

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 1887

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 3 November, 1887.

Question.—Return.—Motion for Adjournment.—Telegraph Stations on the Border.—Roads in the Cook District.—Russell River Gold Field.—Formal Motion.—Petition.—Acting Chairman of Committees.—Maryborough and Urangan Railway Act Amendment Bill.—second reading.—Motion for Adjournment.—Mining Industry.—South Brisbane Railway Contractor.—Warwick to Thane's Creek Railway.—Adjournment.

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

QUESTION.

Mr. PALMER asked the Chief Secretary—

When do the Government intend to call for tenders for a weekly service by steamer from Brisbane to Normanton and Burketown?

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) replied—

The whole matter of the Northern mails is now under the consideration of the Government, and they hope to be able to make very materially improved arrangements. I am not prepared to give a categorical answer to the hon. member's question.

RETURN.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. H. Jordan) laid on the table of the House a return called for by the hon. member for Wide Bay, Mr. Bailey, with reference to timber-getters' grievances.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Has the hon. gentleman moved that the papers be printed?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I beg to move that the papers be printed.

The PREMIER: The motion cannot be made except by the Minister who lays the papers on the table.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member will have to give notice of motion.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I will give notice of motion, then, for to-morrow.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

TELEGRAPH STATIONS ON THE BORDER.—ROADS IN THE COOK DISTRICT.—RUSSELL RIVER GOLD FIELD.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I intend to bring before the House what I consider a grievance that my constituents are suffering under from the gross neglect of the Telegraph Department, and I think my statements will be borne out by the junior member for Darling Downs, who has greater local knowledge than I have with regard to this particular grievance. Some little time ago the Government, or the Postmaster-General, in his wisdom, closed the telegraph office at Dirrambandi, on the ground that the receipts from that office were not sufficient to warrant its continuance. Since then the Queensland Government have also closed the telegraph office at Mungindi, a township with a considerable amount of business on the border, the reason given by the department being that the receipts were not sufficient; but I argue, having been Postmaster-General of the colony at one time myself, that it is not indispensable that a telegraph office should be directly a money-returning establishment. That is to say, that there are many places where telegraph offices may exist, and do exist, where the mere monetary return is not equivalent to the money spent upon them in one sense. Now, with regard to the former case, I may point out that there are many settlers on the Bulloo River with wives and children and houses to look after, and that the station at Dirrambandi was the only means they had of knowing when a flood was coming down. That the river does not come down quite as fast as the telegraphic despatch, even the Premier will admit; but I would point out that the station was established in the first instance, and afterwards abandoned for the economical reasons I have given, and it is for the reason I have given that the station should be restored. I had every reason to suppose, from the Under Secretary for the Post Office, that that station would be restored, but I have received a letter within the last few days stating that the Government have decided not to restore it. Now, with regard to Mungindi station, the position is very much worse. Not so long ago the Government of Queensland laid out a township there, erected a telegraph office, post office, police court, and Custom-house, and allotments were sold to people who thought that the township was likely to be of a fairly permanent character. A great deal of business has been done there, and I am informed, on authority I cannot doubt, that one storekeeper last year paid in duty alone £700. But the Government, finding that the revenue from the telegraph office was not sufficient

to pay expenses, closed the office, and transferred the whole business to the Government of New South Wales, who have not townships on the other side of the river; but there is a small private dwelling that is used as a telegraph station. So here is the anomaly, that if a resident of the township wishes to send a telegram in his own colony he has to cross the river, and send a telegram through the New South Wales office at a cost of 2s. for the privilege of doing so. Now, that is the way in which the Telegraph Department appears to be run at the present time. A rage for economy seems suddenly to have seized the Government. I have given the facts. A Custom-house officer is established in this place; a considerable amount of business is done there; a large number of stock pass through; and yet, because the telegraph office shows an admitted deficit, it is closed, and the department hands the business over to New South Wales. Now, I do not know, but I think I have heard or read, that the relations between Queensland and New South Wales are not of a highly friendly nature. I have thought, from what I have read and heard, that the relationship between these two knights is somewhat strained. We have been told and have read that the Premier of New South Wales considered it quite sufficient to tell the Premier of Queensland, "Oh, it is all right." I admit at once that I do not share the opinion of the Premier of New South Wales, who was at the time in what to an ordinary individual would be a very tight place. That gentleman is so used to it, however, that he probably treated it as a sort of by-the-way business, which need not interfere with his going on with the ordinary business of the State. Nevertheless nothing can excuse his want of courtesy to the Government of this colony, no matter who they may be. I hope the Premier will look into this matter of the closing of the station at Dirrambandi. I admit it is not a station where the revenue may be expected directly to defray the cost of keeping it open, but it is of great importance to the stockowners and the residents on the banks of the Bulloo River, because through it they were enabled to leave when the river was coming down in flood, and thus had an opportunity of removing their flocks and herds from danger. I pointed out the position of affairs connected with the closing of the office at Mungindi fully and fairly, and I say it is not right after the township was formed and the lots sold, and the residents led to believe that it would be permanent, and receive the ordinary support which such townships receive from the State—it is not right after that has been done to close the office and compel Queenslanders who may require to use the telegraph to cross the river and send their telegrams through New South Wales.

The PREMIER: When did that occur?

Mr. MOREHEAD: A short time ago. I cannot say exactly when, but I know that office is closed, and I have had a reply from the Postmaster-General to the effect that he does not see his way to re-open it.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I am not able to give any detailed answer to the hon. gentleman, because I have not heard of these matters before. I know that the present Postmaster-General and his predecessor were engaged for some time in endeavouring to effect all proper economy in the department. Of course, every place where the economy is practised objects and thinks it should be practised somewhere else. It appears to me at present that the hon. member has made out a good case for the reopening of the office at Mungindi; but as to the case of Dirrambandi I do not think his reasons with respect to that are so good. I will take the earliest opportunity of consulting the Postmaster-

General on the subject. As to making the telegraph offices pay, unfortunately we know that the department does not pay.

Mr. MOREHEAD: They may pay indirectly.

The PREMIER: Yes; I admit that it cannot be accepted as a rule that they must pay to be kept open. I do not know how the hon. gentleman connects this matter with consultations with the Government of another colony. The hon. member has referred to what he calls the "strained relations" between Sir Henry Parkes and myself. So far it appears there are no relations at all existing between us. I have communicated with him and have usually had no reply to my communications. I will take the opportunity, now that the hon. gentleman has referred to this matter, to speak of what has been stated in the Press as to the answer Sir Henry Parkes is said to have given me in reference to New Guinea. The statement reported to have been made by him to a reporter of the Press, I think, is that he told me it would be all right, when I wanted to know what he proposed to do. That answer, even supposing that he gave it to me—and I do not recollect his having done so—would be unsatisfactory, because what would be "all right" would depend upon what he considered "all right." The answer he is reported to have made in Parliament is, that whatever New South Wales was bound to do she would do. I do not remember his saying that either, but even if he did say it, it amounts to absolutely nothing. The point is that New South Wales was no longer bound to do anything in consequence of the change made in the arrangements. The proposals agreed to by New South Wales had been altered, and New South Wales was, therefore, perfectly free, and I wanted to know what action New South Wales would take with respect to the altered proposals. To say under the circumstances that "New South Wales would do what she was bound to do," when she was not bound to do anything, was certainly no answer upon which this Government could act. I am not prepared to say he did not make use of such expressions, but if he did, it is clear I could have considered them no answer at all, and probably forgot them.

Mr. ALLAN said: Mr. Speaker,—The leader of the Opposition has referred to me as having some knowledge of the district in which these offices were situated. I may say I have myself received some complaints that two telegraph offices had been closed in that one district. The Premier said the leader of the Opposition had made out a very good case for reopening the office at Mungindi. An equally good case could be made out for the reopening of the office at Currawildi, or Dirrambandi as it is now called. I have lived in that part of the country for some years and speak with a knowledge of the place. The principal reason for keeping those offices open was that the whole of that country from St. George down to the border was liable to heavy floods, and unless people got rapid information that a flood was coming down they were in danger of losing almost the whole of their stock. In some parts of the country they have bridges at different places across to Culgoa, and when they get telegrams that floods are coming they rush the stock across those bridges and get them on some high ridges on the western side of the Culgoa. The distance between St. George and the next telegraph office, which is in New South Wales, is 130 odd miles, and the distance between St. George and the border is 120 odd miles. It would pay this colony, therefore, to keep Dirrambandi, if only as a line repairer's station, for if the line got down in flood-time it would take a man a week to ride down

and back a distance of 260 miles to find where the accident had happened. I am sure that the owners of the stations in the district—Boombah, Gulnarbar, Doondi, Currawildi, Noondoo, Cowildi, Currawillinghi, Miamoningindi, Whenbah, Woolerina, Brenda, and many others—would join to guarantee the expense to the Telegraph Department. It is very poor policy to shut up an important office like that. It has been very useful in the past in saving stock, and I am sure that if the office is shut up one of those floods will cost more than keeping the office open for twenty years. I trust that when the Premier is looking into the case of Mungindi he will also look into that of Dirrambandi.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I shall take advantage of the motion for adjournment to say a few words on the same subject. My district is suffering from similar disabilities. Representations were made recently to the Post Office Department by the secretaries of the progress associations at Herberton and Mount Albion, calling attention to the necessity for extending the telegraph line from Watsonville to Irvinebank and Mount Albion. The answer given by the department was that they were not certain the extension would pay, and they required guarantees before they would grant what was asked. For the extension from Watsonville to Irvinebank, a distance of ten miles, they want a cash guarantee of £500 for three years and an office suitable for the operator free of all expense for two years; while, if it is extended an additional five miles to Mount Albion, it would be on similar terms, the amount to be guaranteed being £475. The total amount to be guaranteed for an extension of fifteen miles is £975, with free buildings for a couple of years for the telegraph operators. I think that is very unfair, considering the treatment that is received by other places that are not subject to the same want of communication as this portion of the colony. I notice in looking over the report of the Postal Department that there are many places in the colony where the cost of conducting the telegraphic operations is greater than the returns. At Aramac, for instance, the total expenditure is £378 17s. 2d., and the total cost £439 12s. 11d., leaving a loss of £65 15s. 9d. per year. Then at Beenleigh the total income is £162 7s. 1d. and the total expenditure £275 17s. 11d., leaving a loss of £113 10s. 10d. At Caloundra the total income is £40 10s. 6d., and the total expenditure £224 1s. 2d., leaving a loss of £183 10s. 6d. I suppose the Caloundra individuals have to thank the hon. member for Enoggera, Mr. Bulcock, for that. Then again, we have Cleveland, another favoured constituency, where the total income is £46 19s. 8d., and the total expenditure £175, leaving a loss of £128. At Drayton, again, the income is £20 10s. 3d., and the expenditure £135 8s. 8d., leaving a loss of £114 18s. 5d. At Eulo the income is £223 1s. 5d., and the expenditure £465 7s., leaving a loss of £242 5s. 7d. At Hewittville the income is £74 1s. 10d., and the expenditure £233 8s. 3d., leaving a loss of £157 6s. 5d. Now, those places are much more favoured than Herberton and that district, both in the way of postal communication and in every other way. The receipts from the telegraph office at Herberton are £982 4s. 9d., and the total expenditure £620 4s. 8d., leaving a clear profit of £362 0s. 1d. The telegraph line is extended seven or eight miles past Herberton, to Watsonville, and that extension is run at a slight loss of £10 or £12. Taking Herberton and Watsonville together, the total income is £1,213 1s. 7d., and the total expenditure £860 16s. 7d., leaving a clear profit of £352 5s. per annum. Taking that into consideration, and the fact that the increased fifteen miles of line would

only cost at the highest rate £50 a mile, I certainly think that some attention should be paid to their prayer. While I am on my feet I will take advantage of the motion to refer to another matter. Last night was spent on the discussion of a road or railway from Warwick to St. George. I am now going to spend a few minutes on the discussion of certain roads in my district, for which very small assistance is required. In 1883-4 a sum of £10,000 was voted for excepted roads under the Divisional Boards Act Amendment Act. Of that sum £800 was granted to the Daintree Divisional Board, £1,000 to the Hann Divisional Board, £750 to the Douglas Divisional Board, £750 to the Tinaroo Divisional Board, £500 to the Woothakata Divisional Board, and £525 to the Johnstone Divisional Board, making a total of £4,325. The surplus of £5,675 was allowed to lapse. The following year—in 1884-5—the sum of £10,000 was again voted for the same purpose. The Tinaroo Divisional Board received £1,500, and the Hann Divisional Board £500; an amount of £497 4s. 10d. was granted for Irvinebank and Emu Creek, opening a road for Messrs. Young, McCulloch, Stenhouse, and Mineral Lands Commissioner Mowbray; and £346 2s. 1d. for the road from Tallebudgera to the border; the total amount being £2,843 6s. 11d., so that of the £10,000 voted that year the sum of £7,156 13s. 1d. lapsed. In 1885-6 only £6,000 was voted for excepted roads. Of this sum the Tinaroo Divisional Board spent £1,300; the Woothakata Divisional Board, £500; the Daintree Divisional Board, £1,000; the Cairns Divisional Board, £500; the Hann Divisional Board, £500; the Douglas Divisional Board, £500; the Einasleigh Divisional Board, £500; the Johnstone Divisional Board, £500; and the sum of £692 12s. 8d. was granted for the road from Tallebudgera to the border; total, £5,992 12s. 8d. The balance which lapsed from that vote was £7 7s. 4d. For 1886-7 the same reduced amount of £6,000 was voted, and it was expended in the following manner:—Einasleigh Divisional Board, £500; Woothakata Divisional Board, £665; Tinaroo Divisional Board, £1,000; Cairns Divisional Board, £1,000; Daintree Divisional Board, £500; Douglas Divisional Board, £800; Nerang Divisional Board, £500; Hann Divisional Board, £500; and Port Douglas Divisional Board, £500. The balance remaining from that vote was £35. Those sums have never been sufficient. Before half the year has elapsed the whole of this amount has been expended. The roads are in a disgraceful state, and communication is consequently very seriously interrupted, and when applications are made to the Minister for further grants the invariable reply is, "You must wait until the next sum is voted, as we have expended the whole of the amount placed on the Estimates." I think, then, that with the experience of previous years to guide us, it is desirable that a larger sum should be placed on the Estimates. But what do we find this year? The amount is reduced from £6,000 to £2,000. Although the number of excepted roads is larger and increased expenditure is required to keep them in order on account of the increased traffic, the vote is reduced to £2,000. I consider that very false economy, and that instead of reducing the vote, and in consequence retarding the development of those districts in which the roads are situated, the amount should have been increased by the Government. Two or three days ago I received a petition from certain miners on the Russell River, but as it is not in order I could not present it to the House. As it refers to a very important matter, I will briefly indicate what the petitioners desire in order that the matter may be brought under the notice of the Minister for Mines. Hon. members will no doubt recollect

that some years ago a road was discovered to the Russell River. But a new discovery was made sometime ago by Mr. Christie Palmerston, and large numbers of miners are now working on the field and obtaining payable gold. There are some Chinese who claim to be entitled to work on that field on the ground that they discovered it, but that claim is disputed by white men, who say that there are records in the Mines Office to show that they reported the discovery first. The warden of the field was instructed to report on the matter and he has recommended that the Chinamen should have a certain area of ground allotted to them, but the miners object to that area as being too large, and as interfering with their interests. They are dissatisfied with the line drawn by Warden Mowbray, as it surrenders a large area of auriferous country unprospected on which gold can be got, but owing to there being no mode of transit there is a great difficulty in prospecting it. They would like the Chinese restricted in the way indicated on a map which has been sent to the Department of Mines. I hope the Government will take notice of this matter, and that their action will be very different from the action of the last Liberal Government with respect to Chinese on the Palmer. In consequence of their action there are a number of gullies lying desolate on that field at the present moment which would be worked by white men had they not been prevented in the first instance by the invasion of myriads of Chinese. If it is proved that the Chinese have made a discovery on the Russell River, the Government can easily comply with the Act, yet prevent the Chinese interfering with the whites, by limiting the area of the goldfield discovered by the Chinese to, say, 100 yards square.

Mr. NELSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I would like to take advantage of this motion to draw the attention of the Government to the very little use we get from the telegraph stations compared with what we might receive, in respect of floods, a subject which was referred to by the leader of the Opposition and also by the hon. member for Darling Downs, Mr. Allan. Of course, if we support a telegraph office it is a public institution, and we naturally expect that the operators, even if they do not receive instructions from the head of the department, should in cases of danger to life and valuable property by flood send notice to the stations lower down the river when a flood has occurred in the higher part. But my experience has been that they invariably fail to do that. I have had occasion, living near Dalby a considerable distance down the Condamine, to watch the state of the river at Warwick. The communication from Warwick to Dalby is very easy, but on no occasion yet have I ever found that the operator at Warwick has sent notice to the office at Dalby when a flood has happened at Warwick. Many times I have gone to the operator at Dalby and asked him whether there was any probability of a flood in the Condamine, and he has always told me that he had not received any notice about it, but he would find out for me if such was the case. On several occasions it has happened that there has been no intimation given at Dalby that there was a flood at Warwick. I will give an illustration. Hon. members will recollect that last January there was a heavy flood in Brisbane and at Warwick. On that occasion there was next to no rain in the Dalby district—probably not more than an inch. I happened to be in Brisbane at the time, and when I heard of the flood I sent a special telegram to Dalby with instructions to engage messengers to convey the news to stations likely to be affected by the flood. Had I not done that it is probable that the first intimation of the flood

received at Dalby would be the account in the *Courier*, which arrived there at 2 o'clock on the Monday. It seems to me a very simple thing that operators should get positive instructions that whenever a case of that sort occurred they should at once send word to the stations further down the river, warning them of the danger, so that people might take the necessary steps to protect their lives and property.

