they take? They come by Inglewood, too.

"Then, the next question I will ask you, is, what quantity of stock would you estimate comes from the border up to Warwick? In ordinary seasons I should think very little. I may explain that they are sometimes able to fatten sheep on the Macintyre and in that neighbourhood; and then I have known them to be sent to the Brisbane market. In ordinary seasons the butchers are well able to get supplied in their own neighbourhood without going to New South Wales for stock for the Warwick or Toowoomba markets; and for Brisbane as well.

"Have you any idea of the relative proportions of stock that come from the Southern herds generally *via* Warwick, and *via* Cambooya and Toowoomba? Upon my word, there is not a great deal of stock; but I cannot say by which route most stock come. I think it is principally horses that come across that neighbourhood; very few cattle or sheep. The great stock route is by the Moonie to Toowoomba, from the west."

That was perfectly correct. His business led him to know that such was the case. The only stock they ever obtained from that part of the country was horses, coming up to be sold in the markets.

"Do you know anything at all about the wool traffic, such as there is; or what route it takes to find its way to market? No. That which comes this way comes by the Moonie.

"And what runs would that come from? Bodumba, a large sheep station on the Moonie, and the Cubby.

"In fact, a considerable portion, if not the whole, of Mr. C. B. Fisher's Bodumba wool comes in that way? Yes; comes in that way; and from various sheep stations. The worst of that is that on a lot of the country there are little or no sheep."

Mr. FOOTE said he would point out that the hon. gentleman was reading for the information of the Committee, and notwithstanding that the information he was giving was of a very interesting character, the hon. member could not be heard. If the hon. member could raise his voice a little it would be very much better. Hon. members were sitting there and could not hear a word that was being said.

Mr. MOREHEAD said it was unusual for one hon. member to express an opinion with regard to the disabilities of another hon. member in the Committee. It was well known that the hon. member for Dalby had been suffering from a sore throat for some time past. He had had to apologise to the Committee before for not being able to speak louder.

Mr. FOOTE: I did not know that.

Mr. MOREHEAD said if the hon. member was really desirous of hearing the hon. member for Dalby he ought to come over and sit alongside of him.

Mr. JESSOP said he was really sorry the hon. gentleman could not hear him. He was speaking as loud as he could. As the leader of the Opposition had said, he was suffering from an affliction of the throat and his voice was not very strong.

Mr. FOOTE said he must apologise to the hon. member. He was not aware that the hon. member had been suffering from a sore throat.

Mr. JESSOP said he was only sorry he could not speak louder, as he felt it his duty to explain as far as he could the evidence which had been given. His sole desire was to protect the interests of the country, and he was reading for the information of hon. members. He thought it his duty to raise his voice against the construction of the line, and he should try and let hon. members hear him. He

really thought it would be advisable if the hon. member for Bundamba would take the advice of the leader of the Opposition, and come and sit on the Opposition benches. It appeared to him that some hon. members only read one side of the question. He had read the evidence through several times, and he was picking out the evidence given against the line. They had heard the evidence in favour of it from the other side, and he thought it his duty to put the other side of the question before the Committee:—

"Do you know the country between Dalby and St. George, taking a direct line;—that would be *via* Western Creek? Yes.

"What quantity of stock do you suppose comes in between Western Creek and Toowoomba by that line? Well, I really cannot say, but it is a route that people who buy store cattle in Queensland very often use—cross through Dalby, Cecil Plains, Western Creek, and on to Goondiwindi."

Now, those were all facts that had been under his observation for a good many years past, and fifty times within the last six months.

"That would be for stock travelling from Queensland into New South Wales? Yes; and often plenty come from New South Wales into Queensland.

"Have you any knowledge of that country between Western Creek and St. George, crossing the Weir River, below the junction with Western Creek? [*Examining the map.*] Yes; I have a knowledge of that country.

"What sort of country is that for carrying stock? Starting from Beauraba there is good grazing country until you cross the Condamine;—the distance would be about thirty miles.

"Then is there any good country between the Condamine and Western Creek Station? No good country.

"Not even pastoral country? No good; it is very indifferent second-class pastoral.

"Then, from Western Creek Station to Retreat, on the Weir, what class of country would you pass over? Very wretched, poor country, that is uninhabited."

That was perfectly true. He had been along the route himself and knew it to be perfectly true.

"Worse country to Woondool and Wyaga? I think it is broken; it is higher—barren, ridgy, wretched country; the other is low.

"Then from the Weir River to the Moonie, what is the character of the country? The same answer I gave you from the Weir, on the Goondiwindi route to St. George, would do for this exactly. This route is through the same class of country, only that it strikes the Moonie River a little sooner, and runs parallel with it for some distance. The river flats are pretty good.

"That is, it is indifferent pasture? Oh! indifferent pasture. It is not pasture at all after you cross the Weir, because there is no pastoral land; the place is not occupied."

That was the place which they were told was thickly populated with settlers, but he had been through the country and could vouch for the truthfulness of that evidence.

"What class of stock could live upon it at all? There is no class of stock that could very well live upon it at all in ordinary seasons. There are patches here and there that might keep a few hundred cattle." They might keep a few "brumbies."

"Are there any squatters who own runs or stations or stock on the route between the Weir River and the Moonie? I think there is a little station called Beenleigh on which there are a few hundred cattle. It is not on this map [*referring to it*]. That is the only place I know.

"Is there any stock depastured on the eastern bank of the Moonie now?—That is, the Toowoomba side of the river, which runs north and south there? [*Tracing the line on the map.*] Yes.

"Are the stations which have been in existence as stations for the last thirty years still occupied? They are.

"Are they able to raise any stock worth bringing to market at all? Yes. I have purchased cattle repeatedly myself from them.

"To what extent does that available country reach, from the Moonie towards the Weir River?—We are coming back now, as I could not get information I wanted the other way? We will say in a line from Western Creek to St. George—

"Yes. To what extent does the pastoral country reach from the Moonie, back this way, towards the Weir? [Map examined.] The Moonie flats average about the same as the Macintyre—about three and a-half miles on each side of the river.

"You consider that the full extent of the available country? I think so.

"Taking it altogether, if a road had to be constructed, or a railway, which route would you prefer to travel to bring in stock or produce direct;—direct from Beauaraba to St. George, along the route that we have just been speaking of; or from Warwick to Goondiwindi, thence to St. George? I would prefer to go down the Moonie. I think it would be a direct, straight road; and I would be going over better grazing country for travelling stock, to the Moonie.

"If you had to construct a line of road, from your knowledge of the character of the country, would you strike out *via* the Moonie or in a direct line which we have just been taking evidence upon? You are referring, Mr. Gregory, to the line from Beauaraba to St. George—from Beauaraba to the Moonie and down the Moonie; and to the Warwick and St. George route?"

Now, there was a lot more evidence of that kind that he had intended to read, but his voice was not as good as it ought to be. He would now have a spell, and he would read it after a while, and give hon. members some information which would enlighten and surprise them.

Mr. BLACK said he would like to have a little information upon a point upon which he had some doubt. That was as to the exact position in which the vote stood. The Premier was not in his place just now, and he would like to know from the Chairman if it would be in accordance with the rules of the Committee if he waited until the Premier returned before putting the question to him?

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think the question can be put to him in his absence.

Mr. BLACK said the matter was of importance to the Committee and the country. He understood that the Government had introduced that line with the distinct understanding that it was a branch line from Warwick to Thane's Creek, that it had nothing to do with the line from Warwick to St. George passed in the Loan Estimates of 1884, and included in the £10,000,000 loan. He understood that was the position the Government took up. He hoped the Minister for Works, in the absence of the Premier, would be able to confirm or controvert the position he now took up. The hon. member for Enoggera distinctly stated his intention to support the line with the understanding and belief that it was not a branch line from Warwick to Thane's Creek, but that it was a portion of the line sanctioned by the House in the Loan Estimates of 1884. The hon. member gave the Committee to understand that if he ascertained that it was merely a branch line to Thane's Creek, without any intention on the part of the Government to continue it to St. George, he should decidedly vote against it. He would like an expression of opinion from the Premier or the Minister for Works as to what they were to understand. Let the Committee know distinctly, before they further discussed the proposal, whether it was merely a branch line from Warwick to Thane's Creek, intended to develop the magnificent agricultural resources of the place, so graphically described by the hon. member for Warwick, the land having been already alienated; a line to develop those hidden mineral resources of which they had heard so much, but which he regretted to say had remained hidden for a very long time; a line to develop the magnificent timber resources of the Thane's Creek district—was it in fact a line to develop the magnificent agricultural, mineral, and timber resources of the Thane's Creek district, or was it, as asserted by the hon. member for Enoggera, the commencement of the proposed line from Warwick to St. George? If the Government would give them

that small amount of information it would very likely tend to facilitate the passage of that measure through the Committee.

The PREMIER said he was not so sanguine as the hon. member, that any information he could give would tend to facilitate the passage of the proposed line through the Committee, and he doubted whether the information was asked for from that point of view at all. He had explained clearly enough, and so had the Minister for Works, that the proposal now before the Committee was for a railway from Warwick to Thane's Creek, which was, as now proposed, an agricultural line. As a matter of fact—as a physical fact—it would also be a part of the line from Warwick to St. George if that line was constructed. In the meantime the matter under consideration of the Committee was not the construction of the line from Warwick to St. George, but the construction of a line from Warwick to Thane's Creek. Those were the exact facts, and he thought every member of the Committee perfectly understood them. He thought a great many members believed that the line would some day be extended to St. George. He was one of those who believed that would be the case, but that was not the question now before the Committee.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would like to say a few words on the present very important question. He was very glad to hear the answer given by the Premier to the question put by the hon. member for Mackay. He had been under the impression, from the way in which the hon. gentleman and the Minister for Works quibbled and fenced on the previous night, that they were ashamed of their action in 1884, in getting an appropriation for the Warwick to St. George railway, and that they had determined, as a means of keeping their word in appearance, to bring down the proposed line from Warwick to Thane's Creek instead. However, what the hon. member had stated that night was plain enough. The proposal before them was for the construction of a portion of the line from Warwick to St. George. It was no longer a branch line—it was no longer a line which the Premier wished hon. members to understand was simply a question of £100,000 for a branch line to an agricultural district. Now they had the truth; last night they had the equivocation.

The PREMIER: I said exactly the same thing last night; the words were the same on both occasions.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would repeat that that night they had the truth, and last night they had the equivocation. They knew now exactly what they were fighting against, and they would fight against it. The Premier also expressed great surprise that afternoon when his colleague in the representation of North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, stated that he did not think any promise had been made to bring that line forward during the present session. The Premier hastily turned round from the table where he was sitting and said, "Yes; I gave a promise to bring forward this line this session." True, he did; but when? After the hon. gentleman had made a most disgraceful exhibition of himself at a banquet at Warwick in making the promise. The hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates, threatened the hon. gentleman that if he did not bring forward that line during the present session he would support him no longer.

The PREMIER: You are quite wrong in your facts.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: The hon. gentleman said he was quite wrong in his facts. Well, he was referring to the report in the

*Courier* of the Warwick banquet on August 15th. He would refer also to the modified report during the following week in the *Warwick Argus*. The people at that banquet, especially the member representing the district and the hon. gentleman himself, knew the dirty position he had placed himself in, and no doubt got the *Warwick Argus* to modify the truthful report which appeared in the *Brisbane Courier* the following morning. That came after the appeal the hon. gentleman had made the previous night in making his Financial Statement, when he put as gloomy an appearance on the state of the country as he possibly could, leading them to believe that the finances of the country were in a terribly disordered state, worse than they appeared to be now, bad as they were. When the hon. gentleman appealed to hon. members to examine Table T, and wished that hon. members who had constituencies calling out for railways would consult those tables, he (Mr. Macrossan) thought the hon. gentleman had at last returned to his senses, but instead of that, like a dog he returned to his vomit the next night at Warwick. The hon. gentleman went there most deliberately, and after the member for Darling Downs had said there were only two members in the Assembly who could give them their railways east and west—that was the line to St. George and the *via recta*—that those men were the Premier and the Minister for Works, and that if they did not bring them forward this session neither he nor his constituents would support them any longer, then the hon. gentleman promised to bring that line down, and after that the promise was made in the House. He (Mr. Macrossan) felt ashamed of the position the Premier of Queensland occupied when he read the report of the banquet in the *Brisbane Courier* next day; and he thought every man in Queensland who really had the honour of the country at heart would have been glad had the Premier turned round on the member for Darling Downs and told him to cross the floor of the House as soon as he pleased; but the hon. gentleman had not the courage to do it. They had heard that night from the ex-Colonial Treasurer a speech which partook more of the jingo character than any speech he had ever heard in that House or read of in the House of Commons. The hon. member was not only prepared to spend the million of money that was required for the Warwick to St. George line, and whatever might be required for the *via recta*, from half-a-million to a million and a-half, but he was also prepared to spend a million or two more, to go to Cunnamulla and Hungerford, to get a trade which existed only in his imagination, and of the existence of which he had never produced a single proof, though he had been several times challenged to do so. The hon. member was going to spend millions of money to fight New South Wales—or, rather, he was prepared to spend it—thank God, they were not going to allow him to do so—he was prepared to spend millions of money to catch that trade for the benefit of the people of Brisbane. He (Mr. Macrossan) made bold to say that the people of Brisbane did not want to be benefited in that style; they had rather too many benefits of that kind showered upon them, which resulted in the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government bringing up a land tax which would have crushed a great many business people in Brisbane very considerably. £20,000 of that £100,000 land tax would have had to be paid by the people of Brisbane, and the business men of Brisbane knew it. They knew, too, that the trade the hon. member talked about catching was not worth even that £20,000. The hon. gentleman had also talked very loudly about the state of the finances. Well, the hon. member was an authority