Mr. JESSOP said : Mr. Speaker,—I can bear out all that has been said by the hon. member for Northern Downs. In the flood of 1873, when there were several feet of water on Rosalie Plains, extending over forty or fifty miles, a great amount of stock might have been saved if timely information had been given, as might easily have been done, of the rise of the flood. The same thing, as the hon. member had pointed out, occurred during the flood of January last. It frequently rains heavily at Warwick, and we get our floods at Dalby from there. The same thing happens at many places throughout the colony, and the rise of a flood is known near the heads of creeks and rivers long before the flood reaches the plains. If the Government were to give instructions to both the Telegraph Department and the Police Department to send messengers ahead to give information as to the approach of floods it would often effect a great saving in stock, and, perhaps, in loss of life. I trust the Government will take this suggestion into their consideration, and issue instructions of the kind I mention.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said : Mr. Speaker,—I wish to say something in relation to one of the matters brought forward by the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hamilton. I refer to the Chinese on the Russell River. I think that if that petition, although informal, had been sent to the Minister for Works instead of to the House, it would have met with a good deal of consideration, for I feel quite certain that that hon. gentleman is in no way inclined to favour Chinese at the expense of his own countrymen. Here is a petition signed by over sixty European miners. I presume the signatures are *bona fide*; they have the appearance of it, anyhow. I should like to hear from the Minister for Works, after I sit down, what action he is likely to take in this matter. There has been a good deal of confusion, as hon. members are aware, on the Clermont Gold Field, between European miners and Chinese miners, the latter claiming to have a right to mine on that field owing to some mistake having been made in the proclamation of the extension of the field; which proclamation, I believe, has been taken to mean, not the proclamation of a new field, or extension, but as applying to an old field, and giving the Chinese miners a right to mine upon it. Hon. members are aware that we have a law which prevents Chinese from mining upon any field until three years after it has been proclaimed. In this particular case it seems they have claimed the right to mine on an old goldfield. A similar question, it seems, has arisen on the Russell River. I should like to know by what right the Chinese are there at all. If a Chinaman discovers a new goldfield—and I do not know whether he has a right even to discover a new goldfield—if he discovers, by accident or industry, a new goldfield, does that give every other Chinaman in the country a right to go there and mine? If he has any legal right at all it is to the reward of his discovery by having a large area of ground given to him for his discovery, usually called a prospecting claim. It is a question which the Attorney-General might be able to give some information about. It is a very serious matter—these conflicts arising between Chinese and European miners.

The European miner does not like to break the law. At the same time he has a horror and disgust of Chinamen, and would like to keep them as far from him as possible. But if they are allowed to come in contact like this, we may have a repetition of what has occurred in other colonies—at Lambing Flat, in New South Wales, and on the Buckland, in Victoria. None of us would like to see a repetition of those things in Queensland. The conduct of the miners there, I must say, was not very exemplary, but they were irritated by the very cause which is at work here—by the Chinese going to the places where they were drawing their drinking water and fouling those places, which it is well known Chinamen do to a very large extent. The question I wish to ask the Attorney-General is, if a Chinaman finds a deposit of gold, and that place is proclaimed a goldfield, does that give all other Chinese a right to go there and mine at any time before that field has been three years open? I think it should not, unless we have a statute giving them that right; and we have no such statute that I can call to mind at present. The only thing in fair justice which a Chinaman or party of Chinese who find a gold deposit are entitled to is a prospecting claim, and no more, and they are entitled to be protected in that. At the same time every other Chinaman should be kept off that field until it has been for three years a proclaimed goldfield.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said : Mr. Speaker,—With reference to the Clermont Gold Field I do not think any mistake was made in the proclamation. It was proclaimed a new goldfield, and Chinamen would of course be excluded. But as hon. members know, the field covers a very large area of ground, is very patchy, and a great deal of it is very poor indeed. I believe there are 250 or 300 Chinamen fossicking about on the field in different places, I instructed the police magistrate, who is also warden there, to try and remove these Chinamen, and he then advised me that it would be necessary to send a strong force to enable him to do so. I asked him for more information and told him to find out where these men were mining or fossicking, and ascertain what they were doing. The result of his investigation, as far as I could learn, was that the Chinamen were making about 15s. a week at it, and that the white miners on the field were making on an average about £1 a week. Under those circumstances I thought it scarcely worth while to insist upon removing those men, seeing that they were working on ground that no white man would attempt to work. The difficulty arose in this way : In one or two instances Chinamen would go off by themselves and succeed in getting what some of the white miners believed to be a pocket of gold; that of course aroused the cupidity or envy of the white miners, and they at once required the warden to put the white miners in possession of that patch of ground which the Chinamen, after a good deal of trouble, had fossicked out for themselves. I did not think, under the circumstances, it would be worth the time and trouble that would be necessary to shift those Chinamen from the field. The matter remains at present in abeyance. Of course, they are there illegally, but it will require force to put them away—more force than the warden has at his command. With regard to the Russell Gold Field, Mr. Mowbray is warden there, and he has reported, I think, twice upon the matter. In the first instance, the field was a very large area, and at the time it was first discovered I believe some Chinamen discovered the first workings on the lower part of the field. Christie Palmerston's discovery is higher up the Russell River, where the white miners are at work. I

instructed Mr. Mowbray to examine the field carefully and ascertain the kind of ground the Chinamen were working on. His report was that they were working on very poor ground, and far removed from where the white men were working, and he thought under the circumstances that it would be as well to leave them on that patch of ground on the Lower Russell that they had found for themselves, and which was of little value, too little for any white man to work. On what information he arrived at that conclusion, I do not know, except it was his own observation. I assume that probably one or two white miners who have a particular dislike to Chinamen, as I suppose all miners have, got up a petition—I have received a petition myself—that these Chinamen should be removed entirely from the field. But it would be rather rough on those Chinamen, especially if they are working on ground not likely to be of any value to white men, that they should all be put out of it except the discoverers. I suppose they, at all events, are entitled to a certain area for having discovered it. But that does not, as I understand the law, give the right to their countrymen to come in and take up additional ground near them. It does not extend beyond the men who discovered the ground. From all the information I received it appeared to me that it was scarcely worth while to take all the trouble that would be necessary to put those men off the lower end of the field. They are far removed from the white men, the ground is too poor to be worked by white men, and under the circumstances I have done nothing more, except to request Mr. Mowbray to report further upon the subject, and as soon as I get his report I shall act upon it. As to the Chinamen, if I find they are occupying valuable ground and keeping out white men, they will have to go and work somewhere else. I do not know how it is to be done except we send up a force to do it.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said: I may be allowed to say a word or two by the indulgence of the House. I should like to say that the fact of trying to draw a line and proclaiming it—I do not mean a proclamation in the *Gazette*, but proclaiming it through the warden as an area where Chinamen will be allowed to remain and work—is a very dangerous precedent to establish, especially as it is very likely to lead the Chinese to think that they have a right to go there, and it might lead to trouble if the Government found themselves necessitated to put them away.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—There is no line confining the Chinamen to any particular ground. They have naturally collected about one particular spot which their countrymen had found. Of course, we could not set apart a new goldfield for Chinamen to work on. They are illegally there, and are only tolerated as holders of miners' rights.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—I have here a letter containing some information on this subject, and as I take an interest in it I shall read portions of it. It is from Christie Palmerston, who says with regard to Geraldton:—

"The heaviest gold and the largest quantities have been obtained below the confluence of Cane Creek with the Russell, the Chinese having sent away about 2,000 oz. since May last, and large parcels still continue to roll in."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Where is that?

Mr. HAMILTON: On the field we are speaking of; the ground the Chinese are working. The letter is dated September 29.

Mr. PALMER: The letter goes on:—

"The loss of the main river is not the worst of it, for you will notice from what I have written on your map that a line at Cane Creek will be giving the 'Chinks' a

fearful area of very auriferous mountains between the Upper Russell and Johnstone Rivers, only partially prospected by myself, and which may turn out a rich reefing field."

I noticed that the Minister for Works said just now that only the poorer parts of the field were allowed to the Chinese, but it is very hard to say what are the poorer parts of a goldfield until it has been tested.

"If I continue to prosecute my researches, and the boundary remains as it is, the Chinese will have perfect right, on any discovery being made, to swarm me or any other prospectors like so many land leeches."

That is a letter that has been received by the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hamilton, with regard to the goldfield on the Russell River.

Mr. CHUBB said: Mr. Speaker,—I think the point the hon. member for Townsville wants to make plain is this: The law on the subject will be found in the Goldfields Act Amendment Act of 1878, vol. ii. of the Statutes, page 1255; and if I read this Act aright, if a Chinaman discovers a goldfield, that goldfield may be occupied by all the other Chinamen in the colony. The hon. gentleman in charge of the Works Department shakes his head, but let him read the Act. The Act states:—

"Every goldfield shall be deemed to be a new goldfield or the purposes of this Act until after the lapse of three years from the date of the first proclamation of such goldfield."

It further says:—

"No miner's right issued to any Asiatic or African alien shall, either when originally issued or by way of subsequent endorsement, be made available for any new goldfield."

Now, as the law stands, it is plain enough that Chinamen cannot go on new goldfields; but the Act goes on to say:—

"But this section shall not apply to any miner's right issued under the Goldfields Act Amendment Act of 1877, or to any Asiatic or African alien who shall desire to have the miner's right issued to or held by him made available for any new goldfield of which the first discoverer and reporter or one of the first discoverers and reporters was an Asiatic or African alien."

So that, if a Chinaman discovers a new goldfield, or a Chinaman and white man together discover it, the right to that Chinaman and his countrymen to go upon that field is clear. If a Chinaman discovers a goldfield Chinese can occupy it, but if a white man discovers it the Chinamen cannot enter upon it for three years. If that is the law, and I believe it is the law, then the sooner it is amended the better, because hon. members must understand that a goldfield is by the Act described as "Crown lands proclaimed, or which may be proclaimed as a goldfield." There is no doubt that if a Chinaman in fossicking around discovers a new goldfield, he and his countrymen may occupy it.

Question put and negatived.

FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to:—

By Mr. HAMILTON—

That there be laid on the table of the House, all correspondence between the Under Secretary for the Post Office and the late postmaster at Cooktown, Mr. Allen, relating to his application for leave of absence or removal from Cooktown to some other portion of the colony.

PETITION.

Mr. HAMILTON presented a petition from residents of Cooktown in relation to the late postmaster at Cooktown, and praying that relief might be granted to his family. He moved that it be read.

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

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

ACTING CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—Before the House passes to the Orders of the Day I wish to move that during the absence of Mr. Fraser, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Aland do act as Chairman of Committees of the whole House. Mr. Fraser is, I believe, affected by the protracted sitting of yesterday, and may be absent from the House during part of the evening.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to know whether this motion has been made with the consent of the hon. member for Toowoomba?

The PREMIER: Of course.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: If so, it looks like a little *coup d'état* on the part of the Premier. The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government knows very well that the hon. member for Toowoomba is antagonistic to the railway which is under discussion, and which has probably caused Mr. Fraser's indisposition and unfitted him to occupy the chair. Now, I think that the hon. member for Toowoomba would be acting more in accordance with true principles if he refused to act as Chairman; and the leader of the Government would be acting more in accordance with the principles which have always been carried out in this House if he asked some other member on his own side to take the chair—a member who is favourable to the passing of this Thane's Creek railway. There are many members on that side who are able to act during Mr. Fraser's absence as well as the hon. member for Toowoomba—gentlemen who do not wish to speak, and who may have been asked not to speak, on the question. It seems that some of them have agreed not to speak and to be silent for the future. I certainly object to this motion for the two reasons that I have given, and I think Mr. Aland should refuse to take the chair, and the Committee should not ask him to do it.

Mr. ALAND said: Mr. Speaker,—Perhaps I ought to say a word or two about this. I should be very sorry that hon. gentlemen opposite should think for one moment that after acting in concert with them for the last twenty-four hours I am now untrue to the position I took up. The hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. W. Brookes, spoke to me and asked me whether as a matter of kindness to Mr. Fraser I would, if it were found necessary, occupy the chair for an hour or two to relieve that gentleman; and I consented to do so.

Mr. MOREHEAD: He gets £500 a year for his services in the chair.

Mr. ALAND: So he does; but I know well that the hon. gentleman does not wish to see an old man like Mr. Fraser suffer.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: That is not the question. The question is your taking his place.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Yes; you, who are opposed to this motion, taking his place.

Mr. ALAND: All I can say is that if hon. gentlemen on the other side think I am, in offering to take the chair, acting in any way in a manner untrue to the position I have taken up upon the railway question, I will not take the chair for Mr. Fraser. But I can assure those gentlemen and the House that I consented to take the chair out of a pure feeling of kindness to the Chairman of Committees. The leader of the Opposition knows that once or twice within the last twelve or fourteen hours I expressed a feeling of sympathy with Mr. Fraser in his position.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I accept at once the statement of the hon. member, and I never for a moment thought he was acting unfairly towards members on this side of the

House; but the hon. member may possibly have overlooked the meaning of the motion which has been put to the House. It is not that the hon. member should take the chair for an hour or two, or even for a day or two, but "during the absence of the Chairman of Committees." Possibly from physical exhaustion the Chairman of Committees may not be able to take the chair during the remainder of the week; and if the hon. gentleman consents to the motion as submitted to the House, he will have to take the chair as long as the Chairman is absent. The motion reminds me of the notices which used to be set up in gardens—"Spring guns and man-traps" here. There is a good deal of the man-trap about the motion. Advantage is taken of the kindly disposition of the hon. member for Toowoomba to put him in a position the effect of which he does not fully realise. I am one of those who believe that if the Premier gets an opportunity to take a slant he will take it. I hope the hon. member will fully consider the effect of accepting the motion now before the House.

Mr. SCOTT said: Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to hear what fell from the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Aland, as I can understand how the thing came about. A similar thing happened to myself in this House some years ago. The Chairman of Committees met with some accident, and I was asked to take his place and consented to do so, and thought no more about it until I was taxed with having done so by some members on my own side. There was nothing particular going on then, and I took the position for a time and heard nothing more. I did not calculate that by doing what I did I took away a member from the strength of my own side of the House.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—Suspicion haunts the guilty mind, I suppose. It certainly did not occur to me, in proposing Mr. Aland's name, that members on the other side would see a veil of wickedness in the proposal. Mr. Aland has acted for Mr. Fraser on previous occasions. The hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, suggested to me that he might act again for him. I do not suppose the division is likely to take place while Mr. Aland is in the chair, as Mr. Fraser, I know, intends to be here this evening. The point was not worth taking and reflects no credit upon the gentleman who raised it. Under the circumstances, however, I will withdraw the name of Mr. Aland from the motion and substitute that of Mr. Foote.

Question.—That during the temporary absence of the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Foote do act as Chairman of Committees—put.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I shall object to this motion, though I do not think any member of the House would more worthily fill the position than the hon. member for Bundamba. But we are not fighting with gloves now. The Government have shown us that, and by their action, and the position they have compelled the Opposition to take up, Mr. Fraser has been incapacitated from fulfilling the duties for which he receives a considerable salary. Under the circumstances I do not see why we should be asked to fill the vacancy. Does the Premier intend to go on in this way and put all his supporters one after the other, in the chair in order to force this railway down our throats? The only reason given why Mr. Fraser is not in his place as Chairman, is that he is physically incapable of being there.

The PREMIER: I said he wished to be absent from the House for a few hours.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Does the hon. member meant to pretend that that conveys any other meaning than the language I used conveyed to the House?

Does it not mean that the hon. gentleman, knowing the Chairman of Committees is worn out, intends to put in a gentleman who will worry along for a time, and then put Mr. Fraser back? Now, are we to understand that this is to be a fight to the bitter end? Is this Thane's Creek railway to be rammed down our throats? If so, I can say it is the intention of this side of the House, and a section of the other side, not to submit to it. I do trust that the Government will now give up the fight. I might call it a half-hearted fight, because I am sure the hon. Minister for Works had no stomach for the fight. It was only under the whip and spur of the hon. member for Townsville that he was made to jump at all, and he did jump, and took the opportunity of attacking a gentleman who if he had been in the House would have warmed his skin in a way that would rather have astonished him. Of course it was within the province of the Minister for Works to attack in the way he did the late Minister for Lands. Of course he was perfectly justified according to his lights in ransacking every pigeon-hole in the Lands Office to find something upon which he could attack an absent man who could not defend himself. I think this amateur detective, the Minister for Works, who has been in office for four years—this official scavenger, who appears to have gone round to try and rake up everything which might take away from the character of those who preceded him—has not been so successful as he hoped to be when he went in on the backs of men, some of whom he has since got rid of. I believe one of his chief friends, one of his assistants in the construction of the celebrated yellow pamphlet, got a billet—

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker,—I rise to order. This is not relevant to the question.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. member, with his feeble mind, ought to know that he cannot tell until the end of my argument whether it is relevant or not to the contention I intend to set up. In the meantime I am dealing with the hon. the Minister for Works. If, at the end, my argument proves worthless, it will then be time for the hon. the Premier to say it is irrelevant. I object to be put down by the bully of the Bar, and I will not be put down. This is not a court of law; this is a tribunal where I stand as a representative of the people, and I will express my opinion irrespective of the bully of the Bar. Now, sir, I will go on to deal with the hon. the Minister for Works.

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker,—I ask your ruling on the point I raised. I insist that the debate be kept within due limits. I have moved an ordinary motion with reference to the conduct of the business of the House, and I submit that the hon. member must be kept within proper limits.

The SPEAKER: The question before the House is a motion for the appointment of Mr. Foote as acting Chairman of Committees during the temporary absence of the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Fraser. I understood the hon. member, when he rose, to say he objected to that appointment, and he must confine himself to his reasons for objecting to it.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Of course I shall give my reason for objecting to the appointment. I hope to show that the conduct of the Ministry has been such as to make us look with very grave apprehension on any recommendation they may make, and I am dealing now with one of the Ministry.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member will pardon me if I say that his arguments must have some relevancy to the motion.

Mr. MOREHEAD: If I am only given time I shall show that my remarks are relevant. I do not think it is right that I should be cornered—"cribbed, cabined, and confined"—by the leader of the Government. We are dealing with the important question of the Chairmanship of Committees, which, I assume, is to be temporarily vacated by the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Fraser. We are dealing with a matter so important that the Government consider it necessary to sit up all night over it—at least, certain members of them do; others retire to bed. I have a perfect right to discuss the merits of the individual members of the Ministry who recommend a substitute for a gentleman who was elected by the votes of this House. Mr. Fraser was elected by the votes of this House, and it may be admitted that he has done his duty fairly well, but we have now not only to discuss the merits of the hon. member for Bundamba, which I admit are very great indeed, but also to get from the Government some reason why that particular gentleman should be selected as acting Chairman of Committees. This opens up a very wide field, and I am perfectly right in pointing out the action taken by the Minister for Works in certain appointments he has made.

The PREMIER: Mr. Speaker,—I must ask your ruling distinctly on this matter. The hon. gentleman has now said that he proposes, on a motion for the appointment of a gentleman to take the chair in committee for this evening, to canvass the conduct of the Minister for Works in the administration of the Lands Department. I ask your ruling distinctly, whether that is or is not in order.

Mr. SPEAKER: On a motion for the appointment of an Acting Chairman of Committees, the hon. member cannot canvass the conduct of any Minister, unless it can be shown that the conduct of the Minister has some relevancy to the objection the hon. member raises to the appointment of the gentleman proposed as Acting Chairman of Committees.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—That is exactly what I intend to do if I can. I say that a recommendation of the present Ministry is not one that should be accepted by the House, and I was proceeding to show that, by calling attention to different appointments made by different Ministries.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member has now said what he proposes to do. I asked for a distinct ruling as to whether it is in order for the hon. member, on a motion for a purely formal appointment, to make an attack on individual Ministers with regard to the conduct of their departments. I ask your ruling, sir, as to whether his remarks are relevant or not; I submit that the hon. member has shown that they cannot be relevant to the question before the House.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order. He must confine himself to the question before the House.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I bow to your decision at once, and I proceed now to discuss the relative competency of the gentleman who is proposed to be put into this position with the competency of other gentlemen who have been introduced by the present Government. I think there can be no objection to that. I am now going to refer to the appointment of Commissioner Paul.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I must ask you to keep the hon. member in order. It is your duty to do so.

The SPEAKER: It is not competent for the hon. member to discuss the conduct of Commissioner Paul on a motion for the appointment of an acting Chairman of Committees.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Very well, sir, I will abandon Commissioner Paul, and will now come to Mr. Golden. Mr. Paul being ruled out of order, I will now deal with the appointment of Mr. Golden. As I said before, I look with very grave suspicion, with more than suspicion, upon any recommendation made by the present Government. Having regard to the position that Mr. Golden obtained as an incompetent inspector of rabbits, which he was never able to find, and afterwards as Crown Lands Dividing Commissioner, I think that in every case it must be admitted, even by his bosom friend the Minister for Works, that he was a failure. At the same time it is very expensive having such appointments made by the Government.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I must ask you to maintain your ruling. You have held that this sort of discussion is out of order, and I ask you to keep the hon. member within the limits laid down by you.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must certainly confine himself to the question before the House. The question is that Mr. Foote be appointed to act as Chairman of Committees.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—That is what I intend to confine myself to, but I think you will admit, sir, that a great amount of latitude is allowed in any other parliament in dealing with a matter of this sort. We can only arrive at the fitness or unfitness of the gentleman nominated for this office by parity of reasoning. I have no fault to find with the hon. member personally who has been nominated for the position. I have always held him to be a highly respectable man, but I intended to show that, judging by the appointments and recommendations made by the Government up to the present time, he will probably be placing himself in a position where he may not be considered a thoroughly respectable man. I would still like to point out to the House that any appointments or recommendations made by the present Government ought to be taken with considerable caution. I think that even the Premier, who appears to wish to be the bully of this House, as he is the bully of the Bar, if he will allow me to say so, must admit that there are many appointments which have been made by the present Government that I might possibly unfavourably comment upon. I suppose, sir, that after your ruling Mr. Golden must go. Therefore we will go now to Mr. Rule. Probably I shall be ruled out of order in referring to his appointment.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I submit that it is not necessary for me to continually call your attention to your ruling that the hon. member is out of order.

The SPEAKER: I may remind the hon. member for Balonne of the practice of the House of Commons in a case of this kind. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, as leader of the House, names the gentleman he desires to take the chair, when the elected Chairman of Committees is unable from illness or other cause to take the chair, and if there is any difference of opinion as to the fitness of the gentleman named, the discussion takes place on that alone. The hon. member must confine himself to the question before the House, which is that Mr. Foote be appointed Acting Chairman of Committees during the temporary absence from illness of the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Fraser.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I at once bow to your decision, and had the Premier had sufficient competence and knowledge to have informed the House that what you have now stated is the practice, I would have accepted it before. After your ruling I am convinced that I was in error.

Now, to come to the question as to the appointment of a Chairman of Committees, I think it is unfortunate that a member should have been selected for this particular post who holds very pronounced opinions on the subject of the *via recta*, and who has also expressed very pronounced views on a previous occasion, which did not altogether agree with the views of the Government. I do not know why he is selected. I admit at once that his integrity is undoubted; that his intelligence is as great as that of any member of this House—I admit that willingly and frankly; but I do not think it is fair, either to the hon. member himself or to the House, that a gentleman who is a strong and pronounced partisan on this particular railway should be put in the position of Chairman of Committees. I should much have preferred to have seen the senior member for Maryborough put in that position, as he is a gentleman who has held high office in this colony, and was at one time a colleague of the Premier, and I believe he is well up in all the forms of the House. The hon. member for Bundanba will know at once that I would not say one word that would in any way offend him, for I have a great respect for him personally; but I think that under the circumstances, seeing that he holds very strong opinions on this railway, for very good and sufficient reasons no doubt, he should not be appointed Chairman of Committees. I do not for one moment accuse the hon. member of being actuated by improper motives, but I hold that it would be very much better if a colourless politician—I do not use the term in an offensive sense—such as the senior member for Maryborough, who has not expressed any strong opinions on this subject, were appointed to the position. He is well acquainted with the forms of the House, and would, I am sure, perform the duties as ably as any member in the House. It would be better, therefore, if the Government were to put someone into the chair who has the character and the political qualifications I have described. The hon. member for Bundanba, perhaps, has no desire to sit in the chair. It cannot be a position of any great comfort to anyone. Holding these views, I must object to the hon. member for Bundanba being appointed Acting Chairman of Committees; and that hon. member will quite understand that I do so without any personal feeling in the matter at all.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I think there is no occasion for the Government to appoint a temporary Chairman now. If the Chairman of Committees is unable to attend at present, let us adjourn the business until he is able. I do not think the authority you quoted from just now provides for a case of this kind, which is of a special character; and if the Government are allowed to appoint a fresh Chairman of Committees time after time it will give an unfair advantage as against those hon. members who are determined, from thoroughly conscientious motives, to make use of all the forms of the House to oppose this railway, which they look upon as a thoroughly worthless political railway. We have a Chairman who is paid to occupy the chair permanently, and when he is unable to perform his duties, let him adjourn the Committee. If we adjourn now, until the Chairman is able to take his seat, we shall all get a rest, and we shall be able to go on cheerfully all the rest of the night. I object to see anyone put into the chair except the proper Chairman. It will be time enough to do that when the Chairman is really ill from natural causes. But he is not ill. He is merely tired, just as a good many more members of the House are; and he will be perfectly recovered, and ready for business again, I have no doubt, by 7 o'clock, after which

I expect we shall spend a very pleasant evening. In the meantime, I do not see why I should not be allowed to go away until about 7 o'clock, when the real business will begin.

The PREMIER: You will not be missed if you go.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: No doubt the hon. gentleman would be very glad to get rid of me on this occasion. But I have not the slightest intention of going away, and I do not suppose I shall be away much to-night or to-morrow night. But I enter my protest on principle against the appointment of a temporary Chairman, who may be replaced from time to time as often as one happens to get tired out; and I hope other hon. members will see the matter in the same light that I do. Then we shall be able to go on without making any invidious remarks about the qualifications of the Chairman who may be proposed from time to time.

The SPEAKER: The course proposed by the Premier is that adopted on all occasions both in the House of Commons and in Colonial Parliaments. If it should happen that the Chairman of Committees is unable to take the chair in committee when the Speaker is moved out of the chair, it is the usual practice for the leader of the House to move for the appointment of an acting chairman for the day. I would remind hon. members that in the House of Commons, where the sittings in committee last sometimes for forty-eight hours, this course is adopted. One chairman is appointed for six hours. Then the House resumes, the Speaker takes the chair, and another member is appointed for six hours. As soon as that term has expired the House again resumes, the Speaker takes the chair, and another chairman is appointed for another six hours; and so on. That is the ordinary practice. Whenever the Chairman is taken ill, or from any other cause is unable to attend to his duties, it is usual for the leader of the House to appoint an acting chairman for the day.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not think there is any doubt as to the practice of the House of Commons in appointing a deputy Speaker or a deputy Chairman of Committees. The objection, if any, to the hon. member for Bundamba as temporary Chairman is, that hon. members on this side of the House, who have entered their protest in an energetic way against the passing of a certain railway, are of opinion that the battle should be fought out under one Chairman. But that, I fear, cannot be done. I do not suppose there is any mortal man who could stand the strain for twenty-four hours after twenty-four hours, as it seems the Government intend to make it, and as we are quite prepared to do. Even if they go on for a week they may make up their minds that we shall sit that week also. I am not going to discuss the fitness of the hon. member for Bundamba for the chair. I believe he is perfectly qualified to fill the position, and to fill it very solidly too. But I will say this, that I am very glad the hon. member for Toowoomba has seen fit to withdraw his name as a candidate for the chair. I am quite certain that hon. gentleman was carried away by his feelings on behalf of Mr. Fraser, who is tired out by the long sitting since yesterday. But the hon. member should consider those with whom he is acting, as well as Mr. Fraser, seeing that there are so many hon. members on that side of the House who are perfectly qualified to take the chair. The hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Sheridan, has been mentioned by the leader of the Opposition as a gentleman who could fill the chair very well. I believe he would fill it as well as any

member of the House, and, having once occupied the position of a Minister of the Crown, he would add dignity to the position of the chair—although not, perhaps, weight, as in the case of the hon. member for Bundamba. Then there is the hon. member for Darling Downs; he might be put into the chair. I am surprised that the Premier did not select him for the chair. He is a formidable antagonist to hon. members on this side of the House, and it would have pleased us much better if he had been appointed to the position. Next to those two hon. gentlemen I would prefer Mr. Foote, for the very same reason that he is a formidable antagonist to hon. members on this side of the House on the particular question we are now debating. I would much rather see him in the chair—where he would be comparatively harmless—than sitting where he is, giving directions to the anti-stonewallers during the temporary absence, from fatigue, of the Government. I do not believe conscientiously that there is a single man on that side of the House, with the exception of the hon. member for Enoggera and the gentleman at the head of the Government, who understands what stonewalling really means, and how it can be carried on, except Mr. Foote. I prefer seeing him in the chair, where he will be, as I say, comparatively harmless. He will have no intricate questions or points of order to decide, which he cannot decide for himself. We shall have no divisions, except ordinary divisions upon moving the Chairman out of the chair, and that he report progress or no progress, and ask for leave to sit again. Those will be the only kind of motions that will be put. Therefore, I say, Mr. Foote will be harmless, but he might be very harmful where he is sitting now. I know very well that he is not at all satisfied with the tactics of the Government in carrying on this anti-stonewalling, and that if the matter was left in his hands, if it were possible to break down the stonewall and have done with it, that gentlemen would do it. That, I am happy to say, I can see no possibility of yet. The wall is still very sound, very solid, and appears, so far, to be impregnable, so that it is a matter of indifference to this side of the House who takes the chair, whether Mr. Fraser, Mr. Foote, or Mr. Sheridan. I agree entirely with Mr. Foote's nomination, and hope to see him in the chair at 7 o'clock.

Question put and passed.

MARYBOROUGH AND URANGAN RAILWAY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

Mr. FOXTON said: Mr. Speaker,—As hon. members are aware, this is a Bill introduced for the purpose of extending the time which the Vernon Coal and Land Company, Limited, were given to construct the Urangan railway as provided by the Maryborough and Urangan Railway Act of 1884. As time is short, Mr. Speaker, I shall make my remarks as brief as possible, but I think it is perhaps as well that I should recall to the memories of hon. members some of the principal provisions of that Act. It will be remembered that authority was given to the company by the Act to make a railway from the town of Maryborough, or rather from a point on the Maryborough-Burrum line, seven miles out of Maryborough, to Urangan. A mineral loop line, as it was called, from another point on the Maryborough-Burrum line, some few miles further on crossed the Urangan railway, forming a triangle. I believe there are lithographs on the table which will assist hon. members in understanding the position of affairs. That line from the Seven-mile peg, as it is called, to

Urangan and the mineral loop-line are designated in the Act "the main line of railway." There is also provision for making certain other short lines, such as a line to a place called Polson, and a duplication of the line from the school reserve in Kent street, Maryborough, to the junction of the Maryborough-Gympie, and Maryborough-Burrum lines, at a place called Croydon Junction, about two miles from Maryborough. The company were at liberty to select 1,000 acres within the Burrum coal reserve, in one block or in blocks of 964 and 40 acres, at the price of 30s. per acre. It was also required that before the company began the construction of the line, they should prove to the satisfaction of the Minister—

"That they have a capital subscribed in good faith, and by responsible persons, equal to £1,000 for every mile of railway as shown on the deposited plans, and a paid-up capital actually available for the purposes of the construction of the said railway of not less than one-tenth of such subscribed capital."

If I remember rightly, the length of the line is about twenty-four miles, including the mineral loop-line; so that hon. members will see that a considerable amount of capital will have to be subscribed before the company will be allowed to commence operations. By the 6th section they were also required to deposit in the Treasury the sum of £2,000 within six months from the passing of the Act, as security for the due completion of the line within three years, the time allowed for the construction of it from the passing of the Act, which occurred on the 23rd December, 1884. Consequently the time for the completion of the railway would, under the Act, expire on the 23rd December next. The object of the Bill is to give the company further time to complete their arrangements. It was hinted when the Bill was introduced that it would be necessary that very good reasons should be shown why this company had not undertaken the work in accordance with the provisions of the Act and carried the line to completion. The select committee took that view, and intimated directly to both Mr. Hart, of the firm of Hart and Flower, who appeared for the promoters of the Bill, and also to Mr. Rawlins, the representative of the company, that it would be necessary for them to show very conclusively that there were good reasons why this railway had not been undertaken within such time as would enable them to complete it within the period specified. If hon. members would look at the evidence—

Mr. MOREHEAD: We will read the evidence.

Mr. FOXTON: On reading the evidence hon. members will find that the reasons why the work was not undertaken earlier were that by one of the clauses of the Act power was given to the Government to purchase this line at any time after the expiration of five years. Certain gentlemen who are mentioned in the evidence, who undertook to find the necessary capital, and who were known residents of Melbourne, objected to this term of five years, and required ten. Ten years had been substituted by the select committee, but an amendment was moved in Committee of the whole House reducing the term again to five years. Those capitalists then withdrew from the company. In their place other capitalists were induced to come forward and have failed since, and another gentleman who was relied upon, Dr. Power, afterwards died. The consequence was that the company was partially left without any shareholders who were able to carry the works through. That was the position of affairs when Mr. Rawlins went to England and saw there the representatives of a company well known to hon. members, the Australasian Transcontinental Railway Syndicate, who entered into an agree-

ment with Mr. Rawlins to take up 47,000 shares out of the 50,000 of which the Vernon Coal and Railway Company consisted, and the other 3,000 were to be devoted towards liquidating certain claims against the company in the colony—claims of creditors or shareholders. All the shareholders then existing were to take fully paid-up shares, and the creditors were to do the same. Messrs. Hart and Flower were appointed agents for the Transcontinental Railway Syndicate to act for them in the colony, and their instructions are given here at length and dated 14th July, 1887, from Mr. Wm. Harvey, the secretary to the syndicate. An extraordinary meeting was afterwards held of the Vernon Coal and Railway Company by whom the contract was adopted, and Hart and Flower cabled to the syndicate in London on the 17th September last, as follows:—

"Creditors and shareholders settled with under clause 1 of agreement.

"Shares issued to Rawlins under clause 2, but lease not assigned for want of name of nominee.

"Rawlins has complied with clause 3.

"The Government have agreed to support an extension, but will not take the matter up themselves.

"We require names of nominees of Syndicate as Directors of Vernon Company.