on spending money, but not as a financier, according to the meaning which was usually applied to the term. He (Mr. Macrossan) would give the hon. member the cap for spending money before any Colonial Treasurer he had heard of in Australia; he certainly excelled in that respect any Treasurer who had preceded him in this colony. They had had bad times at different periods in the history of the country, they had had times of depression of trade, and they had had times of deficit in the revenue; but they had never had such bad times as that hon. gentleman's conduct of the Treasury had brought about in Queensland. In three years, from the 30th June, 1884, until the 30th June, 1887—he took the three full years the hon. gentleman had been spending money as Colonial Treasurer—that hon. gentleman had spent £916,000 more than he received. The hon. gentleman was certainly an authority on spending money, but he was no authority on what he had called rest and caution, otherwise judicious economy. He would take the hon. gentleman's own tables, so that there could be no doubt about it—he would not even take the Auditor-General's report, which the hon. gentleman sometimes called in question, nor the ordinary Treasury returns, but the tables the hon. gentleman himself had placed on the table at different times in making his financial statements, with the exception of the last which was laid on the table by the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government. From 1884 to 1885—June to June—the receipts were £2,720,000, leaving out the odd hundreds, and the disbursements for the same period were £2,918,000; from 1885 to 1886 £2,868,000 were the receipts, and £3,112,000 were the payments; from 1886 to 1887 £2,807,000 were the receipts, and £3,283,000 were the payments. There was a total for three years of £9,312,000 in payments against only £8,396,000 of receipts, leaving a debit balance of £916,000, which the hon. gentleman had spent more than he received during those three years, which, of course, meant the surplus revenue which he spent and the deficit he left behind. The hon. gentleman was an authority on spending money, but surely no member in the Committee would take him as a safe guide in the position they were in now, when judicious economy should be exercised. He would not have called in question the hon. gentleman's conduct of the Treasury, seeing that he had left the Treasury, but for the jingoistic speech the hon. gentleman had made that night, urging the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government to an extravagant expenditure of money, which the head of the Government would not be warranted in doing, and which the Committee would be quite justified in preventing him doing. That was not all the spending the hon. gentleman had been guilty of. In addition to that £9,312,000 of revenue, he had spent six millions of borrowed money. But before passing to the borrowed money he (Mr. Macrossan) would just show the average per year of revenue the hon. gentleman spent over and above what he received. Taking the average population during those three years at 300,000, then the £300,000 a year meant an average of £1 a head more spent than was received during each of the three years the hon. gentleman had held office. That did not look very much when they had only £300,000 to spend; but to compare small things with great, if the Chancellor of the Exchequer in Great Britain spent £1 a head more than he received, it would amount to the enormous sum of £35,000,000. Why, such a Chancellor would never have the remotest chance of being Chancellor again; he would be relegated to the oblivion which he should never have come out of. That was the way to understand the extravagant amount of money

which the hon. gentleman had been spending and which he now wished the Government he had left, to continue to spend. Whether it was his desire to drive them on to destruction he (Mr. Macrossan) could not say. He hoped it was not; but such a thing had been done before now by men who had left their colleagues. If, however, that was his desire, he was quite certain that the hon. gentleman would fail in his object, because the Committee had more sense than to allow the Government to be so driven, or the hon. gentleman to drive them. But in addition to the nine millions of money thus spent there was six millions of borrowed money. In September 1884, there was a balance to the credit of the Loan Fund of over £1,700,000, and since then up to September of the present year, the amount the Government had borrowed, deducting the sum now in hand as a cash balance, was £6,000,000, an average of close upon £2,000,000 a year. The total expenditure for the last three years, including revenue and loan moneys, was £15,000,000. What had they received for that expenditure? Had they prospered? Was the country at the present time in a state of progress in trade or in commerce, or in agriculture, or in anything but mining? Were the people better off than they were in 1884 after that enormous expenditure? Were they happier? Were they better educated or better clothed? Were they in any degree one whit better by that enormous expenditure of £15,000,000 during three years? No, they were not; they were quite the reverse. The hon. gentleman left the Treasury when the finances were in a most disordered state; he left the Government at a period when the revenue was still falling off and the expenditure still increasing; he left them when the railways were not returning anything like the amount they were returning at the time he took office; he left them when everything was in a worse state than he found it, in spite of his having expended all that £15,000,000. The hon. gentleman took office in 1883. During a portion of that year the McIlwraith Government were in power, and during the remaining portion the present Government were in office. In that year the railways returned interest at the rate of 4·218 per cent., so that the interest paid by the lines then was a little more than the rate at which they borrowed money in London. But taking into account all the expenditure in connection with the floating of their loans, the total amount they had to make up for interest at that time was something like £38,000 or £40,000. What state did the hon. gentleman leave the railways in? In round numbers they had now to make up £400,000 to pay the interest which he in conjunction with his colleagues had saddled on the country. Was that a proper position for him to leave the country in, and then to try to increase the extravagance which he had commenced? Was that a state of affairs in which the Committee should go cheerfully into the expenditure on that line from Warwick to St. George, which would cost at least £1,100,000 before it was completed, when there was no probability of the line by the remotest chance paying its working expenses during the present century, much less immediately after it was constructed? According to the best authority they could get on the subject, according to the evidence which had been read by members on both sides of the Committee, there was not the slightest chance of the railway paying when it was constructed from Warwick to St. George. There was no trade there at present, there was no agriculture there at present, except on Thane's Creek, and there was no likelihood of any agriculture in such a country; there was no great amount of pastoral land in the country until they got far beyond St. George, towards Cunnamulla, and, of course, it would cost millions more to extend the line out there.

Seeing the condition the country was in with regard to the finances, and that they had to pay £400,000 interest on the cost of their railways, he asked whether the Committee would be justified in going on and making that railway simply because the Government had promised it in the state of disordered mind in which they were in 1884; a disordered mind caused by the inflated notions of the hon. gentleman who was then Minister for Lands, with his new land system, and a disordered state of mind which could not see the truth when it was put before them? The hon. gentleman thought he would have derived, under the Land Act introduced by him, sufficient revenue, not only to pay the interest on the railways in that schedule, but the interest on all railways building at the time, and that he would have a surplus which the Treasurer would have great difficulty in making away with. Seeing, then, that that was their state of mind at the time that railway was proposed, would the Committee be justified in simply carrying out what the Government considered a pledge—or as the hon. member for Enoggera put it, a pledge of honour? Would they be justified in passing that line, and putting £1,100,000 more on the back of the country, the interest on which, as well as the working expenses of the railway, would have to be paid by the general taxpayer? He did not think they would be justified in doing that, and he was quite certain that if hon. members, no matter on which side of the Committee they sat, were left to their own discretion they would agree with him that it was a most monstrous thing to ask them to do. But there was another question in connection with that matter. Would they be justified in giving the Government any longer the administration of the railways which they had so sadly mismanaged? He thought it was for them to go before the country, and for the country to decide whether they were fit managers, after what the country had seen of their management of both the railways and finances.

The PREMIER: You are opposing all lines now.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was opposing that particular line at present, whatever he might do afterwards, and he said, and said it believingly, that it was for the country to decide whether the Government were to be allowed to mismanage the railways and finances of the country any longer. He could prove before he sat down that they were utterly incapable of managing the railways. What could be thought of a Government, as railway managers, who brought down a proposal for the appropriation of £100,000 for a line from a certain place to a coalfield that did not exist? In 1884 the Government brought down an appropriation for £100,000, which they asked that Committee to pass, and, in fact, forced their own side, who were then in that disordered state of mind of which he had just spoken, to pass in spite of the protestations of members on that side of the Committee. They pointed out that that coalfield to which a railway was about to be made, was really a coalfield only in name; all the coal had been consumed ages ago—very likely ages before man was created. He himself undertook to read Mr. Jack's report upon that coalfield, in which that gentleman pointed out distinctly that the coal had been there, but it was there no longer, and that there was nothing there now but ashes. Yet, in spite of that, the Government actually compelled their followers to vote £100,000 for that line; and although they were in honour bound to make that line, they found a ready way out of the difficulty and sacrificed their honour by transferring—and wisely transferring—that

£100,000 to another appropriation altogether. Was not that a strange piece of mismanagement? But that was not the only instance he might name. Hon. members would no doubt well remember the plans and sections of a line being brought down to the House, and that it was pointed out to the Government by himself and other hon. members on that side of the House that the line did not go at all to the place that the Government intended it should go to, and which it was stated on the plans it was going to, but that it was going to a different place entirely. That was the line from Cooktown to Maytown. That section of railway, which was supposed to go to Maytown, was clearly pointed out by hon. members on that side of the House—by Sir Thomas McLlwraith and himself especially, and also by the hon. members for Cook, Mr. Lumley Hill and Mr. Hamilton—instead of going to Maytown was going to Palmerville. Would the Government believe them? No. The Engineer had deluded them into the belief that it was going to Maytown. A fortnight afterwards they had to apologise and say they had made a mistake. They on his side had not the same means of knowing where the line was going as the Government had, and yet with all the means at their command they were unable to detect that gross blunder, intentional, he believed, on the part of the Engineer, because he knew it was intended to be carried to Palmerville. They would have gone on with the line, and very likely it would have been half way to Palmerville before those wise administrators of their railways would have made the discovery. That was another instance of railway mismanagement, and yet they asked the Committee to give them another railway to mismanage; in fact, two more. Then, they all remembered the muddle the Government got into with the railway from Stanthorpe to the border—how tenders were called twice, and how at last they brought pressure upon a contractor who, he believed, tendered at a very fair price, and forced him to accept a lower price by £5,000 than the sum he had tendered for. They knew also how the Government had mismanaged the terminus of that line. He did not blame the present Minister for Works in the least for that. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government and the hon. member for Enoggera, Mr. Dickson, seemed to be very anxious to get trade for Brisbane; but if they had been as wise as they were anxious, instead of having the changing station at Wallangarra, where it now was, they would have had it at Tenterfield, where they could have had it, and have thus avoided the expense of putting up expensive buildings which would be useless if the New South Wales Government carried out their intention. Instead of adding to the trade of Brisbane, they had added nothing but expense to the colony, and all through their want of foresight and knowledge of railway management. Then there was the duplication of the line between Brisbane and Ipswich. That was another sample of their railway management. The Government put an appropriation upon the £10,000,000 Loan vote of 1884, and before that Committee knew where they were, that appropriation had been doubled, and they had not got to the end of the expenditure yet. It was still going on, according to the tables laid before them yesterday by the Premier. The cost of that work had been double the amount sanctioned, and yet nobody was responsible. The Engineer was not responsible; the Railway Department was not responsible; the responsibility could be fixed nowhere. But notwithstanding that, the country had to find the money. He would now turn to the Herberton line, and see how that had been managed. There was no need to go into the

management of the survey, because that story had been told several times in the House already. A most disgraceful mismanagement it was, which had saddled the country with a line which would cost £20,000 a mile, when one could have been made for £5,000 a mile. He would come to the letting of the line to the present contractors; and what did they find? They found that tenders were called and sent in in January last, and that the lowest tender of three was that of Carey and Maund, of Sydney, the amount being some £298,000. But, as Mr. Carey stated in a letter, which he (Mr. Macrossan) read to the House some time ago, he was told distinctly in Brisbane that, no matter whether his was the lowest tender or not, he would not get the line; that the line was intended for another man.

The PREMIER: Who told him that, I wonder?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: He does not say in his letter, but he told me privately.

The PREMIER: I should like to know who told him.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: It would not do the hon. gentleman much good if he knew.

The PREMIER: I do not believe it.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said all the statements contained in Mr. Carey's letter but that, had been proved by returns laid on the table of the House, and if it were possible to verify that statement, he was perfectly convinced that Mr. Carey's statement would be found true to the very letter.

The PREMIER: A statement like that might be made by somebody who sits on that side of the House.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that Mr. Carey told Mr. Miles that he had been told so, and that he had been offered £7,000 not to tender; and the answer Mr. Miles gave him was, "I know that such things are done." Mr. Miles knew of his own knowledge that such things were done, and he was a Minister who had had much more experience in the Works Department than the Premier. The Government considered all the tenders, and they decided upon rejecting them. Mr. Carey went to Sydney believing that his tender would be accepted, his tender being the lowest, and having been told by the Engineer-in-Chief that he was perfectly prepared to recommend it; and also having been told by the Commissioner for Railways that he could safely go, as he had appointed a gentleman to act for him in his absence. After he had left, some information reached him by wire which caused him to start back again for Brisbane, the information being that the Government were negotiating with John Robb, whose tender was at least £20,000 higher than Carey and Maund's. He (Mr. Macrossan) did not find fault with the Government for rejecting all the tenders if they thought the tenders were too far above the Engineer's estimate, even although the Engineer himself was willing to recommend the lowest. That they were at perfect liberty to do. But what he found fault with was that instead of asking the lowest man to reduce his tender they asked the highest man to reduce his, showing plainly that they were not bent upon doing fair play, but that they were bent upon carrying out the statement made by Carey—that one man only was to get that railway; that it was cut out for him, and he was to get it. John Robb was induced to lower his tender £7,000 below Carey's. Carey's tender was £298,000, some hundreds. Robb reduced his tender to £290,000, making an apparent saving of £7,000. That would have looked very well had it been fair, but Mr. Carey was



determined to try and have the contract, and he made a verbal offer to the late Mr. Miles, then Minister for Works, and repeated that offer afterwards in writing to reduce his tender still lower than Robb's by £7,000. That offer was refused, although at the time the tender of Robb was not finally accepted. Now, after that little bit of—he did not know what to call it—he could not call it by its proper name and be parliamentary.

Mr. MOREHEAD : Chicanery.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : He would call it jobbery—honest jobbery. Had that honest jobbery been really intended for the benefit of the country, Mr. Carey's second offer would have been accepted—that was the offer £7,000 below Mr. Robb. Let them see how the case stood then. Robb's amended tender was £290,000, being £7,000 below Carey's original tender. Then Carey's second offer was to reduce his tender £7,000 below Mr. Robb's amended tender, making it £283,000. That was how the matter stood. Carey's offer was refused, and the country was led to believe that the country had effected a saving. Now, let them see where the saving came in ; how it was brought about. All that had been brought out by questions he had put to the Government, and which, together with the answers, were upon the table of that House. The answers to those questions verified Carey's statements as far as they could be verified at present. Carey said that he had had a conversation with Mr. Overend, who was Mr. Robb's reputed agent or partner, one or the other, and that Overend had told him that he thought he had been badly treated. "But," he said, "you know I worked that with the Ministry. Such things cost a lot of money, but it is a usual thing in Queensland to work in that way."

The PREMIER : Who said that ?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : Overend.

The PREMIER : To whom ?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : Carey.

The PREMIER : That is the first time that has been said in this House.

Mr. MOREHEAD : Don't get angry.

The PREMIER : I object to such a statement being made.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : It is in *Hansard*.

The PREMIER : No ; that is a very different statement, and Overend flatly contradicts the statement previously made. A statement of that kind should be given in detail, so as to be capable of contradiction.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : That statement was in *Hansard*. That was Overend's statement to Carey. Carey then said, "Well, I cannot help it." Overend told him then, "We have 100s. per cubic yard for concrete." How could Carey know that, if Overend had not told him ? That also came out in the answer he (Mr. Macrossan) had received—100s. was the price per cubic yard for concrete. Mr. Carey's answer to that was, "In that case your tender now must be £16,000 above mine." He said, "My schedule was 60s." Of course, Mr. Carey knew his own price to be 60s. ; but how could he have known what Robb's was until he heard it from Overend ? And that partly verified the other portion of his statement. What was the answer ? Mr. Overend said, "Oh, it does not appear in the totals. The 100s. is not in the schedule ; it does not run up, and does not appear in the totals." That was also true with regard to the answer he (Mr. Macrossan) had got. How could Mr. Carey have known that unless he got the information from Mr. Overend ? He could not

know it. Now, let them see how the matter stood. The answer he had received from the Minister for Works as to the quantity of concrete estimated to be used upon that line was 14,500 yards. Goodness only knew what the real quantity would be when the line was finished. That quantity, even according to the reduction made in Mr. Robb's tender from 80s. to 70s.—how they got the contractor to make that reduction he did not know, because, once a contract was signed, it was binding upon both parties ; at any rate it was got, and the reduced price was now 70s. ; that would make a difference between Robb's 70s. and Carey's 60s., of £7,250.