"Resolutions by next post."

Mr. Hart informed the committee that those resolutions had been forwarded, and I have since seen a letter which was received after the deliberations of the committee had ended, acknowledging their receipt. It will therefore be seen that the matter has now been taken up in England by men who have command of a considerable amount of capital. I do not know the line; I know nothing about the matter; I know probably as little about either the syndicate or the undertaking itself as any member of the House; but it does seem to me that it would be a great advantage if this line could be constructed in the way proposed, because it will be the means of introducing a considerable amount of capital into the colony. The Committee thought, with members who had spoken on a previous occasion when the matter was before the House, that a further guarantee should be given for the due completion of the line, and they therefore introduced into the Bill a proviso to this effect:—

"Provided that the company shall, before the commencement of the railway or entering into possession of the lands to be selected under the third section of the principal Act, and within four months from the passing of this Act, deposit in the colonial Treasury a further sum of three thousand pounds, which said sum, together with the money so previously deposited as aforesaid, shall be detained by the Treasurer as security for the due completion of the main line of railway, and upon such completion shall, together with the moneys so previously deposited as aforesaid, be returned to the company."

The sum of £2,000 which had been previously paid into the Treasury has since increased to about £2,600, and the committee decided upon a further sum of £3,000, because that, together with the £2,600, will give a sum equal to 5 per cent. on the total amount of capital required to construct the line of railway and the wharves. Five per cent. would be the amount of deposit required by the Government from a contractor undertaking the construction of the line in the ordinary way. A new clause has also been introduced, providing for the forfeiture of the whole amount of the two deposits with accrued interest if the railway be not completed within four years, but that an extra six months may be granted, provided the Minister is satisfied that proper expedition has been used and substantial progress made. I do not know anything about railway-making, but my own impression is that the construction of twenty-five miles of railway and an extensive wharf-pier will take more than twelve

months. However, Mr. Rawlins is confident that the railway can be constructed in that time, though possibly it might be necessary to ask for the extra six months for the completion of the wharf. I do not know that I have anything more to say. I have endeavoured to be as brief as possible while making the matter as clear as I can to hon. members. The evidence is very short, and it appears to me to be all that we require as protecting the interests of the country in this matter. I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—The effect of this proposal would be to extend the time allowed by Parliament to the company for the construction of the line, by twelve months, and to increase the company's deposit to £5,000, which is to be forfeited if they do not make the line within the time allowed. It appears to me to be a very substantial security at any rate. The company deposit £5,000, and forfeit that deposit if they do not make the line, and, under the circumstances, I am disposed to support the Bill. It appears from the evidence that the company has materially changed in constitution since it was first formed. The names of shareholders who have disappeared are replaced by the names of shareholders in an English syndicate well known by name. I do not see that that makes any difference, as, if they make this line to develop the country and make a wharf also, they may as well be allowed to do it as anybody else. I should be very averse to extending the time allowed by the original Act unless a good guarantee was given that the railway was really intended to be made. Three years have nearly passed since the authority was given to construct the line, and very little has been done. As the company give a guarantee now of £5,000, and fully understand this time that it will certainly be forfeited if they do not make the line, I think the House will not be doing anything dangerous if they consent to the extension of time asked for.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I cannot agree altogether with what has fallen from the Premier. No case has been made out for the extension of time by the hon. member who moved the second reading of the Bill. It is an extremely interesting Bill, and in more ways than one. It shows, amongst other things, how the Premier, by going over to the other side of the world, alters his opinion, not only with reference to individuals, but also with reference to combinations of individuals. The 17th question in the evidence and the answer to it should, I think, be read by every member of this House. It is as follows:—

"And were you not also a director? I was also a director, up to that time. In November, last year, I received a letter from the secretary of the company, Mr. McMicking, informing me formally that Dr. Power was dead, and that the two Wilsons, who were directors of the company, had become insolvent; and saying that their efforts to obtain capital to carry out the scheme had proved futile in England, and asking me if I would come to Brisbane and see if I could give the necessary evidence to be sent to England to enable somebody to float a company there. I came to Brisbane at once, got all the papers together, and went home to England by the 'Merkara' in January. I arrived in England in March. I brought this matter under the notice of the 'Australian Transcontinental Railway Syndicate.' I think we have heard that name before. Indeed, the Premier himself brought that name very prominently before the House on more than one occasion, and on every occasion he spoke of it in terms of opprobrium and contempt.

"After a meeting of the directors of that syndicate, I waited on Sir Samuel Griffith, who was then in London on some other business connected with Queensland. At that meeting the Maryborough and Urangan Railway

was to have been discussed. The secretary, on the 9th of May, wrote me a letter, saying that a meeting had been arranged with Sir Samuel Griffith, at St. Stephen's Club, Westminster, for Wednesday, 11th of May, and he said after the interview with Sir Samuel, the Urangan line would be discussed then."

It is very interesting to find that the Premier is a member of the most conservative club in London, and yet he poses here as a great Liberal.

The PREMIER: I am not a member of the most conservative club in London.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Then the hon. member must have got in on the card of membership of some other club, or else the evidence of this gentleman is untruthful. I assume from this evidence that there was a meeting.

The PREMIER: Yes, I met some gentlemen on the 11th May at St. Stephen's Club, by appointment. I was not a member of the club, and, in fact, declined the honour of membership which was offered me, because they made it a condition that I should be a Conservative, and should sign a paper to that effect.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I know what the hon. gentleman was asked to sign, but as he disagreed with Gladstone they might have let him in on that ground. The witness went on to say:—

"I understood subsequently from the secretary and from Sir Samuel Griffith that nothing was said about this proposal at the meeting. I went to Euston Station on the 19th of May, to see Sir Samuel Griffith leave by the train, and I then told him that the Australian Transcontinental Railway Syndicate were considering the matter of taking up the Vernon Coal and Railway Company's shares and carrying out the scheme; and I asked, if I got them to do so, would he give me any hope of getting his support for an extension of time necessary to complete the line. He said, 'Yes; if you show *bona fides*, I will give you my support,' and he mentioned the matter, introducing me to Sir James Garrick as coming under his approval."

The Premier approved of it, and introduced the gentleman to Sir James Garrick.

"The subsequent transactions with the Australian Transcontinental Railway Syndicate led to an agreement being drawn up between myself and the syndicate, dated 24th June of this year, whereby I agreed to get the Vernon Coal and Railway Company to sell to the Australian Transcontinental Railway Syndicate 47,000 shares. By that agreement I propose to get the capital to carry out the scheme whose main features are laid down in this paper. [Document put in and marked—Appendix A.] I include valuations made by Mr. Barry, Mr. Keate Hall, and myself. The amount of money I want is £134,000."

Now we will go a little further and refer to question 23, and it is there stated:—

"Who are the members of the board? Lord Denbigh and William Duncan, directors. The members of the Australian Transcontinental Railway Syndicate, who will be members of the Vernon Coal and Railway Company in London, are—the Hon. Major-General Feilding, Lord Denbigh, William Meets, of Jardine, Matheson, and Co., the Duke of Manchester, Henry Campbell, William Braby, ironmaster, and William Duncan, banker. That agreement was made subject to confirmation by the company, a meeting of which was held on the 31st of August last, at which it was resolved decidedly to carry out the terms of the agreement. [Resolutions, etc., read—Appendix D.]

I would like to know from the Premier whether these are the gentlemen who formed the directorate, at any rate, of the Transcontinental Railway Syndicate, who were so discredited by him on a previous occasion.

The PREMIER: When?

Mr. MOREHEAD: And who are to be so favourably treated by him on the present occasion.

The PREMIER: You are mixing up two things.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman has mixed up too much with those highly decorated people at home, and it has altered the views he

held before to a considerable extent. Now, I wonder that the hon. gentleman has allowed his views to be changed in this way. Some years ago there was no term of opprobrium that he did not apply to Major-General Feilding and others on this transcontinental syndicate.

The PREMIER: You are drawing on your imagination again.

Mr. MOREHEAD: No. I have a powerful imagination, and when I wish to draw on it it is there, but just now I am stating what is known to every member of this House. There was no name too bad for the hon. gentleman to apply to those connected with this transcontinental syndicate.

The PREMIER: I should like you to quote one instance.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman can find one for himself; the volumes are in front of him. Now, he has proved that those men are not what he described them, by allowing an agreement to be entered into with them when he was at the other side of the world. By the action of the Premier himself some years ago, the word "syndicate" has become a word of opprobrium. It has a legitimate and honourable meaning, but now it is used as a byword. Even the hon. the Colonial Secretary the other night, in a little sly poke at me, alluded to some syndicates I was in, as if it were a term of opprobrium and contempt. Now, we see how the whirligig of time brings in his revenges. We find the Premier seeing no objection to this Bill, although it is the outcome of negotiations that took place between himself and, inferentially, the Agent-General, and this much abused transcontinental syndicate. I would ask the hon. gentleman if he is going to stop this transcontinental business here, or is he prepared, assuming they make a fresh offer to the Government, to consider a proposition from them for a railway across the continent? Would he consider a proposition from them for the construction of these much-debated lines that are before us now? It would be a good thing if the hon. gentleman and the hon. member who introduced this Bill were to go home at their own expense and negotiate with this syndicate for the construction of the railways to Thane's Creek and to South Brisbane. Now, sir, the Premier occupies with regard to this Bill a peculiar position. He is bound to advocate the passage of this measure because he has been taken into consultation by those people at home and has agreed to what they proposed.

The PREMIER: The evidence shows that that was not so.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The evidence shows it was so.

The PREMIER: Nothing was said about this proposal.

Mr. MOREHEAD: He passed them on to Sir James Garrick.

The PREMIER: Not at all.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Well, I will read it again:—

"Yes, if you show *bona fides* I will give you my support'; and he mentioned the matter, introducing me to Sir James Garrick as coming under his approval."

Mr. McMASTER: That was Rawlins; he passed Rawlins on.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Passed anything you like on; call him Smith if you like, or call him McMaster; he passed the agent on to the Agent-General. I say there was a moral endorsement made by the Premier at home in favour of this line.

The PREMIER: If it is a *bond fide* line I said I would support it.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That is all I contended for. In anything the Premier does, or says, or writes, he always has a saving clause, and *bona fides* in this case was to be the saving clause. That does not interfere with the fact that the Premier leant towards doing business with a syndicate which years ago in this House he utterly and remorselessly condemned, and the records of the House prove that. Now, sir, I shall not support the second reading of this Bill. I think it is surrounded by too many elements of suspicion and doubt. When the Premier suddenly changes his opinion with regard to an individual we cannot be too careful; and this Bill would never have been brought into the House had it not been for the moral endorsement of the Premier. The hon. member for Carnarvon said nothing in favour of the Bill, and I do not think he could say anything in favour of it. He said we had the evidence before us, which is true, and that we had the Bill before us, which is also true, but he never gave any sufficient reason why the second reading of this Bill should pass. It is now 6 o'clock, and I have said my say.

At 7 o'clock,

The SPEAKER said: In accordance with the Sessional Order, the private business under discussion when the House adjourned at 6 o'clock now stands adjourned till after the discussion of Government business.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

THE MINING INDUSTRY.—SOUTH BRISBANE RAILWAY CONTRACTOR.

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that this House do now adjourn. I do so for the purpose of bringing before the Government the persistently unfair manner in which the mining industry is treated by this Government, and especially in the northern part of the colony; and I shall commence by reading the opinion of a paper which is a strong supporter of the Government.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to call your attention to the state of the House.

Quorum formed.

Mr. HAMILTON: At the same time it does not sacrifice its principles to party purposes, but honestly and straightforwardly advocates what it considers right, though in doing so it may not be advocating the policy of the party it generally supports. The paper I refer to is the *Cooktown Independent*, which, in referring to this matter in a leading article, states as follows:—

"We cannot shut our eyes to the stern facts revealed by statistics, which prove that, since their accession to power, the Liberal Ministry have not only been illiberal, but unjust, in their treatment of the most important industry in the colony. The amounts voted for prospecting and opening new goldfields have been as follows:—1879-80, £2,000; 1880-1, £689 15s. 7d.; 1881-2, £720 18s. 1d.; 1882-3, £110; total, £3,520 13s. 8d., all of which was expended by the McIlwraith Ministry—namely, £3,220 15s. 2d. on the Northern, and £299 18s. 6d. on the Southern fields. In 1883-4 the vote was £2,000, and for 1884-5, £5,000, of which £558 1s. 11d. were expended in the North, and £108 12s. in the South; £6,333 6s. 1d. being allowed to lapse. Of the £10,000 voted in 1885-6 to assist deep sinking only £1,150 were expended up to 1st May, 1886, and not one penny of it in the North. The actual expenditure, however, up to August was—Gympie, £713 10s.; Cawarral, £122; and Morinish, £231. Then there are £1,264 6s. 4d. for material and tubing, &c., connected with diamond drills, which should never have been charged to this vote. The total amount expended is therefore £3,330 16s. 4d., leaving an unexpended balance of £6,669 3s. 8d. from the vote of last year. This year there are £5,000 on the Estimates for the same purpose, and which will probably result like the previous vote, in a third being spent in the

south and two-thirds lapsing. The amounts expended for diamond drill material were of no benefit to the North, as both drills were purchased by a sum of £3,000 on the Supplementary Estimates of 1885-6, and both have been kept in the South, one at Dalby boring for coal on Crown lands, and the other at Maryborough boring for coal on private property, at a ruinous loss to the country, for the benefit of wealthy speculators. The foregoing figures reveal the facts that of the modest votes passed by the McIlwraith Ministry, every penny was expended, scarcely a tenth being expended in the South, while of the £17,000 for which the Griffith Ministry have got credit for passing to assist mining, only the paltry sum of £558 1s. 11d. has been spent in the North, while the sum of £13,063 3s. has virtually lapsed or remains unexpended. Of £3,520 13s. 8d., voted by the McIlwraith Ministry from 1879 to 1883, £3,220 15s. 8d. were expended in the North for the legitimate assistance of mining, while out of £17,000 voted by the Liberal Ministry, the North has got only £558 1s. 11d. It was not the fault of Northern residents and miners that advantage was not taken of the provision for which they had been waiting anxiously for three years, but because the Minister for Works declared emphatically that not one pound could be advanced to assist deep sinking, until the shafts were first selected and recommended by Mr. Jack. To render the survey and selection impossible, one man who would be allowed to do such work was coolly taken away from his important and imperative duties, and turned into a hydraulic engineer in the West. Mining, and especially Northern mining, has thus been fooled by the sight on paper of what could never have been intended to be expended for its benefit. The Minister for Works had repeated applications from this district, and the answer was always that Mr. Jack would be sent when disengaged, but he was kept until the vote lapsed, without a penny of it being spent in the North. No matter what their professions may be, and no matter how stoutly we may have defended their other measures, we must independently denounce Ministerial treatment of Northern mining, as glaringly unjust. Sir Samuel Griffith must know that mining has done more for the progress and settlement of this colony and its southern neighbours, than any other industry; and here we have had in this district, the premier field waiting for the promised assistance to develop its second and more permanent life. If the Palmer reefs had been situated in Victoria they would have been supporting a population of 20,000 years ago. Every resident in this district believed in the promises of a Ministry whom they supported, but they must now confess that their most vital interests have been disregarded by at least one Minister. There is yet time to remedy 'something of the past,' by promptly sending Mr. Jack or a qualified substitute to the Palmer, in order that its just share of the vote for deep sinking may be speedily and practically applied to the development of the richest reefing district in Australia."

That article was written in September, 1886. There was yet time for the Government to do something, but they did not take advantage of their opportunity, and nothing has been done. The article correctly states that at about the time it was written there remained out of the £10,000 voted for prospecting purposes during the financial year of 1885-6 an unexpended balance of £6,669. That was subsequently during the same year disposed of in the following manner:—August 26, freight and diamond drills, £47 6s. 4d.; September 2, diamond drill, &c., £336 6s. 6d.; September 9, diamond drill, £932 0s. 7d.; September 23, freight and diamond drill, £5 1s. 11d.; September 30, tin-mining company, Stanthorpe, £16 19s. 1d.; total, £1,337 3s. 11d. Deduct this expenditure of £1,337 3s. 11d. from the unexpended balance of £6,669, and a balance of £5,331 19s. 9d. remains. This sum was not allowed to lapse, but it was carried forward, so that when the vote in 1886-7 of £5,000 for loans in aid of deep sinking was passed, there was also the balance of £5,331 19s. 9d. from the vote of the previous year available—altogether £10,331 19s. 9d. That sum has been expended in the following manner:—1886.—September 3, Stanthorpe tin mines, £13 19s.; September 3, diamond drills, £6 19s. 3d.; September 11, fuel for diamond drill at Wide Bay, £7 16s.; October 14, Great Monkland, Gympie, £170 10s.; October 20, diamond drill, 10s.; November 6,

Gympie, £225; November 6, Stanthorpe, £5; November 17, Stanthorpe, £47 6s. 11d.; December 9, Great Monkland, Gympie, £202 10s.; December 9, P. C., Norton Diggings, £48; December 17, Welcome Reef, Morinish, £238. 1887: January 7, Commission to Mr. Palmer, superintending construction of drills at Melbourne, £200; January 28, Norton Diggings, £62; February 18, Gympie Great Monkland, £225; March 4, Stanthorpe, £47 13s. 9d.; May 12, Great Monkland, Gympie, £187 10s.; May 12, London Gold Mining Company, Gympie, £20; June 28, Advance Reef, Norton Diggings, £16; June 30, Hit or Miss, Crocodile Creek, £322; July 8, Great Monkland, Gympie, £285; July 8, Prospecting Association, Bowen, £60; July 22, diamonds for diamond drill at Mount Morgan, £113 15s.; August 12, white lead for drill, 12s. 8d.; September 29, Great Monkland, Gympie, £262 10s.; total, £2,767 12s. 7d. The unexpended balance of £7,564 7s. 2d. lapsed. Of the whole amount expended the sum of £60 only was spent in the North. When the subject came before the House last year great objection was taken to the fact that large sums of money were placed on the Estimates by the Government for prospecting purposes, and that they were allowed to lapse at the end of the year or were carried forward on the Estimates to the following year. The Government in this way treated the mining industry very unfairly, and of the small amount expended an exceptionally small sum was spent in the North, as I have shown by the figures which I have read to the House. Out of £10,331 19s. 9d., only £2,767 12s. 7d. has been spent in the whole colony, and out of that £2,767 12s. 7d. only £60 has been spent in the northern portion of Queensland. It seems a farce to put large sums of money on the Estimates for that purpose and not spend them. It must also be remembered that when the imposition of a tax on machinery was proposed, one argument used in favour of it was that the Government would put an equally large sum on the Estimates for prospecting purposes. But they have not put on an equally large sum, because £14,000 was realised last year from the machinery tax, while only £10,300 was put on the Estimates for prospecting purposes, of which, as I have said, only £60 was spent last year in Northern Queensland, and only £2,700 in the entire colony. And, at the same time, the Government are reducing the paltry vote to one-third—namely, £2,000 a year—which has hitherto been spent in the North on excepted roads to develop the mines; in fact, the mining interests are being attacked in every possible way by the present Government. My object in moving the adjournment is to have these facts placed on record, to enable the miners to see how their interests are being neglected by the present Government.

Mr. CAMPBELL said: Mr. Speaker,—I will take advantage of the motion to bring a matter under the notice of the Minister for Works. Some four years ago the Government of the day—I think it was the late Government—took over from the South Brisbane Railway contractor his work, and, at the same time, all the material and plant on the works, having taken an inventory of them. When the work was completed there was something like £1,150 due to the contractor, which was paid. He has made application on several occasions for a list of the plant that was taken from him. The Engineer promised it from time to time, and when I called upon the Engineer-in-Chief, he also promised me that he would have a list of it made out and handed over. Mr. Wockner came to Brisbane to get the list, but for some reason they declined to give it to him. They told him he could go and take the plant he could find there. He found some of it and took it away. But a very large

portion of it was missing. It is a very hard thing when a contractor's plant has been taken away from him in that way, and when, after all, there was a certain sum of money coming to him, that the Government will not consent to return the plant which they took away from him. I specially ask the Minister for Works to inquire into this matter, because it is no use either Mr. Wockner or myself applying to the Engineer for justice.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker.—I will make the necessary inquiries, so as to give the hon. member the information he desires.

Question.—That the House do now adjourn—put and negatived.

WARWICK TO THANE'S CREEK RAILWAY.

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. BLACK said they had the honour to see the Chairman (Mr. Foote) in the chair for the first, but not, he hoped, the last time. But he should like to have a little information from the Premier as to how he had been placed in that position. They had hitherto been accustomed to see a gentleman in the chair who had filled it worthily and with credit, and who was, elevated to that position by a vote of the House at the commencement of Parliament. He wished to know from the Premier what was the mode of procedure usually adopted in cases where, owing to a lengthened sitting, the Chairman might be considered entitled to that rest which other hon. members could take when they felt a little weary. It struck him that in a case of that kind, when a substitute had to be appointed, a vote of the House should be taken upon it. He was not in any way deprecating the hon. member's presence in the chair, because he knew it would be filled ably and impartially. He simply wanted a little information as to the mode of procedure by which he had been moved to occupy that honourable position.

The PREMIER said that if the hon. member had been in his place in the afternoon, when the Chairman was ordered to take the chair for the day in the absence of Mr. Fraser, he would have had no need to ask the question; as he would have heard the Speaker point out that the practice of the Imperial Parliament was when in consequence of illness the Chairman of Committees was unable to take his seat, and it was necessary to appoint someone to fill his place for the day, for the leader of the House to name a member of the House whom he desired to take the chair, and he was thereupon appointed by the House. If it was done before the House resolved itself into committee, it was done by motion, and disposed of at once. If it was done in consequence of a protracted sitting, and the Chairman being unable to remain any longer in the chair, the Speaker resumed the chair, and the motion was made. That was the practice; and that was the practice that had been followed that afternoon, which the hon. member would have seen if he had been present. He (the Premier) moved that, in the absence of Mr. Fraser, the hon. member who then occupied the chair

should act as Chairman. He wished before he sat down to do what he did not very often do, that was to refer to a statement in the Press. He saw in a paper published that evening a paragraph stating:—

"The following are the new Standing Orders which it is generally believed in the Assembly the Premier will attempt to apply to the opposition to the Thane's Creek Railway."

Then followed three paragraphs. Now, a thing might be "generally believed" for many reasons, but first of all there must be somebody who had made the statement. He desired to say that whoever made that statement, which was "generally believed"—he did not believe it was "generally believed," it must have been an extremely partial belief—whoever had made the statement from which that inference was drawn was a deliberate liar. He could use no more proper language to express it. There was absolutely no foundation for any such statement. It was absolutely false and unfounded. It was a statement made simply for the purpose of damaging the Government, and had absolutely no foundation whatever. Somebody had made that statement, he assumed, and had induced some persons to believe in it. He knew pretty well the source from which most of the falsehoods circulated about the Government emanated. Whether it came from that particular source he did not know, but wherever the source it had absolutely no foundation. The rules laid down there were simply absurd. The idea of anyone who wanted to enforce the closure proposing that there must be at least forty members in favour of it in a House of fifty-nine! The person who framed that must be a lunatic. He had never seen those rules before, or if he had seen them it must have been in the Press as relating to what was done in some other country. He protested against such statements being introduced into any paper, when there was no foundation for dreaming even that he ever proposed to do anything of the kind.

Mr. BLACK said he was very glad to have heard the explanation of the Chief Secretary as to the mode of procedure by which the Chairman had been placed in the chair. He could excuse the irritability which the hon. gentleman had shown in consequence of his having had the audacity to trouble him to give the information which he had just given. The hon. gentleman, however, must bear in mind that the fact of his absence from that Committee last evening was, perhaps, to a certain extent justifiable. While he was performing his duty to the country and his constituency last night, the hon. leader of the Government deserted his party at a time when they were most in need of his services and went quietly home to bed—at least he assumed that he went to bed. The Chairman, who was present last night, must have seen the humiliating and deplorable position in which the Government were placed by the absence of the only member of the party who was at all able to conduct the affairs of that House or the country.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: The Government were away.

Mr. BLACK said he would accept the suggestion of the hon. member for Townsville, and say "the Government were away." They deserted their post last night, and a few subordinates, who, with the assistance of the under secretaries of the departments, did carry out some minor details in the administration of the affairs of the country, were all that were left in that Chamber to represent the Government, when a most important matter was under discussion. In connection with the paragraph in the paper to which the Premier referred, about the proposals, or supposed intentions, of the Government to

introduce clôtüre into that Chamber, he had seen the article, he thought, in the *Telegraph* newspaper of that night.

The PREMIER: I saw it in the *Observer*.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Not in the hon. gentleman's own newspaper.

Mr. BLACK said, as they were aware, there was a good deal of jealousy between the proprietors of rival newspapers, and he had no doubt that a great deal of the irritation which the Premier had shown arose from the fact that a paper, which was a rival of his own, had obtained information before he thought fit to give it to his own paper. That was the only justification, to his mind, of the hon. gentleman for the very strong language he used in denouncing somebody—language which he certainly thought was not parliamentary—calling somebody a liar; and he regretted very much that the Chairman, on the first occasion of his occupying that chair, had not called the hon. gentleman to order after using language in that Chamber which, coming from him, he could not but describe—to put it mildly—as extremely disgraceful. The hon. gentleman had tried to gag that Committee—that was the plain English of the word “clôtüre,” and, he believed, a much more expressive one. Whether the hon. gentleman did intend to attempt to gag them of course he could not say; but he had slight reason to believe that he was very nearly doing it on a very recent occasion; that he was quite prepared to do so; and if it had been carried out the Chairman in particular and his constituency would have been amongst those who were likely to be most affected by it. The Chief Secretary had referred to the impracticability of the clôtüre as described in the *Observer* that night. He (Mr. Black) thought whoever wrote that article in the *Observer* had probably copied it verbatim from the English Act. He thought he was right in saying that the English Act provided for a majority of forty. Of course, not being in the Premier's confidence, he was unable to say what the number was he proposed to introduce; but he thought forty would be a very suitable number. If the hon. gentleman did attempt to put the gag on the House, he thought it would be only fair that he should secure a majority of forty to do it. The hon. gentleman had rather ridiculed the idea of forty, and he would ask him what number he intended to propose, because, if it were a majority of a smaller number than that, he thought any attempt to introduce the clôtüre would be attended with very great danger to the privileges of that Chamber and the interests of the country. However, he would not occupy the time of the Committee longer. He had no doubt the Government did intend that night to do what they failed to do so signally last night—that was, to give some idea of what their intention was in connection with the special notice of motion which they had then under discussion. If the Government did intend to introduce the very obnoxious principle of the gag, hon. members would know what to do, and to what extent to adopt the present proceedings in connection with that new and aggressive measure to which the Premier had referred.

The PREMIER: What is that?

Mr. BLACK: The gag, to which the hon. member referred when he called attention to the paragraph in the *Observer*.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he did not intend to assist in stonewalling; he merely rose to say a few words in reference to the paragraph read by the Premier. Its appearance in the *Observer* did not surprise him after the address from the hon. member for Townsville on the subject at an

early hour that morning. The hon. member said there was a whisper all about—in the library, in the lobbies, and even outside the precincts of the House—that such a thing as the clôtüre was to be enforced, and that he had been informed that it had been intended to enforce it in connection with the stonewalling on the part of the West Moreton members. He (Mr. Macfarlane) did not believe there was any intention on the part of the Government to enforce the clôtüre, either on the present or on the previous occasion. The hon. member for Townsville assumed a new rôle that morning. After speaking on various matters he informed the Committee that he had peeped under the cloak of the one-man Government—he had lifted the cloak—and seen underneath. The hon. member with his omniscient eye professed to have been able to see the thoughts and feelings of the one-man Government; and had told hon. members that there was very little humanity underneath. He (Mr. Macfarlane) gave the hon. member credit for always being able to make out a plausible case—the hon. member could sometimes make white look black, and black look white—but he thought it his duty to say that any remarks made in that Chamber in the morning they need not be surprised to see mentioned in the afternoon Press of the same day.

Mr. DICKSON said he was not surprised at the Premier calling attention to the matter, but he thought the hon. member had saddled the wrong horse, because the *Observer* was by no means the first to inform hon. members of the intentions of the Government. Hon. members had heard that morning, from the hon. member for North Brisbane, a speech unprecedented in that Chamber—a speech which had elicited from him the interjection, “Never hit a man behind his back.” The hon. member for Townsville thought at the time that the interjection was directed at him, but it was uttered in consequence of the unjustifiable attack made by the hon. member for North Brisbane on the Premier who was absent. Though he differed from the Premier and the Minister for Works, he (Mr. Dickson) spoke to them face to face and not behind their backs, and he was surprised that a gentleman who had thoroughly supported them, had most obsequiously supported the Premier and the Government hitherto, should have turned round on the Premier during his temporary absence that morning in such an astonishing manner. That hon. member called the Government a one-man Government, and pointed out that the Premier assumed the rôle of a melodramatic hero draped in a long robe, under which he concealed dynamite and other instruments of destruction.

Mr. W. BROOKES: No!

Mr. DICKSON said the hon. member stated that underneath that robe were instruments of destruction, and that there was one instrument of a most nefarious character which he had not revealed even to his colleagues; and then he added—he did the hon. member the justice to admit that he did not say it was positively intended, but that he had learned the intention confidentially—that he believed that the Premier intended to proceed with the clôtüre. The hon. member referred to it as having been formulated on account of the position taken up by the West Moreton members with regard to the Redistribution Bill, and said he had no doubt that it was to be applied to the discussion on the Thane's Creek railway. Whatever suspicion the Committee might have concerning the rumour that the clôtüre was to be applied to the debate, there was no doubt that the speech of the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, gave rise to that rumour

primarily; therefore he did not think the Premier was right in attributing, to the Opposition at any rate, that they had been the first to insinuate that the hon. gentleman intended to proceed in the manner suggested.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought the remarks made by the hon. member for Enoggera with regard to the hon. member for North Brisbane were quite uncalled for.

Mr. DICKSON: Very true, though.

Mr. MOREHEAD said the hon. gentleman might say they were very true, but he might be allowed to state his reasons for differing from him. The hon. member had stated that the hon. member for North Brisbane stabbed or struck at the Premier behind his back. Why did he strike him behind his back? Because the Premier showed his back—that was the only part exposed. If the Premier was to be allowed to run away and bolt on any occasion he chose, was it to be called stabbing him behind his back because he was not present? The Premier had as great, or a greater, duty to perform in that Committee than any other member of it, and if they were debarred from commenting upon the conduct of that gentleman because he did not choose to be present, all he had to do was to continually absent himself, and then say that anyone who commented upon his conduct was stabbing him behind his back. The thing was too absurd to require any further comment on his part, and he would leave the hon. gentleman in the hands of a gentleman who was quite able and willing and competent to deal with him, and that was the hon. junior member for North Brisbane, Mr. W. Brookes.

Mr. W. BROOKES said in one of the late Charles Dickens's most interesting novels, there was a character so well drawn that it had excited the admiration of the whole world. The book he referred to was "Martin Chuzzlewit." It was a long time since he had read it; but he remembered that one character—a masterly delineation of a snob and hypocrite—had struck him very forcibly. That gentleman's name was Pecksniff, and his peculiarity was that while professing to know a great deal he knew very little. He called himself a land surveyor, because out of his window he saw a great extent of country, but he was also distinguished by another characteristic, and that was, when he had a simple thing to say he used a large amount of verbosity and circumlocution. A common phrase of his was "a really sound national policy." He believed in big things. Anything in the direction of frugality—anything that looked like a wish to make two ends meet, and not to go into debt—was enough to call from him the most pharisaical expressions of deep abhorrence. Although there was no other character, at all events in that interesting work of fiction, approaching him in the piquancy with which it was sketched, there was one feature of his character upon which he ought to say one word, and that was, that while he presented one side to the world he was quite another man to those who actually knew him—just as though he had posed as being a financier able to teach the Rothschilds, when the fact of the matter was, he could hardly add up an ordinary column of figures. Then there was another feature in his character, and that was, that when he thought a charge against a person of stabbing him behind the back could be established, he thought his own character for virtue was based upon a foundation of adamant. The fact was, that such a reputation as Charles Dickens described had been established by the sole and single means of jumping on other people's shoulders. There was no personal merit in the man at all. He was, to use a concise word, a consummate impostor.

Now, he (Mr. Brookes) had described a character which he supposed Dickens must have seen the ideal of, and the question suggested itself, had Charles Dickens ever visited Queensland? He did not know that he ever had, but the photograph which Dickens had drawn of that eminent man certainly resembled some people he (Mr. Brookes) had seen in his life in Queensland very much. He had seen many Pecksniffs, and he had a gentleman in his mind now who really approached more nearly the picture Charles Dickens drew than any other person he had ever met in his life. He should not tell them who it was; he should keep that a profound secret. But passing on to the speech which had been delivered by the ex-Treasurer—the Committee knew whom he was talking about now—the secessionist—the man who left his friends when they most needed him, and when no other man would have left his friends—

Mr. DICKSON: Not if he had changed his opinions?

Mr. BROOKES: He appeared to have hastened his departure because the Premier's discovery of his real quality as a Treasurer seemed to be nigh at hand. What he was going to say was that ever since that hon. member's re-appearance in the House—

Mr. DICKSON: No thanks to you for it.

Mr. BROOKES: Did hon. members now see any trace of Charles Dickens? Ever since the hon. member made his re-appearance in the House, he had been pursuing him (Mr. Brookes) with such small ability as nature had endowed him with, because he had called him, at a public meeting at Red Hill, a "flabby politician." That was a sin against the holy financier which could not be forgiven. Was it egotism for him to say that every speech the hon. member had delivered in the House had corroborated his opinion? It was a particularly true and applicable epithet to apply to the hon. member, and he thought so still, for a more boneless Treasurer the world had never seen outside of a circus. Now, the hon. member had stated broadly, with all the courage of a pot-lion, that he (Mr. Brookes) had struck the Premier behind his back. The Premier was a gentleman who, he was sure, would not believe that, whoever said it, especially coming from such a decayed authority as the person who left him in his need. Now, what were the facts of the case? He (Mr. Brookes) happened to speak first that morning, but he did not know that his speech was not reported. He knew, of course, that the Premier was absent, because he could not see him in his place, but when he said what he had, he had the certain and distinct conviction that the Premier would read it in to-morrow's *Hansard*. Now, he really treated that remark as the idle wind, because the hon. member who uttered it was very little else but wind. His verbosity had often afforded him (Mr. Brookes) an immense amount of amusement, but his verbosity and circumlocution seemed to resolve themselves into nothing but flatulency. And when a member cast out firebrands in this way, what was it to him what erroneous assertions he made? It mattered nothing if he only injured and degraded him (Mr. Brookes) in the eyes of the House and the public.