The PREMIER : On what ?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : On the concrete.

The PREMIER : On what quantity ?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said on 14,500 yards. The schedule price was 70s. according to the answer that he had got from the Minister for Works. Could the hon. gentleman deny his own answer ? Carey's schedule was 60s. if he had got the contract, as he ought to have done ; so that the difference of 10s. per cubic yard on 14,450 yards made £7,270.

The PREMIER : How much concrete is there in the contract ?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : I cannot tell exactly.

The PREMIER : Then all your arguments go to the wind.

Mr. MOREHEAD : No, they do not !

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman should not think that he did not know what was in the contract. There was a schedule, there was the schedule price, and there was the tender.

The PREMIER : And the quantities ?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN : And the quantities.

The PREMIER : Let us see how much concrete there is.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said he was not speaking without book. The more concrete there was, the worse the blunder.

The PREMIER : Of course.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said, "Cementing concrete in culverts—cubic yards, 800." That was the total in the schedule.

The PREMIER : Yes ; that is £400.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said that was for floating the inside of the tunnels, he supposed ; and then the contractors were asked to put in a price for concrete in piers, which was put in afterwards, and the schedule quantities now, according to the answer given by the Minister for Works, was 14,500 yards, upon which Robb obtained £7,250 more than Carey would have had upon that same item, running Robb's tender up to £298,000—exactly the same amount Carey had tendered for. That was how the contract stood at the present time with Robb. The total amount on the schedule rates, according to the amended tender and the answer given to him by the Minister for Works, ran Robb's tender up to £298,000—or, as he had said, the same sum that Carey had tendered for. But if Carey's tender had been accepted, what would have been the saving ? At first Robb reduced his tender £7,000 below Carey's ; next Carey offered to do the work for £7,000 less than Robb, leaving it at £283,000 ; and had he got it, his schedule for concrete being 60s. per yard, £7,250 more would have been saved—avoiding a



blunder which had cost the country—some people might call it by a worse name—a blunder which had cost the country over £20,500. With such management, from the very initiation of the £10,000,000 loan to almost the last contract as had been shown by the present Government, it was high time the country had the opportunity of pronouncing as to their fitness to manage or mismanage any longer. Take the Valley line, the tenders for which were held in hand for a long time. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government said he believed there was not enough money to make the line; and neither was there; but instead of acting like a wise manager and stopping the line at a terminus where it would be of some advantage, he ran it into a wilderness of streets where it would not be used. Instead of stopping it where it ought to have stopped, and saving so much expenditure, and so much extra cost afterwards of working that portion of the line which would be useless, and keeping it in repair, they let the tender, but had not enough money to fulfil the contract—another instance of their blundering. The Government had blundered, and blundered from the very beginning up to the present moment in the management of the railways, and the management of the finances; and though he did not accuse them of having bettered themselves one single farthing—he did not impute personal dishonesty to any of them—they had allowed their friends to plunder the Treasury. The Treasury was being plundered now with the connivance of some people; and whether in the Government or out of the Government, at any rate the Government were to blame. Let the Premier answer that if he could. There was a contract on which £20,000 could have been saved, but it was actually at the present time in the same position as the original tender sent in by Mr. Carey. The result was that contractors in different parts of Australia had come to regard the Queensland Government with suspicion. There was an association of contractors in New South Wales, of which Mr. Carey was chairman. That association and the Press of Sydney had condemned the Government and the action of the Government in regard to letting that tender. And for what was it done? The tender was given to one man with the idea of saving money; but instead of saving money it had actually caused a loss to the State. He thought after the exhibition of mismanagement in regard to the whole of the railway system, looking at the difference between the payableness of the railways that day and when the present Government came into office, and looking carefully at the Commissioner's report, the Committee would not be justified in entrusting the making of another railway to the hands of the gentlemen who were now asking the Committee to sanction the construction of the line now under consideration.

The PREMIER said he did not rise to follow the hon. member at length in reply to his remarkable speech, which would have been more appropriate on a motion of want of confidence, than on a motion for the expenditure of £100,000; but he supposed that if he did not say something it might be supposed that the statements made by the hon. member were accepted as correct. He had never heard the hon. member more inaccurate in any statements he had made. He would first reply to one of the statements made by the hon. member just before he sat down. The hon. member said the contractors of the neighbouring colonies had a deep-rooted suspicion of the Queensland Government, in consequence of Mr. Carey, the chairman of the Contractors' Association, not getting a contract in last January. The best answer to that was the number of tenders that had been received since from

contractors in the neighbouring colonies. There never was such competition from the neighbouring colonies as there had been since that time. As a matter of fact it was well known by contractors that now, at any rate, and for the last four years, they might rely on perfect honesty and fair play from the Queensland Government, whatever they had to expect before that. The hon. member had referred a great many times, during the present session, to the Cairns contract, but that night he had given many variations on what he had said previously. He believed what the hon. member said previously was strictly correct, so far as his memory guided him, but that night he had made statements which a moment's consideration would show to be entirely apocryphal. He had described a conversation said to have taken place between Mr. Carey and Mr. Overend; a conversation that could never have taken place. He (the Premier) interjected a few questions, which, had they been answered, would have shown that the hon. member was quoting a conversation which, in the nature of things, could never have taken place. Mr. Carey was said to have told Mr. Overend that if his price for concrete was so much a yard that would make a difference of £23,000, but there were no figures in the contract that would amount to £23,000, or anything like that sum. The hon. member was presuming on the fact that a very few members of the Committee had seen the contract. He (the Premier) had seen it, and he made the hon. member say how many yards there were—namely, 800. How would that bring the difference up to £23,000?

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: I will tell you directly.

The PREMIER said he had seen the specifications, and he knew that after tenders were asked for, a special price was asked for concrete in piers and something else—he forgot what—in the event of their being substituted for wooden bridges, but nothing was stated in the specification as to the probable quantities of either. The conversation the hon. member now related for the first time could never have taken place. It must either be apocryphal or else it must have been invented by Mr. Carey, though he never thought Mr. Carey was the kind of man to invent such a story. As to the story the hon. member had told with much embellishment—a story which would give a stranger the idea that it was necessary to pay the Queensland Government something in order to get a contract—nobody in the colony or out of it would believe any such story to be true. It had never been told in that form before; and what Mr. Overend was said on a previous occasion to have stated was at once flatly contradicted by him. He thought that the hon. member need not have imported a vile personal attack on the honour of the Government into the debate. The matter before the Committee could be discussed fairly on other grounds, and there was no reason whatever for any heat; but if an hon. member got up and in effect charged the Government with gross corruption, although he wound up by saying that he did not impute personal dishonesty to the Government, it was time that he should be answered. The hon. member's statements were quite inconsistent with the version he gave previously, and he should not answer him now at any further length.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the Premier's mind was a blank when it was convenient, but it was a fact nevertheless that the conversation between Mr. Carey and Mr. Overend was detailed in *Hansard*. Unfortunately he (Mr. Macrossan) could not read the small type, but anyone who chose to read it might do so.

The PREMIER: I remember that conversation.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Then why did you deny it?

The PREMIER: Because it was quite different from what you said this evening.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said it was just the same. The hon. gentleman wanted to know how Carey could know how much Robb's tender was above his own. Because Overend informed him that all the bridges had been altered, and instead of wooden piers, there were to be concrete piers. That was the reason why. Did the hon. gentleman know it at last? It was a very simple thing.

The PREMIER said he knew they had not been altered, and Mr. Overend never said so.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not care whether they were or not. It was the intention to do so, and the Engineer-in-Chief knew it. The Premier himself said that, before he went to England, he drew the attention of the Engineer-in-Chief to the very same thing.

The PREMIER said he directed a special offer to be obtained for the price of the concrete for bridges. That he did himself; but he had no idea as to the quantity.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would read the extract referred to by the hon. member for Townsville—

"27th January.—James Overend (then reputed Robb's agent or partner in results), said to Carey 'You have every reason to be sore over this matter, but you must know it is a political job. Everything is done by that means in Queensland, and it cost him a round good sum to be able to manage those things, and he managed that in this instance with the Ministry.'"

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: Would the hon. gentleman deny that that was said?

The PREMIER: It was very different from what the hon. member stated.

Mr. MOREHEAD:

"He further stated that all the bridges were unaltered, so that concrete pillars were to be used instead of wood, which was a good thing for them; and he admitted that Robb's price for concrete in pillars to bridges was 100s. per cubic yard, whilst Carey and Maund's price for same was only 60s. per cubic yard, to which Carey replied, 'If such is the case Robb's tender, as amended, is £16,000 above his firm's original contract;' to which Overend replied, 'No matter, it does not add up in the schedule of figures to make up the total amount.' Overend also stated that he and Robb knew before the original tenders went in that the amount of Overend and Stack's tender was £375,000 odd, and that O'Rourke and Ahern's tender was £450,000 odd; hence it was virtually only Carey and Maund's tendering against Robb."

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he would ask hon. members if that was not the very same as what he had just stated? The Premier said he had never heard of that before. That was the letter from Mr. Carey that he read in the House on 1st September last, and the statements made in that letter had been verified, so far as he could verify them, by questions put to the Government. If the Government wished to go any further they could do so—if they wished to defend their honour. He had imputed no dishonesty to any member of the Government, but he said that they had allowed the colony to be plundered on behalf of their friends.

The PREMIER: Who were their friends?

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said Overend and Company were political friends of the Government.

The PREMIER said he really did not know that Mr. Overend had anything to do with the contract the hon. member was referring to, or that he had any more to do with it than the hon. member

for Townsville, at least he had never heard his name mentioned in connection with the matter in that manner. The Government did not give contracts to their political friends.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about advertising?

The PREMIER: Except in advertising, perhaps, when they had to give contracts to their bitterest political enemies also. The Government were not such fools as to give contracts to their enemies and go out of their way to do so. In what the hon. member for Townsville had just said, he had allowed his imagination to run away with him. He was making a fine speech from the point of view of denouncing the Government; but he had allowed his imagination to run away with him a very long way, and would have left the impression upon the mind of anyone who listened to him that he was accusing the Government of the grossest political corruption. In fact, the impression would be that nobody could get a Government contract unless they paid money to some Minister. In reference to Mr. Carey's letter, and his conversation with Overend that had been referred to, they knew that Overend completely denied having had any such conversation.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said he did not know it.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the Premier said he did not know anything about Overend. Perhaps the Colonial Secretary could tell them something about him, as he had heard that Mr. Overend was connected with the celebrated Deposit Bank? Was there any end to those Overends; or was it to be a case of end over end? Perhaps the Colonial Secretary could tell them, if the Chief Secretary did not know anything about him, what he knew about that other gentleman who was connected with the Deposit Bank, which offered "security practically equal to that of the Government Savings Bank"? He did not think the Premier had met the statements made by the hon. member for Townsville (Mr. Macrossan). That Robb contract was a very peculiar contract, and had a very ominous name. He did not think the Premier had in any way met Mr. Carey's statement, or had in any way shown that that gentleman was fairly treated by the Government. He was very sorry, of course, to have to say so, but still it might be a convenient thing for the Government to have a dead man to shelter themselves behind; but that was what the Government had done on more than one occasion.

The PREMIER said he had stated already that he was responsible for all that was done in this matter. He took all the responsibility, and had said so several times.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman, with his imperialistic argument, said that he would accept every responsibility. He (Mr. Morehead) admitted at once that the Premier was the Ministry, and he wondered that that gentleman did not propose to act on a modification of what they proposed to do in New Zealand. He saw that in that colony the new Treasurer, or Premier, had proposed to reduce the estimate of expenditure by lowering the salaries of the Ministers; and he (Mr. Morehead) might point out a way of economy, which perhaps had not yet struck the head of the Government—that was, to abolish the whole of the rest of his colleagues, reduce their salaries by 50 per cent., and take the lesser sum to his own person. He might as well do that, because it appeared to him that he did the work, and he might as well have the salary. In regard to the way in which the Government had acted towards the contractors, he did not think the Premier's explanation could be considered in any way satisfactory.

It was all very well for that hon. gentleman to say in an exultant voice in regard to the statement made by the hon. member for Townsville, as to the disrepute in which the colony was held in the southern colonies, that he had received some tenders for several other contracts invited by the colony; but did that sustain the hon. gentleman's case? Who were they? Might they not have been men who hoped by improper means to obtain a contract, as he believed Robb had obtained his contract by improper means. Of course "noble spirits war not with the dead," but he said that that contract was obtained by improper means, and he believed it might not improperly be termed a contract of Robb and "Over-reach" instead of Overend. He believed the Government were got at. Probably if the same question had been raised yesterday, when the Melbourne Cup was being run, it would have been appropriate to have said that the Government had been "nobbled." He believed they were got at. He believed they were robbed, and he believed that if proper steps had been taken by the Premier himself, who now took all the responsibility, when the position was pointed out to him, he might have avoided the grave error which had been committed. But he did not do so. The hon. gentleman said now, "I take all the responsibility; I was in the colony when it happened," which was not the case. The hon. gentleman was not in the colony when the mistake was made, and knowing that the only witness who could give any valuable evidence could not be got at, and possibly they should not have an opportunity of cross-examining him in the next, the hon. gentleman now came forward and said he would take all responsibility. What satisfaction was there in that?

The PREMIER: It is an answer to your statement to say that I shelter myself behind a dead man.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would repeat that the hon. gentleman sheltered himself behind a dead man, and from his knowledge of the hon. gentleman, he was convinced that that was a position which he would always accept if it suited him. That was his (Mr. Morehead's) opinion. He might be wrong. He dared say that the future would decide whether he was right or not; but he was not at all sure that when the hon. gentleman passed over to the great majority, as they all must, and when his character was discussed, he was not at all sure that his judgment of him would not be accepted as the correct one.

Mr. McMASTER: False prophet!