Mr. DICKSON: I do not want to degrade you or any other man.

Mr. BROOKES said he did not believe the hon. gentleman knew what he wanted. That was his private opinion. The hon. member for Townsville, the hon. gentleman went on to say, followed in the same track that he had been pursuing, by having something to say about the *clôture*. So he did,

and he (Mr. Brookes) was the first to mention the *clôture*, and why did he mention it? How did he get to know of it? Was there any hon. gentleman believed that he invented it? What object could he have in view in inventing such a thing? When he first heard the *clôture* mentioned it was with quite a shudder, to think that a Queensland House of Assembly, after the first twenty-five years of its existence, should be so hard pressed to pass its measures as to find it necessary to have even mention made of the *clôture*. But he had very good grounds for believing that it would be introduced. It was very well known; there was no secrecy about the *clôture* having been mentioned as a possible political instrument of torture, which was to be applied to the West Moreton members if they did not behave themselves and come to heel like so many hounds. That was what he had in view, but, of course, he was not dealing with the simple fact. He wanted to assert that it was not his invention, and the hon. member for Townsville was perfectly right when he said it was whispered in the lobbies, in the refreshment-room, in the library, and in the corridors, and, of course, everyone seemed to know something about it except the Minister for Works, who assumed a virtuous innocence and ignorance which he did not believe he possessed.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: He admitted he had seen it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I said I had heard of it.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Did the hon. gentleman ever see the resolutions?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No.

Mr. W. BROOKES said he did go so far as to say that it had been seen in manuscript.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The leader of the Opposition said so.

Mr. W. BROOKES said, should he challenge the hon. gentleman to say whether he had heard of the *clôture* being in manuscript and had not seen it? No, he would not complicate matters. He would confine himself—

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have never seen it in manuscript.

Mr. W. BROOKES said he would confine himself to what seemed to be at present a perfect *bonne bouche* in the ex-Treasurer, and he should not leave him until he had plucked a few of his tail feathers out. That hon. member had commenced his speech by criticising him. He said he had drawn a very gloomy picture of the financial state of the colony, but if he (Mr. Brookes) had been pessimist the hon. member for Enoggera at once became optimist, and went on with a lot of most extraordinary statements. The hon. gentleman always employed the same phrase. They would find it in every speech he ever made. "If he thought the line was not part of a national policy he would not have supported it." What did he mean by a "national policy?" Was it because the hon. member four years ago was a consenting party to approving of a loan of £10,000,000—although of all men in the House, of all men in the colony, he ought to be the very one who should be quick to ascertain the changes in the commercial and financial atmosphere—although he ought to be quick in grasping those things, as a good barometer indicated the atmospheric changes—yet the hon. member seemed to think that because a certain policy was announced, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, it permitted of no change in the year 1887, or three years after. The hon. gentleman as good as asserted that anyone who recommended the principle of rest and be thankful—anyone who counselled such a thing as that must be wrong. He was the gentleman who advised now in diffi-

cult times a headlong policy, going at the same pace when breakers were ahead and the leadsmen showed that the water was getting shallower and shallower. The man who gave that advice had been for several years Colonial Treasurer, and he (Mr. Brookes) would ask, did not that show why they were in the shallows, with such a man to take the soundings; was it not a wonder that the good ship Queensland had not been in the gravel long ago? Then the hon. member went on to speak as though he were a leading commercial authority and presumed to act the "heavy father," and gave him some very solid advice, and to describe him as a person who hardly knew his right hand from his left, and was not worth listening to upon a matter so deeply affecting the country and the commercial welfare of Brisbane. The hon. member seemed to think he knew more about the commercial welfare of Brisbane than he (Mr. Brookes) did. He was not going to measure swords with the hon. member as to their commercial capacity, but if the hon. member knew more of the subject he would have been more modest. Those who knew something of a subject, and whose advice was most valuable, did not continually advertise themselves like so much Holloway's ointment, but they held back. The hon. member used a most extravagant and extraordinary argument. Because he disapproved of an expenditure which would commit a colony without a shilling to bless itself with—that seemed extravagant, but the hon. member for Townsville made it clear that morning that when they paid their debts at the end of next June there would be a deficit. The hon. member for Enoggera had given expression to some dreams he had about the immense value of the border trade that would result from the construction of the proposed line. It had been shown that the line passed through an immense length of bad land, and would cost at the least £1,100,000; and because he (Mr. Brookes) could not see the very small amount of trade which would result from the formation of that line, in contrast with its enormous cost—because he did not see that that would make the fortunes of the merchants of Brisbane, and because he did not see that that would appreciably and perceptibly increase the trade of the Brisbane shopkeepers, he was blind. What was the reason he did not see it? Because there was actually nothing there to see. On the best investigation he had been able to give that subject, he found that all the dreams about the value of that border trade were really imaginative; but the actual cost was certain—at least, £1,100,000. All the evidence led to that. They had only to look at the engineer's estimate, and, as the hon. member for Townsville had said, the estimate of the engineer might be safely doubled, and they would then be within the mark. He had not intended to occupy the time of the Committee that night, nor did he dream he would have to take up the time he had taken, but when he found a gentleman who had been a Minister of the Crown—a miserable retreater—a person who backed out from a situation he never could fill—though that had made him feel thankful—but even a dog might run away, but he did not like to see a dog run away with his tail between his legs. There was a time for everything, even to secede from a Government. It was not an unknown circumstance for a Minister of the Crown to differ from his colleagues. Lords Carnarvon and Derby had done that at home, but how had they done it? Not by fouling the nest they were just leaving. They took care to leave their offices clean, straight, and orderly, and everything was to be found that was required. Was that the case in the instance before them?

Mr. DICKSON: It was undoubtedly the case.

Mr. W. BROOKES: Did they not hear excuses offered by the Premier that whenever he went to the office he could not find this and the other? Time would only widen the discoveries, and they would find that the extravagance of the Government—the extravagance which had been alleged against them—that carelessness of the value of money, which was the very worst kind of carelessness—for a man might be careless of his own money and injure himself, but when a man was careless of borrowed money he was on the way to gaol; they would find that that extravagance was caused by a person whom the Premier implicitly trusted as his brother Minister; and not only would the Premier find that, as time advanced, but the public would find also that from the first day the late Colonial Treasurer was Colonial Treasurer there had been a leakage, and a great and lamentable want of that financial care and skill which the late Colonial Treasurer always assumed to be possessed of, and which, if he did not possess, left the hon. gentleman in a position which he could hardly describe.

Mr. DICKSON said that the hon. gentleman had indulged in a tirade of vituperation which he did not think had ever been excelled in that House. He seemed to imagine that his (Mr. Dickson's) special mission here was, to use the hon. member's own words, to degrade him. Far be it from him to attempt to degrade the hon. member, or any other member of the Committee. That was not his rôle, and he could not understand why the hon. gentleman should attribute to him a tendency to ignore his good qualities because he chose, and had chosen, that evening, to point out what he conceived to be the very extraordinary departure the hon. member made that day, and what he conceived to be also a very ungenerous departure in attacking a gentleman whom he had accepted as his leader, and attacking him in his absence. Had the hon. member attacked the Premier when he was present, and announced his departure from his views, he could have understood it. But the hon. member chose a most inopportune time for an attack, which was really unworthy of the hon. gentleman. The hon. member had chosen to say a great deal about the condition of the Treasury, and his (Mr. Dickson's) mismanagement of the department. He was quite prepared, whenever the Premier or the hon. member chose to enter upon a discussion of the affairs of the Treasury, to show the House and the country the affairs of the department which he undertook to conduct with the advice of the Government. He was not ashamed to enter into what took place there, and whatever charges of extravagance might be levelled against him in connection therewith, they had no foundation whatever, and were only such as were generally made against the whole administration. However, he was not going to make an apologetic speech on the matter. He felt he had done his duty to the country and he was quite prepared to defend his administration of the Treasury, whenever the hon. member for North Brisbane Mr. Brookes, or the Premier might wish. The hon. member had endeavoured to show the extent of his reading by referring to a well-known character from one of Charles Dickens's novels—Pecksniff—and no doubt intended to convey the idea that he (Mr. Dickson) was the original of the picture. Well, he did not care what the hon. member might say of him, or with what abuse the hon. member might try to bespatter him. When he parted from the Government on matters of public policy—it was well known that there was no private feeling in the matter—the hon. member was one of the first to abuse and persecute him and to endeavour to induce the electors who had re-

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turned him for fourteen years to withdraw their confidence in him. The hon. member went out of his way to do it, itinerating the electorate and using every means in his power to discredit him with his electors. That was an unworthy thing to do, and he (Mr. Dickson) would have been perfectly justified had he expressed soreness in the matter; but he did not feel any soreness, because he was aware of the hon. member's eccentricities. However, if the hon. member chose to cross swords, he (Mr. Dickson) was quite prepared to cross swords with him. The hon. member in drawing upon Charles Dickens's novel had not quoted the words of the novelist, which might possibly have given the portrait greater significance, but had coined words for the occasion, adapting them to the position of an ex-Treasurer, and altogether surrounding the figure with embellishments and accompaniments not strictly in keeping with the original portrait. Now, there was a man named John Dryden who wrote some poetry about 200 years ago, and if the hon. gentleman had ever read any of the works of that celebrated writer he would find words that exactly described him, Mr. Brookes. He would just quote six lines, and let the hon. gentleman know that if he was inclined to go into English literature to vilify him (Mr. Dickson), he also could go there and find portraits which perhaps might be a still more accurate representation of the hon. gentleman. He would read what was said of a very eminent statesman at home, of a very vacillating and uncertain character 200 years ago:—

"A man so various that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome;
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
Was everything by starts, and nothing long;
But, in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon."

Mr. MOREHEAD: I think that is the highest compliment I ever heard paid to a member of this House.

Mr. CHUBB said that, after the discussion which had just taken place, it was, perhaps, as well to go back to the question. He might tell the hon. member for North Brisbane, if he did not know it, that the quotation just delivered was written respecting a member of the aristocracy—a great duke—so the hon. member ought to feel highly complimented. He (Mr. Chubb) would have thought that, in the calm, cool hours which had elapsed since 12 o'clock, the Government would have considered the position, and have come to the conclusion that it was utterly impossible for them to expect to pass that motion. It was well understood that the motion was not going to pass, and, therefore, it seemed futile to waste the time and stamina of hon. members in a vain effort. Those proceedings proved to him more than ever the mistake that was made in 1884 in passing the £10,000,000 loan. For his part, he thought now it was a great mistake on the part of the Opposition that they did not then take the course they had taken on the present occasion, and stone-wall that loan. The hon. gentleman who then led the Opposition prophesied what would happen. He told hon. members that the passing of that loan would hang millstones round their necks, deprive them of their freedom, and hamper them in such a way that they would be unable to give an independent vote upon the subjects that came before them. In order to secure the support of hon. members, he believed there was a railway proposed in almost every constituency of the colony except Enoggera. That was an unkind cut, but he supposed the exigencies of the times, and, perhaps, the insufficiency of money prevented one being proposed for that particular locality. It might be

convenient, as hon. members seemed to be in a listening mood, to give a brief history of the £10,000,000 loan, with a view to applying the circumstances to the particular question before the Committee. The first reference to the introduction of a large and unprecedented loan was in a speech made by the hon. gentleman now at the head of the Government, on the 10th January, 1884. He referred to the necessity for continuing the public works policy, and the liability of going upon the money market for a loan. He said:—

"We shall not, therefore, bring in a great Loan Bill or a great scheme of public works this session. We have the fullest confidence in the borrowing powers of the colony. We do not believe that those powers are in the slightest degree impaired. We are perfectly aware that many attempts have been made in Great Britain, in connection with colonial loans of late to 'bear' the market—sometimes apparently successful; but we have no doubt whatever that, if proper counsels are followed in attempting to float loans in London, there will be no difficulty in the matter as long as we satisfy the lending public that our finances are in a sound condition."

He would pause there to ask, were the finances in a sound condition at the present time?

"I trust that the scheme which we shall be in a position to bring forward in June will be of such a nature as to give this satisfaction. We do intend to carry out our public works by loan and not by land grants, and we intend to carry them out as vigorously as they have ever been carried out in the past. When we ask to borrow money it will be for the purpose of constructing railways, improving our harbours, the conservation of water in all parts of the colony, and the extension of telegraph lines. Without going into details, I may state that it is the intention of the Government, if they have the opportunity, to extend the trunk lines into the interior at a more rapid rate than has characterised that work during the last few years. We hope to extend each line at the rate of from forty to fifty miles a year, until they begin to realise that profit to the State which I am satisfied they will do when they have got through the difficult country. A further trunk line is a line from the Gulf to the interior, and early steps will be taken for ascertaining the best route for the construction of it. With respect to coastal and branch railways, we hope to be able to construct them at an equal rate of mileage per annum with the trunk lines. I need not indicate what particular railways will be constructed, or which will be constructed first. Some have been already authorised, and the necessity of others has been indicated by public opinion in the colony; but as we are not in a position to propose a Loan Bill for that purpose this session, the present is not the time to state what we intend to do in that direction."

That was the first intimation they had that the Government intended to bring in a large loan proposal; but even there the amount was not stated—no information was given beyond the fact that it was to be a large Loan Bill. A few years before that, when the then Government, headed by Sir Thomas McIlwraith, proposed to bring in a £3,000,000 loan, it was objected to and criticised in the most powerful manner. It was said that the proposition was absurd—that it was too big a loan. Hon. members asked, why go in for £3,000,000; why not borrow as much as was required from time to time? But circumstances altered cases. As soon as they changed from the Opposition side to the Government benches they out-herded Herod, and brought in a more spirited, more extensive, more far-reaching loan than their predecessors. Possibly if the late Government had proposed a £10,000,000 loan the present Administration would have tried to cap it with a £20,000,000 loan. During the electioneering campaign that took place before that, the country was not told that that enormous £10,000,000 loan was to be introduced. They were simply told that the public works would be pushed on vigorously. It was not till the second session of the present Parliament that the Government disclosed their scheme in all its details. That

was referred to in His Excellency's Speech at the opening of Parliament in the following words:—

"My Government are fully impressed with the necessity of early and vigorous action in carrying out railways and other public works, and are confident that the resources and credit of the colony are such as to warrant the incurring of all necessary obligations for that purpose. You will accordingly be asked to make provision by way of loan for the further extension of trunk lines of railway into the interior, and for the construction of a line of railway between Cloncurry and the Gulf of Carpentaria, as well as for the construction and extension of other lines in the more settled districts, the extension of electric telegraphs, the improvement of harbours and rivers, and other works of public utility."

That was in July, 1884, and that was the only intimation then of the nature and extent of the intended loan proposals of the Government. In the debate on the Address in Reply, the hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, referred to that paragraph of the Speech and said:—

"We are told that the Government are fully impressed with the necessity of early and vigorous action in carrying out railways and other public works. I am very glad to hear it. There have been times in the history of the party opposite when they were not impressed with that necessity, and I am glad they have been converted to the policy of the late Government, which was a vigorous public works policy. They tell us also that they are going to build a railway from some port on the Gulf of Carpentaria—the port is not stated, though the Premier gave an explanation yesterday—to Cloncurry, a distance of between 250 and 300 miles."

That was to be a trunk line to supersede the transcontinental line proposed by their predecessors, but it had not been commenced yet. After that Ministers, in the course of their visits to different parts of the colony made speeches at various places, in which they announced the great policy they were going to bring forward. It was to be a Loan Bill, and a Land Bill which was to provide revenue to pay the interest on loans.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN called attention to the state of the Committee.

Quorum formed.