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not want the materialised member for Fortitude Valley to interrupt him. In intellectuality he was prepared to meet the hon. member, but in point of weight he must give way to him, and give him best. He did not think that the Premier had in any way met the statement made by the hon. member for Townsville, and he thought that a very serious charge had been levelled against the present Government. The Premier had treated it in a very flippant and, in many respects, offensive way, which would not help him to pass the resolution. If he dealt with other matters in that way he stood a very poor chance of getting any business through.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government said the statement made by him (Mr. Macrossan), if listened to by an outsider, would lead him to believe that he imputed dishonest and corrupt conduct to the Government. Now, the hon. gentleman was mistaken, and he knew he was mistaken, because he (Mr. Macrossan) began by accusing the Government of mismanagement,

and he quoted the mismanagement, item by item, from the beginning of their Ministry until the last act of their mismanagement. So that the hon. gentleman need not try to shelter himself in that way. Let him answer the statement, if he could. Let him controvert the statement that the non-acceptance of Carey's tender entailed a loss to the country of £20,000. Let him controvert the statement that the alteration of the piles to concrete raised Robb's tender as high as Carey's original tender, at the very least, taking the estimated quantity of concrete as given by the Minister for Works as correct, and supposing that that would not be exceeded; but he knew very well it was likely to be exceeded. He found that there were a great many works which could very well be altered from timber to concrete; work which would be far more satisfactorily performed if it was completed in concrete, and if the concrete price was a fair and honest one. All the box drains could be altered to concrete, especially when they considered that the character of the timber in the district was uncertain, and that its durability had not been proved. It would be found that there were some thousands of lineal feet of box-drains to be constructed, and that made a good many cubic yards of concrete. Then there were pipe-drains which could be very well altered to concrete; but he believed the Minister for Works would be very chary in making those alterations, if they were left to him, seeing that the price of concrete was so high. Now, that was the charge that he made against the Government—that they had utterly failed in the management of their railways; and now, when there was a chance to stop them, he thought hon. members were perfectly justified in taking the action they had taken. Let the hon. gentlemen answer the figures that he had given, if he could, instead of indulging in the imaginative statements which they had heard.

Question put.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would like to ask the Chairman if that was the usual form in which to present the resolutions to the Upper House?

The CHAIRMAN: I believe so.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not deal with matters of belief. He wanted to know if that was the usual way in which the resolution should be put. He wanted an answer to that question. The Chairman might have great faith, but he might not be saved for all that.

The CHAIRMAN: Those are the resolutions as referred by the House to this Committee.

Mr. MOREHEAD asked whether that was the usual way of putting them. It was no use saying "whether or no;" but he asked the Chairman, as a salaried officer of that House, having been placed in that position probably in consequence of the confidence reposed in his ability by hon. members, whether that was the correct way, or rather whether that was the usual way, of putting the motion.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: We are anxious for your ruling, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think it is my business to give an answer to the question which the hon. member has referred to me. I have only to deal with the question which is submitted to the Committee by the House.

Mr. MOREHEAD asked if he was to understand the Chairman to rule in this way: That no matter how idiotic a motion might be—assuming for the sake of argument that that House could become idiotic, as was likely under the present leadership—did the Chairman mean to tell him that he would feel himself justified in putting a motion, the reasons and propriety of which he

could not explain? He asked the Chairman's ruling as to whether the resolution, couched in the language in which it was, was in order.

Mr. W. BROOKES said that if he was the Chairman he would say that he knew nothing at all about it, and would further add, for the information of the hon. leader of the Opposition, that it was not his duty to investigate, criticise, and analyse the motions placed before him by the House. If the motion was informal it was the House that was at fault.

Mr. MOREHEAD said if the motion was informal the Committee should correct it. He asked the Chairman whether he would put any motion to the Committee submitted to him by the House, no matter how absurd, or even offensive it might be? Was the Chairman simply a machine; was he an automaton wound up at stated periods?

Mr. FOOTE said he rose to a point of order. He thought the hon. member for Balonne was out of order in asking the Chairman if he was merely a "machine."

Mr. MOREHEAD said he never spoke of the Chairman as a machine. He simply asked him whether the Committee were to consider him as a mere "machine," a mere automaton, simply to get up in his place and read whatever was placed before him. He would have added, had he not been interrupted by the champion stonewaller of the other side, that he did not apprehend that the Chairman would accept the high position, which he filled fairly adequately, did he hold that idea of its duties. He would like to know if the question, in its present form, could be put to the Committee.

Mr. W. BROOKES said he would recall to the memory of the leader of the Opposition an historical incident which would throw full light upon the question he had put to the Chairman as to whether he was a "machine and automaton." The Chairman had historical authority and precedent for saying that he was. The incident took place in the House of Commons, when no less a personage than Charles I. put a similar question to the Speaker—a question equally undignified, although put by a king, as that put by the leader of the Opposition. The Speaker's answer to the King was to this effect, "Your Majesty, I have neither eyes nor ears. I am a mere servant of the House. I see nothing." How did that fit the case?

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought he might properly object to being compared to King Charles I. Such a charge should not be levelled against him. He would prefer to run the Oliver Cromwell business and order the removal of several of those baubles he saw at the table—he did not refer to the Chairman. The Premier, he knew, was very fond of speaking of the head of Charles I., and seemed to keep it in the Ministerial room, where the junior member for North Brisbane sometimes slept. As the Chairman seemed to be in a "box" with regard to his question as to the form in which the motion should be put, he would withdraw his objection and let it be put as it stood.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he did not intend to indulge in any acrimonious debate about the railways going on or to make any charges of dishonesty against the Government. He did not believe them guilty of any dishonesty whatever, and believed they had no interest whatever in the relative contracts of Messrs. Robb and Co., and Messrs. Carey and Maund. There was not the slightest use in introducing acrimonious matter of that kind into the discussion of that railway. It was evident that a large proportion

of the members of the Committee were opposed to the present insidious attempt at the *via recta* and were prepared as he was to resist it by all the forms of the Committee. He was prepared to stop there till all was blue pretty nearly before he would allow the vote to be passed for such a railway, the advocates of which had not shown any grounds for its construction. No evidence had been forthcoming to show that it would pay even the working expenses, not to speak of its paying decent interest on the cost of construction. He opposed the line in the interests of the taxpayers of the colony, and said it was unwarrantable in the present financial condition of the colony. The Premier could not grumble at their following the example he had himself set in 1880 in stonewalling the mail contract. On a second occasion the Premier himself directed a stonewall, which broke down after a long period. Of course he knew, as the Premier had said, that obstruction was only justifiable where a large minority felt that they were perfectly in the right, and that a majority of the country outside would back them up; and he was sure that a majority of the public would endorse their efforts to prevent that perfectly illegitimate railway from being forced upon the Committee. The Government and hon. members who supported the line might say that if it did not pass, no other would, and even that position might have to be accepted. He would point out that that line differed from the others that had been brought forward. It had been tried on once before, last year, and carried by a majority of one, and lately it was sent to that Committee by a majority of four or five in a very thin House, after a good many country members, who could really appreciate its merits or demerits, had had to go away to look after their own business. He considered that no Government ought to press a line of that nature with a Redistribution Bill already passed. Of course, if a line recommended itself to the common sense of a majority of three to one in the House, it might be gone on with; he would not for a moment attempt to obstruct if he were in the minority on an occasion of that kind; but when a line passed by a bare majority, through rallying up all the power the party could muster, and when its extreme advocates had gone round threatening Northern members that if they did not pass that line they would not get the line from Normanston to Croydon, it was quite time for independent members to say they would not see fraudulent railways of that kind foisted on the country. The Premier and the Minister for Works must know that it was useless trying to force through that railway, and he trusted they would not tax their energies, or the energies of their followers, in a proceeding which he could assure them would be only an utter waste of time.

The Hon. G. THORN said he had a few words to say, but he was not going to give the stonewallers fuel to carry on the debate. The last speaker, he believed, had said that if the proposed line were an agricultural line and likely to pay, he would support it. Well, he would point out that the second best paying line in the colony was an agricultural line—the line between Ipswich and Fassifern—and he questioned very much whether there was a greater amount of agricultural produce growing there than there was at the present time growing in the Warwick district. He had in his hand a return of how the railways paid last year, and he found that the Sandgate line paid best, and the next best paying line was the purely agricultural line between Ipswich and Fassifern, which not only paid working expenses, but also 4 per cent. on the cost of construction. He was sure they would be justified in voting

that line at once, because there were no lines that paid so well as agricultural lines. He was surprised at the opposition of several members of the Committee, seeing that they had supported very unproductive lines themselves. He considered it was very ungenerous and undignified on the part of the Speaker to descend from his pedestal to the floor of the Chamber and oppose that vote, for he was really obstructing the passing of a small sum of money for an agricultural line. When they came to consider the favours the hon. member for Toowoomba had received at the hands of the Government—the personal favours and public favours to his constituents—he was the last gentleman in the Committee who ought to obstruct that line. The hon. member had two branch lines in his district. First of all there was the Crow's Nest line. They remembered how adroitly the hon. member had steered that line through that House and the other House. All the time the line was before Parliament there were continually in the hon. gentleman's newspaper reports of a gold-mine at the end of it. Returns were sent in every day, but immediately the hon. member got the line he dropped putting in any more flaming articles with regard to the goldfield there. There was no agriculture along that line, and last year there was a loss on the working expenses of nearly £1,000. Yet, after getting that line passed, the hon. gentleman came down and offered objection to the one now proposed to be constructed, which would pay as well as any line in the colony, not even excepting the railway between Brisbane and Ipswich. Then the hon. member managed adroitly to steer another railway through both Houses of Parliament—namely, the Beauraba Railway. When that line was authorised there were only about twenty-five or thirty adult persons at Beauraba. There might be more now, but that was about the number when the hon. member worked the oracle. In addition to that he had managed to get between £30,000 and £40,000 for a lunatic asylum at Toowoomba. He (Mr. Thorn) merely pointed out those things to show what had been obtained for that electorate by an hon. member who now opposed the voting of a small sum of money for a line that would not only benefit the particular district through which it would pass, but would secure to the colony the border traffic that now went to New South Wales. He believed in filching the trade from New South Wales if they could get it. It was mean and paltry on the part of the hon. member to think that the Committee were so blind as not to allow that railway to pass. The evidence given before the select committee went to show that in addition to the agricultural resources of the district that would be traversed by the proposed railway, there was also good timber there, and he had no doubt in his own mind that there was gold at Thane's Creek. He felt sure that there were gold deposits in that locality, as he himself had seen some very fair nuggets picked up at Thane's Creek. He believed that Mr. Hutchison had failed in extracting all the gold that could be obtained from the stone in consequence of his having imperfect machinery, and that he only got something like 20 or 30 per cent. of the gold contained in the stone. He (Mr. Thorn) fully believed that if the line was extended as proposed it would give a great impetus to gold-mining in that district. That line was part and parcel of the *via recta*. The leader of the Opposition might laugh, but he believed that if the hon. member was Premier to-morrow he would be the first one to give them the *via recta*. The hon. member would not go all round the country, and take a whole day to get to the border of the colony. He (Mr. Thorn) could tell the Committee that the *via recta* could be con-

structed for something like £300,000, and the amount voted for it was £500,000. A first-class line could be made from a point on the present line to Warwick for about £300,000. Such being the case, he did not see why any obstacles should be put in the way of the Government or any Government having that line passed by the Committee. He took that opportunity of pointing out that the junior member for Cook made a great mistake the other night when he talked about a line to Sydney going from Beaudesert to Casino, or even from Dugandan to Casino.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I corrected that.

The Hon. G. THORN said it was absurd to talk about constructing a railway there. The country was all ranges, and it would cost between twenty and thirty millions of money to make a railway through it. He supposed the hon. member meant that a line should be constructed to that place from Southport, as there was no very great obstacle between that place and Casino. He (Mr. Thorn) did hope that the Committee would come to a decision at once on the matter now under consideration. He was an advocate of railways wherever there was a probability of a line paying, and he believed that at the present moment all the lines he constructed whilst in office were paying.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: What about the Bundaberg and Mount Perry line?

The Hon. G. THORN said that the receipts from that line had gone up 100 per cent. the last few weeks and were likely to go up, and if the same rate of increase that was going on at the present time was maintained, that line would shortly be paying 2 per cent. in addition to working expenses. With regard to the *via recta* they would shortly have to duplicate the line between the Darling Downs and Brisbane. He thought that a great trade was likely to spring up with New South Wales, and they might duplicate the line from Warwick. By doing that they would secure an exchange of agricultural produce. There would be lots of agricultural produce going between the two colonies, and that was another reason why they should consent to the construction of the *via recta*. The Warwick district was one of the finest agricultural districts in the colony; but the people there were not able to compete with farmers in Toowoomba, because they had to go all round the country in order to bring their produce to Brisbane. There was also another reason why the line should be made from Warwick to Thane's Creek. There had never been any rust in the wheat grown in that district, whereas in Toowoomba there had always been rust. The wheat round Toowoomba had been rusted for the last seven years. Seeing, then, that that had been the case hon. members would see that the Warwick district was superior to the Toowoomba district for wheat-growing purposes. They ought to be put on the same footing as the Toowoomba people, and he hoped hon. members would no longer obstruct the motion, but allow it to pass.

Mr. ANNEAR said the junior member for Cook had told the Committee that he intended that the motion should not be carried. He might inform the hon. member that a majority of hon. members were returned to the House to carry out certain measures, and that majority should rule; and he would tell the hon. member that he would find a large majority of those present quite as willing to fight the contest out as that hon. member himself. That hon. gentleman and the class to which he belonged told them that the Maryborough and Gympie railway would never pay for the grease on the wheels, and they had been saying that about railways ever since Queensland had been a colony. But their

arguments had been refuted over and over again. Why did not the hon. member for Cook look to his own electorate, and see how the railway there was paying? But no; his feelings were altogether against Southern interests. The Bundaberg and Mount Perry line, to which the hon. gentleman referred, was paying far better than the lines in the Cook electorate would pay for many years to come. He should heartily support all the lines of railway now before Parliament, and he was only sorry that the Government had not brought in the plans and sections for the railway from Rosewood to Warwick, known as the *via recta*. He was confident that that line would be made in spite of the three members for Toowoomba, who had urged no arguments whatever why it should not be. Queensland was a young colony; they were laying the foundations of what was going to be a great country, and they ought to profit by what they had seen in the neighbouring colonies. In Victoria, the line from Melbourne to Ballarat went round by Geelong, a distance of about forty miles more than by a direct route. When the Government brought in a resolution that there should be a direct line of railway from Melbourne to Ballarat, did the people of Geelong come down in the miserable pettifogging way that the hon. members for Toowoomba had done on the present occasion? No. Had the Victorians constructed that direct line ten or twelve years ago they would have saved the colony at least £150,000 in resumption of land. They ought to profit by the example of Victoria, and he trusted that the majority would insist on having its way. It was said the Committee was too thin to carry a measure of so much importance, but last night there were fifty-one members present, which was a very large majority of the House. The hon. member, Mr. Groom, stated last night that it was a very unconstitutional thing to propose the spending of that money on a line from Warwick to Thane's Creek, and the other hon. members who opposed it used the same argument.

MR. GROOM: I never said anything of the kind.

MR. ANNEAR said that the other night it was not considered unconstitutional to divert money from the Cloncurry line to the Croydon line. But the intelligence of the country would not allow the hon. members for Toowoomba to carry out their little pettifogging ideas, as they had seen exemplified last night. Then look at New South Wales. If the Government there had purchased the land at the Circular Quay for railway purposes a few years ago they could have secured it for far less than the £275,000 they had to pay for it a few weeks ago. And the land for the Valley Railway and for the South Brisbane Railway could be obtained for far less now than ever it could be obtained for again. It had been said that Victoria was not proceeding with railway construction at the rate she used to do. If hon. members would look into that day's *Courier* they would see that tenders for three separate sections had been accepted in one day. They, in Queensland, had nothing to fear. They had a grand country, and every member of the community was better off than he was twenty-five years ago. No doubt they had a very large debt, but the growth of population had kept pace with the growth of the debt. Victoria was fifty years old, and had a population of a little over a million. Queensland, only twenty-five years of age, had a population not far short of 400,000. Indeed, if they were to accept all that was said by hon. members while the Redistribution Bill was passing through, they would have a population of close upon a million. According to those

hon. gentlemen the population had increased in all directions since the last census was taken. Seventy-five per cent., they were told, was the increase of population since the last census was taken. By the construction of the *via recta* they would save fifty-eight miles from Brisbane to Warwick, instead of going round by Toowoomba. That was a great consideration, and now was the time when they should embrace the opportunity and proceed with the construction of that line at once. He had no doubt Toowoomba would go ahead. What sort of a place could it be if it had not sufficient vitality in itself to uphold its own, whereby people could live in it as well as they could anywhere else? He had no intention to take part in the debate until he heard the—he would not call them outrageous statements—statements devoid of fact that were made by the hon. junior member for Cook, Mr. Hill.

MR. MOREHEAD said he did not propose, nor did his lungs admit of his speaking in the tone of the hon. member who had just sat down. In fact he might describe the hon. member's speech as "muscular rhodomontade." Perhaps the hon. member did not know the words, but he could assure him that they meant nothing offensive. What he intended to imply was that the hon. member's speech might be described as another speech was described by Shakespeare as "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." That was what he intended to imply by the first words, which he had now to explain in that terse, crisp, pleasant English which William Shakespeare so delighted in. What they had to consider, mainly with regard to that motion, was the question of their financial position. It was no use trying to get away from that. It was on those broad grounds the Opposition opposed the construction of that line from the first, and on those broad grounds they would oppose it to the last. They knew perfectly well from the statement of the Colonial Treasurer last night that if the present expenditure was continued, although there was £3,000,000 on the 1st July last, by the 1st of July next there would be less than £1,000,000 in the banks, and he would ask, did hon. members know what that meant? He, as a business man, and from his experience in large financial transactions for many years in the colony, knew what it meant, and he warned hon. members that there was something far beyond the paltry extension to Thane's Creek in that vote. Those were times when they should go as slowly as they could, and when they should not spend a penny that they could avoid spending. Would any member of the Committee say that that proposed expenditure had been necessitated by any exigency whatever, except the political exigency which, he was sorry to say, it appeared that the Premier had yielded to. He was deeply sorry to think that if the Ministry were to go out of office that they were not to go out of it with honour. To go back to his friend Shakespeare, one could imagine that if the hon. the Premier had gone out of office under the circumstances that had arisen during that session he might have died almost like Caesar died, especially if he could have got a Mark Antony, if there was one about. He was not sure that there was one, because he was perfectly certain that not one of the hon. gentleman's colleagues would say a good word for him if they got rid of him—they were too much afraid of him. But there might be some friend who would do so. He believed that even the hon. member for Toowoomba, the Speaker, would say a kind word for him. He would assume that the Speaker acted the part of Mark Antony, and, over the dead body of the departed Premier, lying bleeding from wounds from various directions, he might, pointing to

the hon. member for Warwick, say, "See what a rent the envious Casca made." Then probably, turning to the hon. member for West Moreton—the leader of that dangerous subsection—he might say, "See here the rent the envious Brutus made, and, as he plucked his cursed steel away, mark how the blood of Cæsar followed it." He thought the Premier might well have died in that way instead of having to be gnawed to pieces, as it were, dragged and bitten, and worried like Actæon was torn by the hounds that he had fed, but whom it appeared the Premier could feed no longer. He might have died nobly, but he had now placed himself in such a position that he was dragged down by those who a year or two ago would have licked the hand that kicked them. That was the position the Premier had landed himself in by disregarding the responsibility of the position he held as a patriot, and by attempting to propitiate those who had assisted him as purely party men. That was a purely party vote. He saw the Minister for Works smiling, but he challenged that hon. gentleman to deny that if he were in a position to give an independent vote he would be voting on the Opposition side of the House against that motion. He had sufficient respect for that hon. member to give him credit for pure obstinacy. Perhaps he had not the same sympathy for the human race that he and others in that Committee had, but at any rate he gave him credit for pure consistency and honesty. He said that distinctly, and he challenged the hon. member to deny that if he were asked to-night, irrespective of being a member of the Ministry, to give his vote, that he would give it against the Government—or at any rate against that proposal of the Government; and he believed the same remarks would apply to the neophyte of the Ministry—the Minister for Lands—the youngest addition to their ranks. He (Mr. Morehead) had now put the matter fairly and fully before the Committee. He put it on the broad grounds that the colony could not afford the proposed expenditure; that they were now in such a critical position financially that they could not go into an expenditure of that sort; that they ought to reef every sail they could, and to go as slowly as they could. Holding those views, he thought it was their duty, by every legitimate means in their power, to prevent an expenditure which they believed to be harmful, and dangerously harmful to the country. He hoped hon. members opposite would see the matter in the same light that he did. It was not a matter that affected merely party. It affected the whole of the State. They often had to decide matters that went beyond the realms of ordinary party politics, and that was one of them. As he said last night, the time would probably come when that and many other railways would be made in the colony, but that time had not arrived up to the present. So far as pledges in regard to expenditure on loan votes were concerned, they must be contingent on the surrounding circumstances remaining the same as they were when the pledge was made, and it was playing with words to say that a parliament was pledged and in honour bound to do a thing that was apparently a good thing to do four years ago. The argument was a monstrous absurdity, and would not hold water. There was no money to make the line, and the colony could not afford it; and under the circumstances the Committee should do all they could to haul in and retrench and prevent expenditure in any direction but that in which it was imminently necessary.

Mr. GROOM said that one remark had fallen from the hon. member for Fassifern which he felt bound to reply to, in order that the answer might appear in the next morning's *Hansard*.

The hon. member said it was most improper for him, as Speaker, to come on the floor and make a speech.

The HON. G. THORN: I did not say it was improper. I used nicer language than that.

Mr. GROOM said that words came from the hon. gentleman so fluently that he did not even think what he was going to say, and sometimes he made such outrageous statements that he probably did not recognise them as his own in *Hansard* next morning. He would let the hon. member know, once for all, what were the rights of the Speaker when he was not in the chair, and he could not do better than quote to the Committee the practice in the House of Commons:—

"But while in the chair the Speaker is thus restrained, by usage, in the exercise of his independent judgment, in a committee of the whole House, he is entitled to speak and vote like any other men. Among the earliest examples are those of Mr. Speaker Glanville, on the 4th May, 1640, upon the granting of twelve subsidies to the king, and of Mr. Speaker Lenthall, on the 22nd January, 1641, against the 'brotherly gift' to the Scottish nation."

Mr. Speaker Lenthall was the Speaker referred to by the hon. member for Balonne, Mr. Morehead, who told King Charles that he had neither eyes to see nor ears to hear, but was the servant of the House.

"Sir Fletcher Norton spoke strongly on the influence of the Crown on the 6th April, 1780; and Mr. Speaker Grenville, on the Regency question, on the 16th January, 1793. On the 17th December, 1790, Mr. Speaker argued, at length, the question of the statement of an impeachment, by a dissolution of Parliament, and cited a long list of precedents. On the 4th December, 1797, Mr. Speaker Addington addressed the committee on the assessed taxes from the gallery."

Mr. Addington was one of the best Speakers that ever presided over the House of Commons.

"The same Speaker also addressed a committee on the Union with Ireland in 1799; and again, on the 16th May, 1800, in the committee upon the Inclosure Bill. In committee on the charges against the Duke of York, 16th February, 1809, Mr. Speaker Abbot moved the commitment of Captain Sandon, a witness, for perjury. Again, on the 1st June, 1809, he made a speech in committee on Mr. Curwen's Bill for preventing the sale of seats in Parliament, and on the 4th February, 1811, in committee on the Lords' resolution for a commission for giving the Royal assent to the Regency Bill. Finally he addressed a committee on the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, in 1813, and carried an amendment excluding Catholics from Parliament, which caused the abandonment of the Bill. On the 26th March, 1821, Mr. Speaker Manners Sutton spoke in committee on the Roman Catholic Disability Bill; and again, on the 6th May, 1825, in committee on a similar Bill; and on the 2nd July, 1834, in committee on the Bill for admitting dissenters to the universities, he spoke against the principle of the Bill. On the 21st April, 1856, in Committee of Supply, the management and patronage of the British Museum, by the principal trustees having been called in question, Mr. Speaker Shaw Lefevre spoke in defence of himself and his colleagues with great applause. And lastly, on the 9th June, 1870, Mr. Speaker Denison spoke, and voted in committee on the Customs and Inland Revenue Bill, in support of a clause exempting horses kept for husbandry from license duty, if used in drawing materials for the repair of roads."

He thought those instances were sufficient to justify the same course of action on the part of any colonial Speaker. The most able Speaker that ever presided over the Parliament of New South Wales, Mr. Wm. Arnold, took the opportunity in committee on the postponement of the preamble of Sir Henry Parkes's Education Bill to make a speech of two hours in duration in support of the measure; so that if he (Mr. Groom) had erred, he had erred in very good company. No constituency would return a member to be elected Speaker if he were prevented from speaking in committee on behalf of his constituents; and hon. members would do him the justice to admit that during the time he had been Speaker he had not spoken very often.



It was only on matters affecting his own constituency that he had taken the opportunity of speaking, and so long as he had the honour of representing a constituency, nothing would prevent him from speaking on their behalf when he thought it necessary. When he spoke he did so under restraint as Speaker, and no one could say that in any of his observations he had used one offensive word against any hon. member or against any constituency. There was one point in the speech of the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, to which he would like to draw attention—it was in regard to the *via recta* from Melbourne to Ballarat. The agitation for that line had been going on for twenty-five years; it was only lately that the contract for the last section had been let, and it never would have been let if the South Australian Government had not seen the propriety of establishing an overland route from Adelaide to Melbourne. One of the strongest reasons for the construction of that line was that Ballarat was a city with 40,000 inhabitants—a reason that did not exist in connection with the line now under consideration, which went into one of the most wretched districts on God's earth—the cold, barren country about Stanthorpe and Wallangarra. Not only did the *via recta* in Victoria go to Ballarat, which contained a population of 100,000, including the suburbs, and 40,000 without the suburbs, but farther on there were Ararat with a population of 40,000 and Stawell with a population of 30,000. These were cities which contained buildings equal to anything in the city of Brisbane. There was a reason for that *via recta* which did not exist in the case before them. Anyone who travelled from Geelong to Ballarat would see the enormous settlement all along the line of route. From Melbourne to Geelong and beyond that they went through the most beautiful settled country they would see in any part of Australia, with an agricultural population the whole way, and with villages and towns laid out very much upon the English plan, and the fields fenced, not with fences as they were in Queensland, but with hedges. There was a reason for the *via recta* there, and a very strong reason indeed, and no objection could be urged against it. The hon. member also said that he mentioned last night that he had said the money would be spent in a manner constitutionally wrong if spent on the line before them. He did not say anything of the kind. What he said was that if the line were simply a branch agricultural railway, and had nothing to do with the *via recta* or the line to St. George, then no money had been voted for it. That was what he stated; and the point might very well be raised, whether that Committee would be justified in approving of the plans, sections, and book of reference of a line for which no provision had been made on the Loan Estimates. He did not know whether the hon. member did him the honour of listening to him. Those were the exact words he used. It was now said that the line was not a branch line. Last night they were told distinctly that it was a branch line, and then they were told that it was not a branch line. But if hon. members would only look at the plans, sections, and book of reference lying upon the table, what were they? The plans, sections, and book of reference they were asked to approve of were those of the railway from Warwick towards St. George, section 1, from Warwick to Thane's Creek. If that was not the *via recta* pure and simple he did not know what common English meant. He had no intention of making a speech now; he had discharged what he considered to be his duty to his constituents, and should not have risen at all had it not been for the imputation thrown out that he, as Speaker, should sit there, and see the

interests of his constituents affected to a very large degree, and not say anything at all about it. The hon. member, Mr. Thorn, generally asked for information in such a humorous way that it was almost impossible to refuse to give it to him. He desired to know how the Beauaraba line was engineered through the House, and he (Mr. Groom) might inform him that the inhabitants of that portion of the Darling Downs were indebted to the late Minister for Works alone for it.

The HON. G. THORN: And the Crow's Nest line, too?

Mr. GROOM said the Crow's Nest line was initiated and passed by the late Government. Now, the hon. member said the other day that the Beauaraba line was one of the worst paying lines that had ever been constructed; but he might inform him that if he would go to the Commissioner for Railways he would be informed that at the present time it was one of the best paying lines they had. It had paid from the very first. They thought one carriage would be sufficient for the passengers, but they very soon had to put a second one on. So far as the Crow's Nest line was concerned, the ordinary trains were not sufficient to carry the traffic, and extra trains had to be put on. He had before stated that the first section of the Crow's Nest line was not taken the route by which he thought it ought to have been taken; but that was not the matter for discussion. Although it had not been taken the route it ought to have been to benefit the greatest number of persons, still for all that it had paid. It did not pay at the start. It was constructed upon a cheap plan, and the grades were very steep, and the curves very sharp, and only a limited quantity of tonnage could be taken per train. But since it had been extended to Crow's Nest he had ascertained from the best authorities that it had been paying as fairly as the rest of the lines. So far from having brought pressure to bear upon the Government, he might say that in the present financial condition of the colony he would not ask the Government for unreasonable expenditure. His constituents, when they expected to have their properties assessed for the land tax, said "Stay your hand." They did not believe in the land tax; many of them said so frankly. But if people were not prepared to submit to additional taxation, he was not prepared to agree to any additional lines of railway that would render that taxation a necessity. If the country were committed to the *via recta*, those taxation proposals would not be sufficient to meet the £973,000 interest they had to pay annually at the present time. For a young colony with a population of only 350,000 to be asked, as they were asked, to pay out of ordinary revenue a million sterling per annum interest, was a position far from satisfactory, and it was about time that they began to stay their hand for a time until the colony was able to recover itself. What did they see in New Zealand? Nothing could be worse than the position of that colony, and it was entirely owing to the Vogelism that was carried out there. Then, again, there was New South Wales. They saw the deplorable position in which that colony was placed. They were obliged to stay their hand, and many projected lines of railway had come to an end. The line from Glen Innes to Inverell was stopped; the extension from Narrabri to Moree was stopped; the Glen Innes to Grafton line was stopped; and the Grafton to the Tweed River line was also stopped. Not because the railways were not necessary, but because the financial position of the colony would not admit of their construction. The colony of



Queensland was in a similar condition. In proportion to the population their deficit was larger. In New South Wales they had 1,000,000 of population and a deficit of £2,500,000. In Queensland, with a population of 300,500, they had a deficit of £500,000, which would probably be much larger at the end of the financial year. He could understand—and he thought all business men could understand—although those who had no business transactions probably would not—that the words which fell from the leader of the Opposition to the effect that a withdrawal from the banks of two millions of money to pay for public works would mean a tightness in the money market and a restriction of trade to every business man, and the consequences would be very serious if they were not careful. In fact, they could not tell what the result would be. It was all very well to say that there was a slight increase in the Customs receipts in some of the Northern towns; but the increases in those receipts were nothing to be compared with the serious depression which must take place in their great industry—the pastoral industry—owing to the present low price of wool. Wool was lower in price than it had ever been known before. Probably so much so that if it went much lower it would add a great deal to the depression which must take place amongst the pastoralists; and the cessation of improvements upon the different runs was a question which ought not to escape their attention. It might be said that his constituents were selfish in not agreeing to the proposed line; but they might say that those who advocated it were doing so from purely selfish motives. He did not say so, but they might just as reasonably be so charged. They had a duty to discharge to their constituents in relation to the matter, and he was sure his hon. friends the members for Toowoomba and Aubigny were actuated by most sincere motives in the course they had taken. They had opposed the line from the very start, and whatever might have been the reasons which justified their opposition to the line in 1884 they were intensified in 1887, in consequence of the financial position of the colony. He had not pressed the Government in regard to any work in his own neighbourhood, and he had not gone to the Treasury doors importuning for money for his own constituents. As to the promises he had referred to, it was a promise made to him by the late Minister for Works, when he agreed to accept the position as Speaker. He pointed out that he did not think his (Mr. Groom's) constituents would not altogether like it, as he had been always an active member of the House. But the late Minister for Works said he need not fear that his constituents would suffer, and he (Mr. Groom) did not think they had suffered; but at the same time he had not been an importunate beggar. He had never put the Government into any unfortunate strait, or put them in a way by which, in order to gain any advantage for them, the party might seriously suffer, not only in the House, but also in the country.