Mr. CHUBB said that Ministers, in addressing the constituents in different parts of the colony, stated that they were going to bring forward a Loan Bill and a Land Bill of such a revolutionary character that it would bring in such an enormous revenue that the interest on the cost of public works would weigh no more than a feather on the back of the people of the colony. They knew what it weighed now. It weighed £850,000 per annum, and when the balance of the ten millions was borrowed and spent, it would be over a million sterling a year, and as far as they could see at present there were no means by which that amount of interest was going to be met by increased revenue from the Land Act. The Land Act had enough to do to pay its own working expenses. So much for the keynote which was sounded in regard to the introduction of the great scheme of financial progress which was to mark the era of office of the present Government. The Loan Estimates were tabled by the Colonial Treasurer in November, 1884, and a financial statement was made in respect of it in December. The language used on that occasion by the hon. gentleman who was in charge of the finances of the colony was of the most exaggerated description. It was coloured in the highest degree, according to subsequent events. Of course it was very easy to be wise after the event. Still, those were the aspirations of the hon. gentleman; those were the inducements which were held out to the House to accept that loan. He might here say that hon. members on that side of the House consistently and persistently opposed not only the loan, but the greater portion of the appropriation of it when it came before the House in

individual votes. He would read what the hon. gentleman said on the occasion of moving the Loan Estimates:—

"In moving the resolution to go into Committee of Supply, I propose to make a few remarks on the Loan Estimates for 1884-85, which I have the gratification to submit to the House. These Estimates embrace an amount surpassing in magnitude any previous loan proposal; but which is, I confidently assert, such as the circumstances of the colony demand, and its financial position and credit enable it to sustain. The colony may be likened unto a man commencing business with small means, who has inherited large sources of material wealth, undeveloped through lack of capital, mistrust of investors, or want of a market, having but a small amount of ready money, and equally restricted credit, has at length surmounted preliminary difficulties, and having wisely conserved his credit, and duly discharged, as they matured, his obligations, finds himself in a position to make unwonted use of his good name, and with such extended credit to afford unprecedented encouragement to the further and fuller development of his great natural sources of wealth. That the present time is opportune for availing ourselves of the credit of the colony to an unprecedentedly large extent is not only judicious, but I contend, absolutely necessary. Unfortunately, through abnormally severe seasons which have prevailed throughout Australia, one at least of our great national and producing industries has been severely smitten. The great pastoral industry of Australia continuously demands and receives the support of a large proportion of the capital possessed by our financial institutions; and although I have no doubt that, with a return of favourable seasons, the pastoral industry must speedily assume largely increased extent and prosperity, yet it is not too much to opine that, owing to the cause aforesaid, financial nurture may for the present be slightly retarded. In addition, it may be pointed out that the expenditure of our several pastoral establishments in the employment of labour, supplies of stores, and construction of improvements, all of which contribute to a large and permanent circulation of money among the wage-earning and business community, may from similar cause, be considerably restricted. The important agricultural interest has also had to contend with a season of unparalleled severity, and although the drought has happily now broken up in the coast and adjacent districts, and an abundant wheat harvest has rewarded the care of the farmers in the fertile lands of the Darling Downs, while the condition of general crops on the coast lands is reported to be highly encouraging, still the absence of production in the immediate past, and the enforced purchase outside the colony for a considerable time of large quantities of produce of which we have been hitherto accustomed to see grown within, cannot wholly pass away without creating some apprehension of financial pressure. To relieve this feeling is, I contend, among the functions of sound administration, and if any such feeling should have found admission into the guidance of our large financial institutions, Government should now by bold vigorous action speedily extirpate such nervousness, and restore full confidence in the soundness and elasticity of our great industries, while suffering recovery from a natural temporary depression. In the face of these contingencies, unfortunately too probable, and to prevent, as far as possible, any derangement of the commercial and financial interests of the country, the Government desire to push on with vigour the prosecution of important public works, to open up approach to the great interior resources of the colony, to stimulate pastoral and prodrial settlement under the encouraging conditions of present land legislation, to afford greater facilities of communication between the centres of population, to introduce a large accession to our population by whom industries will be promoted and employment for labour likewise extended, to aid local bodies in their efforts to introduce sanitary and municipal reforms and improvements within their respective jurisdictions, to extend the benefits of communication by the electric telegraph to the remoter parts of our large territory, to improve our numerous harbours and rivers so that they may receive in safety the commercial navies of the world; in short, sir, to provide for such extended public services as are embraced in the Loan Estimates—services which, while they will immediately contribute to the prosperity of the people of the colony throughout its full extent, are such as the country not only demands, but, being largely of a reproductive character, will, in time, assuredly relieve and largely assist the revenue, and thereby become important items in the country's natural assets. And I have yet further to add that, as with the impetus to grazing settlement, which is afforded under the new Land Bill, the finan-

cial institutions of the colony may, in all probability, be largely applied to for pecuniary assistance, with which the present condition of pastoral enterprise might interfere, the maintenance by the Government of considerable balances of funds within the colony may enable these requirements to obtain fuller and more favourable attention than they would otherwise receive, especially were money to become stringent."

Those were large words. There was to be an era of universal prosperity throughout the land; everybody was to be rich and prosperous, and no industry was to suffer in any way. The concluding words had a peculiar and important bearing on the remarks made that day with regard to the statement of proposed loan expenditure, tabled on Tuesday by the Colonial Treasurer. The Colonial Treasurer had told them what the balance at the Treasury would be at the end of the financial year, after expending the moneys on the various works mentioned in that statement, and it was pointed out that it would be necessary to withdraw from the banks from time to time large sums which were now deposited with them, which would mature and be withdrawn. If it was necessary in 1884 to borrow large sums to enable the banks to maintain strong balances of Government funds to assist trade, was it not the case now? Would not the Government be bound, if they withdrew those moneys from the banks, to restore other moneys in their place, so that the objects aimed at in the remarks of the hon. gentleman might be carried into effect. Every hon. member knew, and it had already been powerfully pointed out, that the effect of those sudden large withdrawals of public moneys from the banks meant the squeezing of their private customers. Banks must have money, and either their outside customers would have to be squeezed or the Government would have again to go into the London money market to raise more money to put into the banks. It had been the practice of the colony for many years to keep large balances in the banks, and if the Government were to withdraw those large sums of money something was bound to happen.

Mr. DICKSON: The money would go to increase private balances.

Mr. CHUBB said it would go to pay for constructing works mentioned in the loan statement, and a great portion of it would be sent to England to pay for materials. So that, while probably a few individuals might gain, the great majority of people who had dealings with banks would have to find the money which the Government would want to discharge their liabilities with. In the same financial statement occurred the following paragraphs, with reference to the motion now under discussion:—

"Provision to the extent of £500,000 is asked for the extension of the Southern and Western line from Ipswich to Warwick direct, whereby a saving in distance of fifty-four miles on the line *via* Toowoomba will be effected. The proposed line is estimated as seventy-seven miles in length, and will bring the southern border of the colony into direct communication with the seaboard.

"A southern border line from Warwick towards St. George is also placed on these Estimates, and £250,000 is asked on account. This is a line which is highly desirable, not only in the interests of the communities provided thereby with railway communication, but also to protect the revenue and maintain the trade of the colony within our own territory, inasmuch as our southern neighbours, from the extension of their railways to within comparatively short distances of our southern and south-western frontiers, are rapidly acquiring a monopoly of our inland trade to the prejudice of our own merchants and importers, and to the loss of traffic on our own inland lines of railway."

He did not think it necessary to again discuss the question of trade disputed between the hon. member for Enoggera, the hon. member for Darling Downs, and the hon. member for Warrego, Mr.

Donaldson. There had been a return laid upon the table of the House showing what the great trade had been along the border of the proposed line. If the construction of the line was only justified by that return, then a similar return in any other part of the colony would justify a railway there. He was just reminded of a circumstance that occurred in connection with the passing of the Land Act. Hon. members would recollect a large map that hung on the wall of the Chamber showing the boundaries to which the Act was proposed to be extended, and it left out the south-western corner of the colony, to which, however, it was extended afterwards. The object of not extending it in the first instance was stated by the then Minister for Lands to be to keep the New South Wales people from coming on to that country and settling, the result of which would be that they could create the trade which it was now proposed to construct that line to carry. They all knew that the people there had water carriage, which would always complete with railway carriage. Even when the railway to Gympie was completed goods would still be sent by water. The steamers would not be run off, but would run as usual between Brisbane and Maryborough. And it would be so in the case of the proposed railway. As long as the people had a navigable river in that part of the colony it would compete successfully with a line of such length as that line was. It had been said that there was no intention to proceed with the *via recta* that session, and that the proposed line to Thane's Creek was only a branch line. The House was not to be asked to commit itself to the railway to St. George, and he would ask what would be the good of a railway twenty-five miles in length to collect the trade of the southern border, which was far beyond the terminal point of the proposed line? He believed that the returns received from Stanthorpe, and one or two other border places near it, did not pay the cost of collection.

Mr. NELSON said he rose to a point of order.

The CHAIRMAN: What is the point of order?

Mr. NELSON said he was not satisfied with the form of the resolution. The point of order was one he had raised when it was first proposed to go into committee to consider that resolution, and they were then told that it would be explained when they got into committee. He thought a resolution of that sort should be clear, concise, and free from vagueness and ambiguity. If the Chairman would look at the motion he would see that the Committee were asked to approve 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."

He had never seen the plans there described of a railway from Warwick to Thane's Creek laid upon the table of the House. Of course, the Premier had stated that it was a distinction without a difference; but he maintained that it was a matter of the utmost gravity and importance. If it was a railway to St. George, then the remarks of the hon. member who was addressing the Committee were relative to the subject; but if it was only a branch line, then his remarks were entirely out of place. Moreover, they would recollect the long and eloquent speech they had heard from the hon. member for Toowoomba last night, in which he treated it as a railway from Warwick to St. George. But after the statement the Premier had made, it would appear that the hon. member's remarks were irrelevant, because the Premier had stated

clearly that it was a branch line, although it might become a main line some time. Then the hon. the ex-Treasurer had told them that if it was a branch line he could not support it; that he could only support it as a line of national importance, a border line. Therefore, it seemed that they were getting into a state of confusion, and he thought, before they went any further, they should know distinctly what the plans, section, and book of reference really were. The Premier's letter, which had been read that day, distinctly and clearly described it as a branch line; if that were so the discussion should be confined to that. He would point out to the Chairman that the book of reference stated that it was for a railway from Warwick towards St. George, and it was therefore not in accordance with the resolution the Committee were now asked to agree to.

The CHAIRMAN said the book of reference was not in accord with the proposition before the Committee, in which the words "St. George" were not mentioned. It had been stated by the Premier that the first section of the proposed line was the first section of the railway from Warwick to St. George.

Mr. MOREHEAD said, did he understand the hon. gentleman to rule against the point of order raised by the hon. member for Darling Downs?

The CHAIRMAN: Just so.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought it was a pity the hon. gentleman had not put it more clearly before the Committee. However, he was new to office—he would not like to call him green to the office, because he might object to it—but, at any rate, he thought it was a matter of regret that the first decision which he had given in the novel position he now occupied should be one that did not commend itself to the intelligence of that Committee.

Mr. CHUBB said that, speaking to the point of order, he might point out that the Railway Act required that there should be laid on the table of the House the plans, specifications, and book of reference of any proposed railway. There had been laid on the table plans, specifications, and book of reference of a line described as a railway from Warwick towards St. George, section No. 1, from East Warwick station to Thane's Creek. He was aware that the House might approve of the plans and specifications first, and make the necessary appropriation afterwards, but in the present instance an appropriation had been made for a line from Warwick to St. George, and the plans tabled were for the first section of that line; but the motion was for the approval of a branch line from Warwick to Thane's Creek—a line which was not mentioned in the Loan Estimates at all. The point of order was that they were discussing a motion as to the approval of plans and specifications which were not on the table of the House.

The CHAIRMAN: There is nothing in the resolution with regard to a branch line.

Mr. MOREHEAD said that, as a rule, the Committee were not accustomed to irrelevant interruptions from the Chair. When they wanted an expression of opinion from the Chair they asked for it.

The PREMIER: It is the Chairman's business to keep order.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he fancied it would take the Chairman all his time to do that. As a rule, one volunteer was worth two pressed men; but if the Chairman would take his advice, he would keep very quiet, and not provide any texts for hon. members to preach upon. There were some very good preachers on his side, though they might have some very bad texts.

Mr. NORTON said that, speaking to the point of order, he wished to draw attention to the fact that the Minister for Works himself had explained that the cover of the plans was the cover of the plans introduced last session, and that if he had anticipated any objection to the description he would have had a fresh cover provided. Attached to the plans was a memorandum to the effect that Mr. Dutton laid on the table of the House plans, sections, and book of reference of the proposed railway from East Warwick to Thane's Creek; and he maintained that they could not be the plans of the first section of a line from Warwick to St. George. He thought the question raised by the hon. member for Northern Downs was a very important one. According to the Premier's statement they were in reality the plans of a branch agricultural railway which might possibly, at some future time, be carried on towards St. George. Ministers who had spoken on the subject had either grossly misled the Committee or else the plans on the table were not the plans of the first section of the line from Warwick to St. George.

Mr. NELSON said that on a close examination of the plans he could not see that they could be in any way identified with the resolution; therefore he begged to move—he did so with very great reluctance—that the Chairman's ruling be disagreed to, and the point of order be referred to Mr. Speaker for his decision.

The CHAIRMAN: What is the point of order?

Mr. CHUBB said the point of order was that there were no plans and specifications on the table which were relevant to the motion before the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: There has been no ruling on that point.

Mr. MOREHEAD: Are you sure, Mr. Foote, that there has been no ruling?

The PREMIER said he thought the Speaker had given a ruling on the point in the House.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he hoped the Chairman would not allow himself to be ruled by what the Premier thought the Speaker had done.

The CHAIRMAN said he had not given any ruling on the point suggested by the hon. member for Bowen.

Mr. NELSON: Have you given a ruling on the point I raised?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he hoped the Chairman would explain to the Committee the exact ruling he had given, because it might be converted into a precedent.

The CHAIRMAN said the point of order put by the hon. member for Northern Downs was in reference to the resolutions now before the Committee—was the motion embodied in the resolution identical with the plans and specifications laid on the table of the House? His answer was that he thought it was.

Mr. MOREHEAD: The Chairman had put it in a somewhat complicated form, and he thought it ought to be put into writing by the Clerk-Assistant.

Mr. CHUBB said the point of order was whether the plans and specifications required by the statute had been tabled to give legal effect to the resolution before the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. member put his question in writing?

Mr. MOREHEAD said, while that was being done he would like to have the Chairman's opinion about it, which he was sure they all valued highly, for he must say he never saw a

Chairman fill the chair so ably and so completely as the hon. member. In fact he offered a striking contrast to the occupation of the real Chairman of Committees. He was inclined to think the imitation Chairman was very much better than the real Chairman. At any rate, if the hon. member was permanently appointed to the position, they would get value for their money. He moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report no progress, and ask leave to sit again.

The CHAIRMAN: It will be necessary to decide the point of order that has arisen before the hon. member's motion is put.

Mr. MOREHEAD said, would the Chairman be good enough to tell them what was the point of order? The Committee could not sit there waiting while the hon. member for Bowen sat at the table preparing points of order. Had the Committee come to that? He had made a proposal to the Committee that the Chairman leave the chair, report no progress, and ask leave to sit again. Had he again to ask the Chairman to put the motion he had made?

The CHAIRMAN: I think I am not in a position to put the question until I have received the point of order of the hon. member for Bowen.

Mr. STEVENSON said he did not quite know what was the question before the Committee.

Mr. NORTON said a peculiar question had arisen in connection with that point of order. The hon. member for Bowen had been for some time preparing a point of order, and the business of the Committee had been delayed. Could an hon. member occupy a whole evening in preparing a point of order? Was there any limit to the time allowed for so doing? In New Zealand, he remembered, Sir George Grey stood up in his place in the House and said nothing, and yet claimed that he was in possession of the floor, and the Speaker ruled that he was in order, and he did occupy the attention of the House, which very possibly he did. Now, bearing that in mind, could an hon. member occupy the time of the Committee as long as he liked in preparing points of order?

The PREMIER said he hoped the Chairman would deal with a tangible motion, and not with a conundrum.

Mr. MOREHEAD said if the Chairman gave his ruling in favour of an hon. member who happened to be of an inventive turn of mind, and who sat at the table preparing points of order, which the Premier had just called conundrums—and he was perfectly certain they would be conundrums to the Chairman—he would sit at the table himself and compose some. He thought the Chairman would have to be much more clever than the young man or woman who was advertised to tell the number upon a bank note under any system of deception that might be practised. But he thought he could dodge the hon. member if he gave his ruling in the direction which he was afraid, from the smile on his amiable countenance, it was going to be. He did not know of any point of order or disorder.

The PREMIER: Possibly the latter.

Mr. MOREHEAD said, after all, disorderly people were not the worst people. He would give the hon. gentleman a lecture on larrikins, if he liked. What was larrikinism but misdirected energy? If the Premier had directed his energy in a proper direction, possibly he would have been a respectable member of society; but he belonged to a profession notorious for its dishonesty. The hon. gentleman's energies had been diverted into a channel which had led him into his present position, surrounded by his present colleagues, and supported by his present supporters. He could not imagine a depth

of degradation deeper than that in which the Premier was placed at present. He hoped the Chairman would rule against the point of order, and he knew that gentleman would cheerfully accept the position he should put him into, that was outside the chair. He certainly thought his motion ought to take precedence of a paltry legal quibble raised by a pettifogging lawyer.

Mr. NORTON said perhaps the Chairman would like him to put his point of order in writing. That gentleman ought to have an opportunity of thinking the matter over.

The CHAIRMAN: The point of order is this: Are the plans and specifications laid on the table of the House the plans and specifications alluded to in the resolution? I say that they are.

Mr. NORTON said he raised another point of order.

The PREMIER: That is no point of order. You cannot put a point of order until the question has been put.

Mr. MOREHEAD: He can.

Mr. NORTON said he raised a point of order before the Chairman put the question.

Mr. STEVENSON said the hon. member had no right to raise a point of order until the question had been put.

Mr. NORTON said he hoped the Chairman would decide whether a point of order could be raised before the question was put.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. gentleman, in my opinion, should have the privilege of raising a point of order before a question is put; but the point raised by the hon. member for Port Curtis is not relevant to the question; and according to my opinion, the motion of the hon. member for Balonne comes first.

Mr. CHUBB said the decision, he was afraid, was not in accordance with practice.

Mr. STEVENSON said he objected to anyone speaking until the question was put. If the Chairman was fit for the position he held, the motion of the leader of the Opposition should be put—that the Chairman leave the chair, report no progress, and obtain leave to sit again.

Mr. CHUBB said it had been decided that if a motion had been moved it was not competent for another hon. member to raise a point of order until that had been put. He thought that ruling was wrong, because it might perhaps be shown that the motion itself was out of order. He hoped the Chairman would reconsider his decision, otherwise he should have to move that the question be referred to Mr. Speaker.

The CHAIRMAN said the hon. member had mistaken him; that was not his ruling. He ruled that it was competent for an hon. member to raise a point of order on a question that was being put from the Chair, but at the same time he ruled that the point of order of the hon. member for Port Curtis could not be put, because it was irrelevant to the question at issue—that the Chairman leave the chair, report no progress, and obtain leave to sit again.

Mr. STEVENSON: What is the question before the Committee, Mr. Foote?