The HON. G. THORN said the hon. gentleman had told them he was not going to make a speech, but he had repeated his speech of last night. The hon. member had accused him of imputing to him improper motives, but he had done nothing of the kind. He had simply said that it was ungenerous and undignified for him to leave his pedestal as Speaker to come down on the floor of the House and indulge in obstruction. The hon. gentleman had also accused him of making extraordinary statements, which he did not recognise in print. The hon. gentleman had corrected him with reference to the representation of the city of London. He said there were 62, and the hon. member said there

were 51 members. He (Mr. Thorn) produced proof and showed the hon. member that he was wrong; yet he published in his paper a statement trying to prove that he (Mr. Thorn) was wrong. The hon. member had misquoted intentionally, and that was a serious accusation to make. The hon. member accused him of making rash statements, but he did not hesitate to say that if the hon. member's statements were less rash he would have more influence in that House and outside of it.

Mr. ANNEAR said he was sorry the hon. member for Toowoomba had left the Chamber. He had read the almanac published by the hon. member in 1885 in which he drew a beautiful picture of the *via recta*, and had also read a later publication which threw a different light on the question. Now, the point to which he would draw attention was that by adopting the line they would have a direct line to Sydney fifty-eight miles shorter than the present route. The hon. member talked about the large population round Ballarat and Sandhurst, but Victoria was much older than Queensland, and they had progressed as much as Victoria, since being formed into a colony. Let any hon. member look at the Commissioner for Railways' report and see how much the present line paid between Toowoomba and Warwick; but with a direct line fifty-eight miles shorter the earnings would be very much greater. He had taken no part in the debate up to that time, and he promised hon. gentlemen that if he was allowed he should be able to give some interesting information between that time and the morning. There was a large passenger traffic between Sydney and Brisbane, but travellers refused to go round by Toowoomba, a distance of fifty-eight miles out of the way. Now, the hon. member for Toowoomba (Mr. Groom) told them last night that that portion of the line on this side of the range would cost a million of money, but he (Mr. Annear) had faith in the Engineer's estimate.

Mr. ALAND: That is more than anyone else has.

Mr. ANNEAR said he took the statement of the Minister for Works, made yesterday, that for the last six or seven years the lines made in the Southern division had been well within the estimate. Mr. Stanley's estimate for the construction of the railway, after paying cost of permanent way, erection of stations, and everything complete, was £500,000 for seventy miles of line, and he felt sure that that estimate would be borne out. The hon. members for Toowoomba professed to oppose the line through patriotic motives, but if so why did they not oppose the expenditure of £40,000 on the huge building that was being put up in Toowoomba as a lunatic asylum? He hoped the hon. members would never have to be inside the walls of that building, but judging by their present conduct he was afraid they would. However, he hoped not. The hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Aland, charged others with being selfish, and thought himself so very pure, but he (Mr. Annear) had seen that hon. member walk outside when lines were being dealt with for his (Mr. Annear's) district, the construction of which would benefit the whole colony. He did not often intrude his speeches upon the House, and did not assume the attitude which some hon. members did, and as a rule he tried to talk common sense, and would continue to do so. He was confident that if that line was passed no hon. member who voted for it would regret the vote he gave. That little section was going in the right direction, and before it was finished he trusted to see a Government in office with sufficient support in Parliament to enable them to enter upon the construction of the *via recta* from Rosewood to Warwick at one swoop. They

were told that the present Government had bungled all the railway construction they undertook, but the greatest bungle ever made in the colony was made by the late Government, as was shown by the fact that Mr. Stanley put down the sum of £37,000 to put the Fassifern Railway in safe and proper order. He had had a little to do with railway construction in the colony.

Mr. MOREHEAD: With railway engineering.

Mr. ANNEAR said he could look at the leader of the Opposition and say he had faithfully performed the work he undertook to do, and he asked that hon. gentleman whether he and his Government had given him fair treatment when he was a contractor for railways in the colony? He had gone to work on the greatest railway contract in England when he was twelve years of age, and he had been working on railways and public works and contracting ever since. He therefore did not speak on a subject he did not understand. There were no better railways constructed in any of the colonies better than the railways constructed in Queensland within the last twelve years. An extraordinary statement had been made with reference to Mr. Hannam, the Engineer for the Northern Division. He believed Mr. Hannam had done nothing wrong in connection with the second section of the Cairns railway. From what he had heard, he believed that contract would be completed for £20,000 or £30,000 less than the contract price. The schedule of the contract could be amended at any time. He was sorry the hon. member for Townsville had gone, as he would have liked to hear Carey and Maund's price for the timber-work in the piers for the Cairns railway and Robb's price for the same work stated. It would be found that if the whole of the bridges had been constructed by Carey of timber they would cost as much as Robb's contract for the concrete piers.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. member appeared to have some grievance against the late Government, but he did not know what it was. According to his own account the hon. member had made his own living since he was twelve years of age. He did not know whether he commenced by contracting or whether he commenced in the usual way by picking up a horse-shoe or by picking up a pin, and with excessive modesty endeavouring to return it to its owner whenever he could find him. The hon. gentleman often favoured the House with an expression of opinion endorsed by himself as to all that he did, but it had nothing to do with the subject under discussion. He might be, as he said, the most virtuous man in the world, and he (Mr. Morehead) did not deny it, and would not discuss it, and he did not care whether Phillips's sleepers were good or bad. At one time the hon. member for Maryborough was strongly in favour of those sleepers; since that time he was strongly against them, and he had just about averaged them.

Mr. ANNEAR: I was never in favour of them.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was inclined to think that the hon. member was still strongly in favour of them. He would ask the Government again, in the absence of the Premier, who appeared to have become invalided, and whose mantle he supposed had descended on the shoulders of the Minister for Works—

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: On the hon. member for Maryborough!

Mr. MOREHEAD said it did not matter. It might have fallen upon that member, or upon any other off-side supporter, because if they removed the Premier, it was chaos. It would even be admitted by the Minister for Lands, he

thought, that he did not think so hard in his absence as he did when the Premier was present. He would like to know where the Premier was, and the Committee would have to know before they went on with the business. He would explain to the hon. members who jeered that in his opinion the second position in the colony was that of the leader of the Opposition, and if he had to stop in the Committee to do what he believed to be right in the interests of the colony the Premier should also be in his place.

Mr. KATES: Oh no!

Mr. MOREHEAD: That is the boy from Warwick, I suppose.

Mr. MORGAN said he rose to a point of order. First of all he thought the hon. member was not in order in calling him a boy, and in the second place he had not interjected at all. It was another boy who interjected. He hoped the hon. member would do him the justice to withdraw the expression.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that if he had said anything that would in any way offend the hon. member for Warwick he would withdraw it at once unreservedly; but he, at the same time, thought that the jocular remarks which the hon. member had chosen to make at the expense of his colleague on the present occasion—the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates—were very ill-judged. If there was an unfortunate politician in that Committee it was the hon. the senior member for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates. A sadder sight he had never seen than that hon. gentleman, notwithstanding the consoling influence near him of the junior member for Cook. He had never in his life seen an hon. gentleman placed in such an unfortunate position by his friends.

Mr. KATES: I am quite satisfied.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman said he was quite satisfied; and in saying so he had said exactly what he (Mr. Morehead) would have said for him. The hon. member had one of those saturnine dispositions—possibly hereditary, or belonging to his race—and he was pleased to find that, by the action he had taken, he had put the Government in a very difficult position. It was one of those bad things that must necessarily be the outcome of introducing a foreign element into an English-speaking community. It was very sad, but at the same time he did not see that it was any reason why the Premier should be absent.

Mr. HAMILTON: He has gone home.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was very glad to hear it, for two reasons. He was glad for one reason, because it would give the hon. the Premier an opportunity of rest and quiet, which he hoped would not be disturbed by dreams; the other reason was that they would have to deal with a decapitated body. It was a matter of serious moment now to know on which member of the Ministry the mantle had fallen. He believed to-morrow morning was the time when the Premier was to bring forth his scheme for shutting up the Opposition, which he believed was in the hon. gentleman's box. He knew, as a matter of fact, that the hon. member had it ready to deal with the West Moreton contingent, because he (Mr. Morehead) had seen it, and had it in his hand. Until that time came, they were clearly entitled to know who was acting as leader of the Government.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said it was hardly worth while replying to what had been said by the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, but there were one or two statements with regard to which he would like to put himself right. The Bundaberg to Mount Perry line was finished years ago, and there were no results yet

from it. Everybody knew that it was a ghastly job, which he was thankful to say he opposed at the time, though it was brought forward by the party which he then supported. He believed the Maytown and Cooktown railway would be a great source of national wealth when it was completed, or nearly completed. They all knew that those short lines did not pay till they had been taken a considerable distance. He remembered when the Central line went westward, the first extension did not pay at all; the bullock drays came down alongside it; it went on to the Dawson and did not pay; it went on to Emerald and hardly paid working expenses, but when it got beyond the Expedition Range it paid very handsomely till all their calculations were upset by the disastrous drought three or four years ago.

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. MOREHEAD rose to a point of order. He wished to know whether the hon. member for Bundanba was justified in adopting a recumbent position. It seemed, on the face of it, to be opposed to be Standing Orders.

Mr. FOOTE said the position he adopted was a very common one and a very comfortable one, as he had a windmill at his back in the hon. member for Cook.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he had no objection to the hon. member lying in that position, so long as he did not interject.

Mr. HAMILTON rose to a point of order. He asked the Chairman's ruling whether the hon. member was justified in saying that another hon. member was lying?

Mr. MOREHEAD said if the hon. member for Bundanba did not object to it, there was no reason why the hon. senior member for Cook should champion him.

Mr. HAMILTON said he did not agree with the leader of the Opposition. He did not champion the cause of the hon. member for Bundanba, but rose to a point of order because he considered that the language used was an insult to the Committee, though it was not a particular insult to the member for Bundanba.

The CHAIRMAN: What is the language of which the hon. member complains?

Mr. HAMILTON: The junior member for Cook accused the hon. member for Bundanba of lying.

Mr. CHUBB: It is quite true, Mr. Chairman—lying on the sofa.

Mr. FOOTE: I was only reclining, no lying.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said he did not think they were likely to get any further with the business that evening, and he would suggest that the Chairman send for the Premier to move him out of the chair, to report no progress, and ask leave to sit again to-morrow.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the proposition made by the junior member for Cook was a very reasonable one, but one that he took it the misrepresentatives of the Government would not accede to. The Minister for Works and Minister for Lands sat on the Treasury bench drawing their thousand a year, and they were dumb. While the Premier softly slept they had been instructed to sit there and be quiet. That was the position the Premier of the colony took up, and the position accepted by those thousand-a-year men. The Minister for Lands sat there a dummy, while the Premier, who was either unable or unwilling to sit in his place and carry through an iniquitous railway, had gone away to sleep. So far as regarded the Minister

for Works they all knew that he had a hide like a bullock, and was about as intelligent. He was not even capable of dealing with rabbits. They knew how the hon. gentleman had dealt with the lands of the colony; he was now going to hand them over to the rabbits; that was his last dying kick to the pastoral tenants. He (Mr. Morehead) did trust that the Chairman would now see his way to leave the chair for half-an-hour.

Mr. FOOTE: At 1 o'clock.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. member for Bundanba interjected "1 o'clock." He looked upon the hon. member as one of the principal obstructionists; he was always very genial and good-natured, and was always liked on the Opposition side of the Committee, but not very much liked by the side to which he acted as a buttress. But they would like to know where was the Premier? What had become of him? He might or might not be in the House.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: He will be here at breakfast.

Mr. MOREHEAD said they had at last got an utterance from the other side of the Committee. It appeared that it was only when his carnal appetites were to be satisfied that the Premier would be in the Committee. The "Great I Am" would be there at breakfast time. At what time did he propose to breakfast? When might they expect that lord of many lands to come there? Perhaps he might be called away by a duel with Sir Henry Parkes. Perhaps he had gone home to polish up his decorations. They did not know what might have happened to the hon. gentleman, but it was quite clear that he ought to be in that Committee. He (Mr. Morehead) wished he were there. If he were there he would read a letter he had in his pocket, from which he would prove that the hon. gentleman had lied. He was stating what was a fact. He had a letter in his pocket which the hon. gentleman had found him reading last night, and which he had attempted to bar him reading that evening, and the hon. gentleman had so far barred him reading it. But if he (Mr. Morehead) read that letter to the Committee it would prove that the hon. gentleman had misstated the matter to the Committee. The Premier only asked him to hold the letter in confidence until he made a statement to the Committee on the previous evening, which he did not do.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Shame!

Mr. MOREHEAD: Who cried "Shame"? Let that hon. member state his name. Did the hon. member for Fortitude Valley cry "Shame"?

Mr. McMASTER: He would not be afraid to do so.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Did the hon. member cry "Shame"?

Mr. McMASTER: I shall not reply to the hon. member.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not expect to get either a straightforward answer or truthfulness from that hon. member. He (Mr. Morehead) had made that statement about the Premier's letter, and he defied hon. members to contradict it. He would appeal to the hon. member for Mackay, who had read the letter, as to whether he was not stating what was the case. The Premier had gone away, and he was not going to wait till breakfast time for him. He would hand the letter over to the Minister for Works, so that he could judge for himself as to the truth or otherwise of what he had stated.

Mr. HAMILTON: Read it.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not want to read the letter. He had thrown it upon the table, and any hon. member who chose might

read it and see for himself that the Premier had broken faith with him and the party he represented. Let anyone who doubted his word take up his challenge and read it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was not going to read the letter. If the hon. member had anything to charge the Premier with, let him do it when that hon. gentleman was present. The hon. gentleman might have had manliness enough and magnanimity enough to have withheld his indignation until he had an opportunity of charging the Premier to his face.

Mr. MOREHEAD : Why is he not here ?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said he was not going to apologise for the Premier not being in his place. He (Mr. Dutton) and other Ministers were there, and they were determined to keep the question open.

Mr. FOOTE said that as they were going to have a whole night of it, they might as well have a pleasant night as not, and he would advise the leader of the Opposition to make no reference to the subject of the letter until the Premier was there to defend himself. The Premier was evidently unwell, owing to the heavy work of the session, and had no doubt gone home on that account.

Mr. STEVENSON said he had stated long ago in the House that the Government were not sincere in their intentions to make that line, and the events of the past two nights had shown that he was right. The Minister for Lands, in his opening speech, "damned the line with faint praise," and the Premier took so little interest in it that he had left his place and went home. The people of the district, too, looked upon it as a perfect farce. There was not a single elector, he believed, even in Warwick or the Darling Downs constituency, who believed in the line. Even the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Allan, did not believe in it one bit, and at the bottom of his heart thought that the money spent upon it would be wasted. All that that hon. member said in favour of the line last night was that a certain amount of timber had been taken from the land near Thane's Creek within the last few years; but he did not show that there was any timber left there.

Mr. ALLAN : And that six times as much was left behind.

Mr. STEVENSON : The hon. gentleman did not say that last night.

Mr. ALLAN : I did.

Mr. STEVENSON said he challenged the hon. member, while he was speaking, to prove that there was any timber left there, and he did not do so. The hon. member also told them about 20,000 oz. of gold having come from some place on the line, but he did not prove that there was a single ounce of gold left there. He challenged him again now to prove that there was a single tree along the line worth cutting, or a single ounce of gold left in the whole country. He was certain the hon. member could not prove it. He had been in connection with people in that district; he lived in it himself and had a house along the line or within a very short distance of it, and when he asked people who had the greatest interest in the Warwick district, and upon whom he could thoroughly rely, what they thought of the line, they simply laughed at the idea. The whole thing was a perfect farce. He asked a gentleman the other day what good the line would do if constructed, and he replied, "I really do not know what good it will do." He then asked what kind of country there was along it, and the reply was, "Well, it is very second-class pastoral country, you know. There may be a few

pockets along the line." He (Mr. Stevenson) could see that the whole thing was a perfect farce. It was rotten country right through. The Government had now taken up the position of bringing the line forward, not as part of the line from Warwick to St. George, but as a branch line, but he contended that there was not the slightest justification for constructing a branch line there. There was not a single bit of good country along the whole route except, perhaps, a few pockets. The hon. members for Darling Downs, Mr. Kates and Mr. Allan, and the hon. member for Warwick, Mr. Morgan, could not say that there was any agricultural land there equal to that on the Darling Downs, that was now going begging for buyers—the Clifton estate, and many other estates.

Mr. ALLAN : At how much an acre ?

Mr. STEVENSON : Never mind how much an acre. He simply asserted that there was no land along the proposed line that would be worth cultivating at all, with the exception of the one or two pockets which had been described to him by a gentleman upon whom he could thoroughly rely. They knew perfectly well that along the whole line from Toowoomba to Warwick there were estates where there was not a tree to be cut down, where the land was all ready for the plough, going begging at from £2 to £3 an acre. The land between Warwick and Thane's Creek would cost something like £8 or £10 an acre to clear and make fit for agriculture, even if the soil were good enough, which he contended it was not; and when they had splendid agricultural land between Toowoomba and Warwick, and within a few miles of Warwick, going begging at £2 and £3 and acre, he held that they had no business to construct a line of railway for the purpose of trying to induce people to go into cultivation upon land which would cost from £8 to £10 an acre to clear. As he had said at first, the Minister for Works in introducing that line had damned it with faint praise, and it was clear that he was not sincere in it. The absence of the Premier showed that the Government were not sincere in bringing the line forward, and that they did not want it to pass. They knew very well that the Government had not got the money to construct the line, even if it were passed that night, and that it could not be constructed for years to come. He was sure that no one would be more glad than the Minister for Works to see the railway thrown out by the Committee that night. That hon. gentleman had not said a single word in its favour, notwithstanding all the arguments that had been brought forward against it. He (Mr. Stevenson) maintained that the whole business was one of pure log-rolling—trying to gain votes in that way, and he thought that the Opposition, and other members on the other side of the Committee who joined with them were perfectly justified in using every form of the House to stop that railway from going through the Committee.

Mr. HIGSON said that notwithstanding the opposition of hon. members opposite—

Mr. PALMER rose to a point of order. What was the question before the Committee ? He understood that the hon. member for Cook had made a motion.

The CHAIRMAN said the hon. member had made a suggestion, but had not made any motion.

Mr. HIGSON said that notwithstanding the opposition of hon. members opposite, he thought the hon. members for Warwick and Darling Downs had made out a very good case for that railway. He thought that wherever they could get a railway twenty-four miles in length, where before the

railway was constructed there were 4,000 acres of agricultural land, he thought it was worth while to make a railway in that district. He thought that they must all admit that it would be a great benefit to the country if agricultural districts could supply themselves without importing; that was, if they could grow their wheat and make their own flour and other necessaries. They had already 1,700 or 1,800 miles of railway constructed, and if, on each twenty-four miles they had 4,000 acres of land under agriculture, they would have something like 300,000 or 400,000 acres under cultivation at the present time, and the population instead of being 300,000 would be something like 900,000. They all knew that where agricultural population was there families settled, the sons and daughters worked upon the farms, intermarried, and settled twenty and thirty miles away from each other, and did not leave the country. That was a matter that should be taken into consideration by that Committee. Because he represented Rockhampton, that was no reason why he should not try and do justice to other parts of the colony, and to the whole colony. He did not care whether it was Warwick or anywhere else, if he could see justification for the construction of a line of railway he should support it, and he thought that the hon. members for Warwick and Darling Downs had made out a case fairly and honestly in justification of the construction of that line. He knew it was only a section of the main trunk line, but he was willing to vote for it, even on that ground. When the line got to Thane's Creek it would open up another twenty miles of settlement, and it was well known that one ton of produce sent from Warwick was equal to ten tons sent from Ipswich. A good case had been made out in favour of the line, and he was willing to stay there till the motion was carried.

Mr. STEVENSON said the hon. member need not have entered into such a long explanation as to why he should vote for the motion, because it was perfectly well known that he would vote exactly as he was ordered. The hon. member could not speak very much; and the only time he made a sensible statement was when he (Mr. Stevenson) asked him why he never spoke in the House, and the hon. member replied that when his constituents returned him they gave him instructions to the effect that the less he said for them the better, and that he could serve them far better by holding his tongue than by speaking. What did the hon. member know about the country from Warwick to Thane's Creek? He did not believe the member for Warwick knew more about it than he did, because he (Mr. Stevenson) had taken the trouble to make inquiries, while in the district, about the character of the country, and he found that it was just about as rotten a country as there was in Queensland. Notwithstanding the statements made by hon. members for whom he had the greatest respect—he knew what influences were brought to bear on them and that their seats depended on how they voted on the question—he simply did not place the slightest reliance on their statements as to the character of the country. The argument in regard to timber and gold went against the construction of the line, because it appeared that all the timber and gold had been taken away. While there was good country fit for the plough between Toowoomba and Warwick going begging at £2 or £3 per acre, the Committee had no business to tax the people for a railway from Warwick to Thane's Creek when it would cost from £8 to £10 to clear the land and make it fit for the plough—even if it were fit for agriculture. The way in which the Minister for Works had introduced the motion and the absence of the Premier that night showed

the insincerity of the Government in the matter; and in view of that insincerity, together with the condition of the finances of the colony and the character of the country along the proposed railway, it was the duty of hon. members to do their utmost, using all the forms of the House to oppose the motion.

Mr. ALLAN said the hon. member for Normanby had been a little rough on him in regard to something he said in regard to the timber about Thane's Creek, and he proposed to read to the Committee what he did say the other day on the subject. He almost gave him a flat contradiction; but a friend of his had been kind enough to see what was said by *Hansard*, and he would read the paragraph. He said last night:—

"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 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, and that there was a sufficient quantity of timber to make half-a-dozen more lines still there."

That was what he said, and that was why he contradicted the hon. member. The two men who had given him that information were well known to some members of the Committee and to the hon. member for Normanby as upright, honourable men. One of them was George Alexander, his present overseer, who drove stock along the road from St. George to Warwick and by Thane's Creek, and the other was David Thompson, who was also known as an upright man. They both made statements that they could back up before a committee of that House or anywhere else, and he would take their word as readily as a good many men's oaths. He was certain that every word they said was absolutely true, whatever the hon. member for Barcoo and the hon. member for Normanby might say to the contrary. He did not wish to appear to be stonewalling in any way, but while he was on his feet he might refer to a matter that had not been referred to at all during the debate, and that was the first part of the report of the committee of the Upper House last year. He would take the opportunity of reading it, as it was very short and pithy, and very much to the point. It was to the following effect:—

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

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

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

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

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

"THOMAS MACDONALD-PATERSON."

That part of the report seemed to have been left out, and it was quite as well that it should be upon record. There was another point upon which he would say a few words. It had been iterated and reiterated that £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 would have to be spent upon the line; but what were the facts before them? The only part of the money which was to be spent upon the Thane's Creek railway was £100,000 out of £750,000 voted by the House for the construction of the *via recta* and part of the Warwick and St. George railway. It would still

remain in the hands of that Committee not to vote a single shilling more. All that was at present asked was £97,000 to make that particular branch line, which he thought had been incontestably proved to be a good railway, as a branch line, even if it did not form part of the great system of border lines, and the direct line from Brisbane to Sydney. He need not go further than to say that the evidence before them was sufficient to show any man, who had taken the trouble to go into the matter impartially, that it would be a most profitable line. The corn raised in that locality was of the best quality, and was the very thing that they were now sending to Adelaide for. The millers at Warwick said that they would give 6d. per bushel more for the wheat grown in that district. They had had the evidence of the hon. member, Mr. Lalor, who thought that the line ought to be made, and that it would be one of the best he knew of, and that there would be no difficulty in getting either ballast or timber for it. Then they had the evidence of Mr. Keleher, who had returned from his mill annually during the last eleven years, about 600 tons of hardwood—200,000 feet every year. Time after time last night, and that night, the matter had been brought up as the *via recta* from Munbilla, five miles on the Fassifern line, to Warwick, a matter of sixty-three miles. He was aware of the character of that country, of the distance, and of the quality of the land. Mr. Bashford, a man well known in the country as an able contractor, had gone along that line and had carefully examined it with a view of one day tendering for the construction of it. He was willing to construct that line for £5,000 per mile. There was £500,000 voted for that line, and since then careful surveys had been made, and they had more knowledge of the country. He believed that on the other side as good lucerne could be grown as in Victoria or New South Wales. All the way up there the country was of a superior character, 2,700 feet above the level of the sea, with rich chocolate soil. Now, they had been continually told that the line was going to cost £2,000,000, but he could confidently assert that while they had £500,000 voted, it would cost only £310,000—that was, sixty-three miles at £5,000 a mile. A contractor was actually willing to take it at that price. He wished particularly to refer to that point, because it had been asserted so frequently that £3,000,000 would be spent upon the line.

Mr. STEVENSON said he had never heard a more silly speech than that made by the hon. member. Although he had been member for Darling Downs twice, he had admitted that he had never been over that country in question, and had simply trusted to the word of his overseer, Mr. Alexander, and a person named Thompson.

Mr. ALLAN: I have been over it a dozen times.

Mr. STEVENSON said the hon. member admitted that he had accepted the aid of Mr. Alexander and Mr. Thompson. He thought that was a very poor kind of argument to bring forward. The hon. member and the Government did not seem to be at one on that business. The Minister for Works had called it a branch line, and the hon. member for Darling Downs spoke of it as part of a grand scheme from Ipswich to Warwick and Warwick to St. George.

Mr. ALAND said it was 12 o'clock, and he thought it was a fair thing to let the Chairman leave the chair and get some supper.

Mr. STEVENSON said if the hon. member had waited a few minutes he would have seen that he was about to conclude with a motion.

He would, however, say nothing more at present, but simply move that the Chairman leave the chair.

Question put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 11.

Messrs. Morehead, Aland, Stevenson, Chubb, White, Hamilton, Palmer, Black, Lumley Hill, Ferguson, and Murphy.

NOES, 25.

Messrs. Rutledge, Allan, Jordan, Moreton, McMaster, Dickson, Dutton, Morgan, Annear, Bailey, Mellor, Kates, Higson, Kellett, Foxton, Wakefield, Smyth, Foote, Isambert, Buckland, Grimes, Thorn, Salkeld, Bulcock, and Macfarlane.

Question resolved in the negative.

The CHAIRMAN said he would resume the chair at a quarter to 1 o'clock.

The Committee resumed.

Mr. HIGSON said he could not allow the remarks of the hon. member for Normanby to go uncontradicted. He belonged to no party in that House, but was as independent as any man in it. The hon. member said he voted as he was told, but that was not the case. He voted on his own judgment, and when he had any doubt as to how he should vote, he walked outside. The hon. member also said he would serve his constituents better by not speaking, but that was a question decided before his election for Rockhampton. A meeting of representative citizens of Rockhampton was held at his store, and it was there decided that certain gentlemen should be asked to stand for election. The meeting was adjourned till next day, and in the meantime the gentlemen mentioned were asked to stand, but said they could not afford to do so.

Mr. STEVENSON: Who were they?

Mr. HIGSON said Mr. Carl Harden was one and Mr. Sydney Dick-Melbourne was another, and there were others also. Another meeting was held at his store and the matter was again discussed. He had gone outside for a time, and when he came back he was told that it was decided that he would have to stand. He said he did not care to stand because he was no speaker, and he was told that they did not care about his speaking, as by his judgment and vote he could do as much good as those who would often speak. He had never been coerced in any vote he had given but had exercised his judgment, and he believed done his duty. When he found that he did not represent the opinions of his constituents he would be glad to retire and make room for a better man to come forward. As regarded that railway, the hon. member for Normanby said he knew no more about it than he did. That might be so, but he had listened to the speeches of the members for Darling Downs and Warwick, and he believed their statements were thoroughly reliable. They had spoken of the number of settlers who were there, and the fact that last year there were 3,500 acres under cultivation, and he took it that had increased to at least 4,000 acres this year. It should also be remembered that the line would not only be of benefit to the country through which it passed, but would also open up twenty-five miles beyond the proposed terminus, because it would enable the people there by a day's journey to come in and make use of the railway.

Mr. STEVENSON said the hon. member had corroborated the statements he had made. He had told the Committee that there was a meeting held at his store, at which it was decided certain gentlemen should be called upon to stand for Rockhampton, and that when it was found that they could not afford the time or the money the meeting, as a last resource, turned to the hon.

member and said, "Bill, we will elect you if you promise not to speak. You can serve us far better if you hold your tongue; but you must vote as you are told, and vote straight." The hon. member admitted that that was what had occurred.

Mr. HAMILTON said he objected to the line mainly because the country could not even afford to keep the main roads in proper repair, and that it would be absurd to make an expensive railway merely to please men like "Dear Pat."

Mr. ALAND said it was due to the Committee that a Minister should get up and reply to the criticisms that had been passed upon the scheme. Who, he wished to know, was in charge of the Committee?

Mr. MOREHEAD said that he was in charge of the Committee, and if he liked would turn it into a bear-garden, and defied the Ministers present to prevent him.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said the Ministers were dumber than the dumbest dogs of the Government supporters ever were, and then moved that the Chairman leave the chair, and submit his language to the Speaker as to whether it was strictly parliamentary or not.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that, as far as he was concerned, the language of the leader of the Opposition and the hon. members for Normanby and Cook had not the slightest effect upon him. As to answering criticisms, he did not believe, under the circumstances, in assisting hon. members to obstruct.

At half-past 2 o'clock,  
Mr. STEVENSON moved that the Chairman leave the chair.

Question put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 12.

Messrs. Mellor, White, Aland, Hamilton, Stevenson, Lumley Hill, Jessop, Chubb, Black, Ferguson, Palmer, and Morehead.

NOES, 24.

Messrs. Rutledge, Jordan, Moreton, Dutton, Isambert, Foote, S. W. Brooks, Dickson, Higson, Kates, Grimes, Kellett, Bailey, Morgan, Thorn, Wakefield, Smyth, McMaster, Buckland, Foxton, Annear, Bulcock, Salkeld, and Macfarlane.

Resolved in the negative.

At ten minutes to 3 o'clock,

Mr. MOREHEAD moved that the Chairman leave the chair, and ask leave to sit again.

Question put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 12.

Messrs. Chubb, White, Hamilton, Stevenson, Jessop, Morehead, Lumley Hill, Murphy, Aland, Black, Palmer, and Ferguson.

NOES, 25.

Messrs. Rutledge, Jordan, Dutton, S. W. Brooks, Dickson, McMaster, Mellor, Grimes, Buckland, Isambert, Salkeld, Thorn, Morgan, Foxton, Kellett, Wakefield, Foote, Moreton, Annear, Higson, Smyth, Macfarlane, Bailey, Bulcock, and Allan.

Resolved in the negative.

At twenty minutes past 3 o'clock a.m.,

Mr. HAMILTON moved that the Chairman do now leave the chair.

Question put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 10.

Messrs. Hamilton, White, Stevenson, Palmer, Jessop, Donaldson, Murphy, Aland, Black, and Ferguson.

NOES, 26.

Messrs. Rutledge, Jordan, Dutton, Macfarlane, Foote, McMaster, Morgan, Dickson, Salkeld, S. W. Brooks, Moreton, Kellett, Foxton, Kates, Grimes, Wakefield, Isambert, Buckland, Mellor, Bulcock, Smyth, Higson, Bailey, Allan, Annear, and Thorn.

Question resolved in the negative.

At half-past 3 o'clock,

The CHAIRMAN announced that he would resume the chair at 4 o'clock.

The Committee resumed.

At twenty minutes past 4 o'clock,

Mr. JESSOP moved that the Chairman leave the chair, and ask leave to sit again.

Question put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 7.

Messrs. Donaldson, Jessop, Murphy, Black, Ferguson, Palmer, and White.

NOES, 18.

Messrs. Jordan, Rutledge, Sheridan, Dutton, Grimes, McMaster, Dickson, Buckland, Isambert, Smyth, Kates, Foote, Bailey, Morgan, Higson, Salkeld, Macfarlane, and Bulcock.

Question resolved in the negative.

At seven minutes to 5 o'clock,

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

Quorum formed.

At twenty minutes past 5 o'clock,

Mr. MURPHY moved that the Chairman do now leave the chair.

Question put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 7.

Messrs. White, Donaldson, Palmer, Black, Jessop, Murphy, and Ferguson.

NOES, 18.

Messrs. Rutledge, Jordan, Dutton, Bailey, Morgan, Buckland, Isambert, Wakefield, Smyth, Foote, Bulcock, Grimes, McMaster, Kates, Higson, Salkeld, Macfarlane, and Sheridan.

Question resolved in the negative.

At thirty-five minutes past 5 o'clock,

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

Quorum formed.

At forty-eight minutes past 5 o'clock,

Mr. MURPHY moved that the Chairman leave the chair and report no progress.

Question put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 6.

Messrs. White, Murphy, Jessop, Black, Ferguson, and Palmer.

NOES, 19.

Messrs. Rutledge, Jordan, Dutton, Foxton, Buckland, Bailey, Isambert, Wakefield, McMaster, Bulcock, Foote, Grimes, Smyth, Higson, Morgan, Salkeld, Macfarlane, Sheridan, and Kates.

Question resolved in the negative.

At thirteen minutes past 6 o'clock,

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

Quorum formed.

At twenty-eight minutes past 6 o'clock,

The CHAIRMAN said: I will resume the chair at 8 o'clock.

The Chairman resumed the chair at 8 o'clock.

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would like to know what the Government intended to do—whether they still intended to persevere with the resolution before the Committee?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said that, speaking for himself, all he could say in answer to the hon. member was, that the Government intended to try to carry that line. What would be the result of their action time alone could tell; but he hoped they would carry the line.

The PREMIER said he rose because he saw the leader of the Opposition in his place. Last evening he went away from the House, because,

had he remained there all night, he would certainly have been unfitted for any work, and he considered he could serve the country better by being able to perform his duties outside the House than by remaining all night at the House. He did not think it necessary to apologise for being absent last night. He found that morning that the leader of the Opposition, referring to his absence last night, said:—

"If he were there he would read a letter he had in his pocket, from which he would prove that the hon. gentleman had lied."

Mr. MOREHEAD: Yes.

The PREMIER said he hoped it was not true that the hon. member had made such a statement. The hon. gentleman was further reported to have said:—

"He had a letter in his pocket which the hon. gentleman had found him reading last night, and which he had attempted to bar him reading that evening, and the hon. gentleman had so far barred him reading it. But if he (Mr. Morehead) read that letter to the Committee it would prove that the hon. gentleman had misstated the matter to the Committee."

He could not believe that the hon. member could have said anything of the kind. He never saw the hon. member reading any letter, and did not debar him from reading a letter. He rose now to call upon the hon. member to read that letter and say what he meant by the statements he was reported to have made in that morning's *Hansard*.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was sorry that in the heat of debate he had used the word "lied," because it was an unparliamentary word, but it conveyed the exact meaning he intended to convey. The Premier now asked him to read that letter, and he would read it, and as to his statement that he was barred from reading it before, a portion of the letter would show that he was justified in using that expression. The letter was dated "31st October, 1887," was from the "Chief Secretary's Office, Brisbane," and marked "private." It was as follows:—

"MY DEAR MOREHEAD,

"It may possibly tend to facilitate business and bring about the close of a—to me, at least—very wearying session, if I tell you what I propose to say to-morrow about the railway proposals of the Government."

It should be remembered the matter was initiated by the Premier, and he (Mr. Morehead) made no move in that direction. The letter went on:—

"The Warwick-Thane's Creek line is brought forward on its merits as a branch line"—

The words "branch line" were underlined in the letter—

"irrespective of the *via recta*, to which I do not ask this Parliament to commit itself any further. I only want a vote on the subject—*i.e.*, the authority to expend the money. The same with the South Brisbane extension; I have not the least idea what the votes will be on that.

"The Croydon line I also want dealt with on its merits, though there seems to be some difference of opinion at Normanton on the subject. I do not wish any line to be contingent upon another, and will do all I can to prevent such a thing; but those are the three items of expenditure which must be disposed of in order. I hope to be able to get something also for an extension of the Gympie line, so as not to stop work, and possibly for extending the Sandgate line about three-quarters of a mile along the street. I shall say all this in the House, but in the meantime please treat this as private until I have said it, except, of course, that you are at liberty to say to your friends that you understand this to be the position the Government will take up.

"Yours very truly,

"S. W. GRIFFITH.

"I hope to lay a statement of anticipated loan expenditure for the current year on the table to-morrow."

That was the letter he had received from the Premier, unasked for and unanswered by him, and treated as absolutely private by him until

he found that the Premier did not say in the House what he stated he would say in that letter.

The PREMIER: What was omitted to be said in the House?

Mr. MOREHEAD said he would show that, and the hon. gentleman need not be in a hurry. He intended to use deliberation in the matter. He had treated the letter in the way he was asked to do, in so far as its privacy was concerned. He did tell his friends—without, of course, giving the name of the Premier—the position the Government were going to take up, and stated that he had authority for making the statement. Amongst other things he told his friends that that railway to Thane's Creek was to be treated as a branch line, as shown by the letter in which the words were even underlined. When he followed the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba, Mr. Groom, the other evening, and pointed out that he did not think the branch line was provided for in the Loan Act of 1884, and that the only line to which the money voted could be applied was the line from Warwick to St. George, he was astonished to find the way in which that statement was answered by the Premier, knowing that he (Mr. Morehead) had that letter in his pocket. And having read that letter he was sure hon. members would agree that the hon. member's reply to him on that occasion was most unjustifiable. The hon. gentleman 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, should they not construct part of it? It was the meanest quibble he had ever heard come from the hon. member."

The extraordinary thing was that he had that letter in his possession at that time. He wondered he kept quiet at that time, and were it not that he was naturally quiet-tempered he could not have contained himself. When last night he found the Premier had deserted his post, and left the Opposition to attend to the affairs of the country, he thought, as certain misstatements continued to be made, it was his duty to point out that the Premier had made a distinct misstatement. He regretted that he had used the word "lied," because that word, by the rules of the House, ought not to have been used; but he thought he had now shown, from the letter and the speech of the Premier, that his statements therein were diametrically opposed to each other.

The PREMIER: What are they? I cannot see what misstatement you refer to now.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman should be able to see them. The statements were these: The hon. gentleman said in the letter that that Warwick to Thane's Creek line was to be treated on its merits as a branch line, irrespective of the *via recta*; and in his speech on Tuesday evening he said it was the merest quibble to assume that it was a branch line, because it was part and parcel of the line from Warwick towards St. George. He would leave the Committee and the country to decide between them, and say where the misstatements were. He had made no misstatement, and as far as regarded the hon. gentleman's letter, he would like it to be kept as a record of the House; he had himself no further use for it, and wanted it no more.

The PREMIER said the hon. gentleman had attempted to explain what he meant by using the offensive word "lying" last night. He (the Premier) had learnt one lesson from the hon.



gentleman, and that was that he must be more careful in the future to whom he wrote letters. He certainly had thought that after his long knowledge of the hon. gentleman he might write a letter of that kind without any fear of the hon. gentleman endeavouring in his absence to make such use as he had made of it. He had known the hon. gentleman for twenty-seven years, and had never thought he could be guilty of such conduct. What discrepancy had there been in his (the Premier's) statements? He had said the line would be brought forward on its merits as a branch line, and it had been introduced as that by the Minister for Works. He (the Premier) had afterwards more than once pointed out to members who were opposing it that they were giving themselves away by saying that they would have no objection to it as a branch line from Warwick to Thane's Creek. It was said that the money had not been voted for the line, to which he made answer that that was the merest quibble.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Meanest.

The PREMIER said he used the word "merest," but it was a very pardonable error for the reporter to fall into. He still thought it was so, because if the proposed railway from Warwick to St. George were ever finished, that piece of railway would form part of it.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not think the Premier would attempt to lead the Committee to suppose that he had taken advantage of the hon. gentleman's absence to make the statement he had made; he would have made it just as readily in the hon. gentleman's presence, and he deeply regretted the hon. gentleman's absence when he had to make the statement. He considered that he had proved his case. The letter ceased to be private at the moment the Premier not only broke the promise contained in it, but had led him (Mr. Morehead) to mislead those hon. members who did him the honour of following him. As for the twenty-seven years' friendship, the thing was bathos—it was no use talking about that. He had treated the letter as private till the Premier's action led him to treat it otherwise.

The PREMIER: I wish you had read it last night.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he had offered it to the hon. Minister for Works last night, who would not take it. Faith had been broken not by him (Mr. Morehead) but by the Premier.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said the plan itself was evidence on the face of it that it was not merely a branch line, and that the Premier in saying it was merely a branch line was doing something in the nature of deceit. If it were only a branch line it was the first time it had appeared in the House; it had never appeared on any Loan Estimate. What money had been raised on loan for that line?

The PREMIER: Warwick towards St. George.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said that was where the duplicity came in. The hon. member appeared to be bearing out the character that for years had been attributed to him of having a moral twist in his character, so that he could not see things as other men saw them. If the hon. member did not mean to extend the line any further, if he had become ashamed of the Warwick to St. George line, there was still some hope for the hon. gentleman's political salvation. He (Mr. Macrossan) had been under the impression that the hon. gentleman at the head of the Works Department, as he did not believe in

the line from Warwick to St. George, had satisfied his political conscience by bringing the first section forward as a branch line; but he saw now that the whole thing had been a pure trick, and he was extremely sorry for the trickery and the trickers.

The PREMIER said every member of the Committee knew that if the line from Warwick to St. George were ever completed, the proposed line would be part of it, and because he had not said what everybody knew, the hon. gentleman said it was a trick. If the hon. gentleman's opinion of straight dealing was as queer as his opinion of trickery, it would account for many of the speeches the hon. gentleman had delivered in the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said the hon. member for Townsville seemed to be afraid that some future Government or Parliament would extend the line. At present it was intended to build the first section of what was originally called the Warwick to St. George line as an agricultural line, because it indisputably passed through agricultural country. If any future Government or Parliament chose to carry on the extension they would do it whether the hon. member liked it, or whether he (Mr. Dutton) liked it or not. He did not think it was a good line beyond that. But he thought there was sufficient justification for building the line to Thane's Creek, because it passed through good agricultural country.

At five minutes past 12 o'clock,

The MINISTER FOR WORKS moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report no progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR WORKS, the Committee obtained leave to sit again at a later hour of the day.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at eight minutes past 12 o'clock.