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that I do now leave the chair, report no progress, and obtain leave to sit again.

Mr. NORTON said, before that was put he would raise a point of order. He had been stopped raising points of order before, although the Chairman delayed putting the question until Mr. Chubb had written out a point of order. He wanted to know, could an hon. member sit

down at the table and write out a point of order, without any regard to the time he occupied in writing? Now that question had been put, he would ask a ruling on that point. Could a member of the Committee occupy an unlimited space of time in writing out a point of order?

The PREMIER: That question is not before the Committee.

Mr. MOREHEAD said, speaking to the point of order, he did not think it fair to puzzle the Chairman with a number of problematical cases. The Chairman, he was certain, was a matter-of-fact man, and would therefore confine himself to one point. The position which the Chairman held with great honour to himself and the House he held with reluctance, and he was sure he would confine himself to the question he (Mr. Morehead) had put before the Committee, although it might tend to the removal of the Chairman from the high office which he held. If it was carried it would lead to the hon. gentleman only having had a few brief minutes of authority, but still it would be satisfactory to know that he had occupied the proud and exalted position of Chairman of the Legislature of Queensland for twenty-three minutes. The position was one which he (Mr. Morehead), however much he had aspired to, had never attained, and, although it had been occupied by Mr. Foote for only a few brief moments, it would be an additional ring of the halo which would surround his head. Although he felt keenly having to displace the hon. gentleman from the position which he filled with so much honour, he must ask him to put the question which he had proposed.

Mr. NORTON said that, out of consideration for the fact that the Chairman occupied the chair for the first time, he thought he would do well to withdraw his point of order for the present and allow the question to be put.

Question—That the Chairman leave the chair, report no progress, and ask leave to sit again—put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 16.

Messrs. Norton, Chubb, Morehead, Murphy, Ferguson, Palmer, Stevenson, Pattison, Adams, White, Black, Donaldson, Nelson, Campbell, Aland, and W. Brookes.

NOES, 22.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Rutledge, Jordan, Moreton, Dutton, Sheridan, Dickson, Anneat, Higson, McMaster, Mellor, S. W. Brooks, Kellett, Kates, Wakefield, Allan, Salkeld, Macfarlane, Thorn, Morgan, Bulcock, and Isambert.

Question resolved in the negative.

Mr. CHUBB said he would endeavour to proceed with the discussion. He had been referring to the financial statement of the late Colonial Treasurer when he introduced the Loan Estimates in 1884, for the purpose of making a comparison between the hon. gentleman's language on that occasion and the facts as they now existed. The hon. gentleman stated then that—

"In 1883-4, with a population of 288,000 and a loan indebtedness of £16,570,850, of which sum £8,009,000 had been expended in railway construction, the net earnings from such railways amounted to £273,331, or nearly 3½ per cent. on the whole of the capital sum so employed."

The hon. gentleman went on to justify the proposal of the Government by saying that the earnings of the railways, together with interest on loan balances, was sufficient to discharge the interest upon £9,255,000 of the loan indebtedness of the colony. The hon. member then said:—

"It may therefore be freely admitted that the rapid progress made by the country in the past will be largely augmented and stimulated by the present loan policy, and as with the encouragement of immigration and land settlement population and production must largely and rapidly increase, the augmented

charge for interest distributed over four or five years hence, will, I am assured, be provided without any appreciable pressure."

It was true there was a largely augmented charge for interest.

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. CHUBB said he would pass from that portion of the statement, and refer to another portion where the hon. gentleman said:—

"The proper policy for the Government to pursue will be to sell such portion of the loan annually as they may deem necessary, and as the favourable condition of the money market presents. My desire is that if any large instalments be sold the money accruing therefrom should be introduced into the colony. While the banking account of the Government should be fully maintained, I think that the other banking corporations should also be invited to become custodians of part of our public funds, and I believe that a satisfactory agreement can be made with them on the condition that these deposits so made should be withdrawn from thematably, and with due notice beforehand."

The hon. member also referred to a former speech he had made on a financial subject, when he said:—

"I am convinced that the loan proposals of the Government at the present time will do more to float the country over any present financial pressure that may be felt, will do more to float it into a fuller tide of prosperity than by the dribblets of loans which we have been accustomed to deal with in the past."

Three millions was called a dribblet, and now there was a dribblet of ten millions; but the interest on that was by no means a dribblet. He was afraid they would all be giblets before they found the money to pay the interest.

"Apprehension is always felt, doubtless, when a country borrows to a larger extent than it has formerly been accustomed to do; but I should like to dispel that apprehension, and the feeling that a large amount of capital will not be administered with a due regard to economy."

They knew how the revenue had been administered with a due regard to economy; the surplus left by the previous Government was economised till it had all gone away, and there was a hole in the Treasury chest. The loan money was also going at the rate of nearly £2,000,000 per annum, so that even the Premier admitted it was necessary to put on the brake; yet in the face of that there were still four railway proposals to come forward—two were on the table, and two more were expected further on. Now, those arguments were very seriously criticised in 1884 by the then leader of the Opposition, Sir Thomas Mcllwraith, in a speech that would be seen to be of a most prophetic character. He would read some extracts from that speech, because they ought to be impressed not only on hon. members, but on the people of the colony. That far-seeing man pointed out what would happen if the country went in for that reckless system of borrowing. He commented very severely and at great length on the proposals, and some of his remarks had extreme pertinence to the present motion, and indeed to the whole of the loan proposals of the Government:—

"But without saying a single word about the Land Bill, he need only read the comments made from the other side when he brought forward his three-million loan in 1879, to show that if they adhered to their own principles they had not the slightest shadow of an excuse for bringing forward the loan at the present time. He believed the country ought to have a loan. He had always advocated the extension of certain of their railways by loan, and he did not believe they ought to be stopped; but he was thoroughly opposed to the proposition to borrow ten millions of money at the present time. It was not justified by the circumstances of the colony, and it was still less justified by the circumstances of Parliament. What was their present position? They had had legislation during the last five months which the Premier had often described as being of a non-contentious character; but it had often been a great deal worse than non-contentious—it had been beneath the dignity of the House to spend its time upon. The early part of the session was to a great extent wasted in small measures, and now they asked Parliament to vote them ten millions of money, at a time when it was utterly impossible for the House to give a fair and unbiassed opinion upon the proposal. A large number of members had left town. The present was the first time for a long while that they had seen what might be called even a moderately small House, while last night it was almost a display of empty benches. It would not be possible to get a much better House together, even if they postponed the consideration of the Estimates for another week, because many of the country members had left, and others had made arrangements to start very soon. The consequence was that they were obliged either to swallow the Estimates as they were or prevent any business being done at all. He had no intention to prevent business being done, but at the same time he had no intention that that loan should pass without the country understanding the principles on which it had been brought forward."

As he would like a quorum formed to listen to the remarks he was reading, he would call attention to the state of the Committee.

Quorum formed.

Mr. CHUBB said he wished the hon. members who had just come in had been there to listen to what he had been reading, because it would have shown them to what position they had brought the country. The hon. gentleman then read an extract from a speech delivered by the Premier, when he was in opposition, and criticising his (Sir T. Mcllwraith's) policy. He proceeded to say:—

"On that occasion he (Sir T. Mcllwraith) had actually laid the Loan Estimates on the table two months before the session closed, and commenced the debate by moving them six weeks before it came to a conclusion. On the present occasion the Premier had already intimated that the session must close next week, and that of next week only two days were available. During that short period they were asked to vote ten millions of money in addition to all the other work that was before them."

The Chairman would remember that there were only two days allowed for putting through that large loan scheme of £10,000,000; he was one of the noble few who sat up till 6 o'clock in the morning, till the sun rose and the cocks crew, in order that they might pass the Loan Bill. The leader of the Opposition then quoted several passages from the speech of his political opponent, and next referred to the question now before the Committee—the line from Warwick to St. George. He remarked that:—

"Hon. members would see on the map hanging in the Chamber the blue lines indicating the lines that the late Government constructed; and the red lines indicating the extensions would be seen to go exactly in a straight line out west. The late Government said exactly where their lines were going, and were prepared to mark their railways definitely from town to town; but the Government had now actually drawn a straight line a few miles due west, knowing nothing, he believed, of where the railways were going. Why, there was that line from Warwick to St. George, in a civilised district, where any surveyor might have made a good survey, and yet there it was drawn on the map for 200 miles in a straight line."

At that time they simply had a map showing the proposed railways, drawn in a straight line from place to place, and they had no more information than that until some time afterwards when they got a little from the then Minister for Works. Sir Thomas Mcllwraith proceeded to quote extracts from the speech of the then Colonial Treasurer, one paragraph of which was very important. It was as follows:—

"As a member of this House I protest against the new system the Treasurer seeks to introduce, and which I may term Victorianising our institutions."

That protest was against the £3,000,000 loan of the late Government. Would not that same criticism apply with more force to the

£10,000,000 loan? Apparently not. What was sauce for the goose on one occasion was not sauce for the gander on another. Then the hon. gentleman went on to pronounce what he (Mr. Chubb) called a prophecy, but before reading it he would call attention to the state of the Committee.

Quorum formed.

Mr. CHUBB said the leader of the Opposition then said :—

"What right had they as a Parliament to say what work they would construct and what money they would borrow five years hence? Surely it was enough to construct the works and borrow the money which they had been sent by their constituents to do, and not to provide for works and borrow money to make those works five years after the present time. At that time the Colonial Treasurer might not be there; the men in Parliament might be very different men from those now sitting there; and why should they assume a position which would make those men virtually abdicate their functions before they had come to be members of Parliament? They would be rendered helpless if the £10,000,000 loan were passed now. Hon. members would see how those future members would be deprived of their liberty, and actually of their rights as representatives of their constituencies, by handing over the responsibility for borrowing the money and constructing the works to the Ministry of the present day. He had shown that they could not spend the money in the time; or rather he assumed it from the assertions made by the Treasurer, and for the additional reason that the Treasurer had said that they would not borrow a great portion of the money for five years."

That was perfectly true. The Government had not spent the ten millions in their term of office. By the time their term of office expired they would not have spent more than half of it, so that Sir Thomas McLlwraith had shown that he was far-seeing in his views. He further stated that—

"They would, therefore, have over £10,000,000, and a roving commission to do what they liked with it. They knew perfectly well they could not spend more than half of it; at all events, by the Treasurer's own showing, they could not spend it. As soon as the Government were placed in that position, who would say what the Government would spend? The Ministers themselves. It was passed out of the hands of Parliament, and that responsibility was given to Ministers which Parliament should never allow to go out of its own hands. What a dangerous power it gave the Ministry! They would see at once that it gave them unlimited power, subject always to the private log-rolling that might go on outside themselves, but subject to no control whatever by Parliament."

They had had a remarkable instance of log-rolling last session, when it was plain that the members of three or four districts had combined together to pass four railways. It was a case of "ca' me, ca' thee." They got two through last session, and were now trying to get the others passed. Sir Thomas McLlwraith continued :—

"By passing the money, they virtually handed over to the Government the power to expend it, and afterwards, according to the hon. gentleman, the Government should not be dictated to by Parliament. As a matter of fact, they would not be dictated to; and then those members who were pressed by their constituents to support the Government, that they might get a railway through their district, would find after all that they had not got that railway. They would find they had got back to the old days when those tricks were as common as they were likely to become now."

And further on he said :—

"If the loan were carried, did they think that it would exhaust all the works in the colony; did they think that, having gratified a few of their loudest-mouthed supporters, they were actually supplying all the wants of the colony with that £10,000,000 loan? Did they not know that they would only have raised a feeling abroad that if people only howled long enough they would get something? Was it not perfectly sure that the Government would have another Loan Bill before long? And as he had said before, if any other Government came in, they were sure to have one. If the present loan were carried, instead of having a Parliament to decide upon the money to be borrowed, and the works to be carried out in the colony, they would have a Ministry who had the choice of spending £2 for

every £1. They could borrow £10,000,000 or £15,000,000, and choose the amount of work they intended going on with, and from what portion of that £10,000,000 or £15,000,000 they would take the money. But they did not have Ministers for the purpose of dictating to Parliament what work should be gone on with; but in the present case they would leave to the Ministry of the day the power to say what they ought to have the courage to say themselves. It showed a great want of courage on the part of members of Parliament, and primarily upon the part of the Ministry, for not limiting the amount of loan. Let them assume that the Ministry would remain in office for another three years; they had no right to go beyond what would be necessary for their own term. By that time constituencies would be represented by other members, perhaps with opinions diametrically opposite. But the Government had adopted that policy not because it was a bold policy—because it was opposed to everything they had done in the House before—and not because it was a statesmanlike policy; but because their friends had come to them for railways, and they would have their £10,000,000 to enable them to make them. After the modest way in which the Supplementary Estimates were got through last night, he did not think the colony would have the money very long."

There was a prophecy that even if the Government got the authority to borrow the £10,000,000 loan they would require another Loan Bill; and it had been proved by papers laid on the table of the House that the Government had already spent in anticipation of some future appropriation nearly half-a-million of money. Further than that, there was the deficit in the revenue, which would have to be made up, some scheme for which, they were told, would be proposed before the session ended.

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. CHUBB said the leader of the Opposition went on to say :—

"The Parliament would, by passing the Loan Estimates, be actually handing the power over to the Ministry of the day to choose what loans should be spent, and what were not to be spent."

That had come perfectly true. They had seen the Government bring forward particular lines and carefully selected public works, this and that session, some at the beginning and some at the end of a session; but it was a remarkable fact that nearly all the railways which had been made were railways in constituencies represented by supporters of the Government. The hon. gentleman then referred to the question of depositing large sums in the banks—remarks which had a very important bearing upon what had been said on the subject that day.

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. CHUBB said the remarks he was about to read were as follows :—

"The hon. gentleman said the reason why they should borrow that large amount of money was that they ought to be prepared to lend money through the financial institutions to the small pastoral lessees who were to take the place of those whose runs were to be taken from them by the Government. Was that a statesmanlike view? Was it a creditable view to take of a matter of that kind? And did not the Government propose to expend the loan on railways and other public works? The hon. gentleman could not pay away the money and have it at the same time. If he paid it away for railways, how could he have it in the banks and lend it to the small pastoral lessees, unless he intended having much larger balances than the Government had at the present time? He (Sir T. McLlwraith) hoped to have an explanation from the Colonial Treasurer on that point. He (Sir T. McLlwraith) did not wish to see the Government having large amounts in the banks. If they increased those balances it would be a bad thing for the colony, because if the money were lent to small pastoral lessees it would not be got back in three years; he did not believe it could be got back under ten years. To hold out hopes of the sort he had referred to was a proposition unworthy the Colonial Treasurer. But what

effect would it have? It would only have one tendency, and that was to damage the credit of the colony at home. If they proposed to borrow money simply to lend it again, they would be looked upon with the greatest suspicion. There was no doubt that it was their duty as long as they had balances in the bank to make the best possible use of them; but to deliberately increase those balances for the purpose of lending money was another thing altogether, and was a matter which he hoped the Colonial Treasurer would reconsider."

It was unnecessary to refer to any more of the hon. gentleman's remarks. What he had read would satisfy any impartial listener that the criticism passed upon the loan three years ago by the then leader of the Opposition was true in every respect. Everything he prophesied had come to pass, and now, in the fourth year of the existing Parliament, they had a deficit of nearly £600,000, and an over-expenditure on unauthorised loans of £500,000, and one-half of the railways authorised by the Ten Million Loan Act not carried out, and could not possibly be carried out during the tenure of office of the present Government. When the Loan Estimates were before the Committee in detail, the proposition was put forward for half-a-million of money for a line from Ipswich to Warwick. That item was criticised at some length by the leader of the Opposition and other members. Sir Thomas McIlwraith said:—

"He had advocated and carried out the line from Ipswich to Fassfern, and among the reasons for that line, he alleged, was his belief that a line there was in the direction of what he conceived would ultimately be the main route to Sydney. He had intended to creep on and make the line as they found it convenient. And he had followed out in every particular the argument he then used, in passing the vote the other night for the Fassfern Branch extension. He had said, 'Extend that line on, and you will find that that will be actually some day the main line to Sydney.' He did not advocate a line from Ipswich to Warwick. He advocated a line through the Main Range so as to get the nearest route to Sydney. But that was a very different proposition from the line under discussion."

Then he went on to say that—

"What was wanted was to strike off from the blue line either at Roma, at Yeulba, at Dalby, or at Beau-araba, and they would get the trade in eighteen months. It was said that the line from Ipswich to Warwick would cost £500,000. £500,000 would not look at it. It would cost a million and a-half to take the line up there."

The Minister for Works thereupon interjected "Nonsense!" He (Mr. Chubb) would rather take the opinion of the leader of the Opposition than that of the then Minister for Works; the former was an engineer and the latter was not, and the estimate of the leader of the Opposition was a better one than that of the Minister for Works. That had, indeed, been confirmed by the hon. member for Townsville, who had made an elaborate series of calculations showing that the cost would be at least £1,000,000.

Mr. STEVENSON said he rose to a point of order. The Chairman of Committees was within the precincts of the building, and it was a duty for which he was paid to take the chair. He moved that the Chairman leave the chair and report no progress.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not competent to do that.

Mr. STEVENSON said he was competent to move the Chairman out of the chair at any time he liked, if he could do it by division. He moved that the Chairman leave the chair.

Question put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 10.

Messrs. Chubb, Stevenson, Adams, Black, Ferguson, Jessop, Palmer, Murphy, Pattison, and Lissner.

NOES, 19.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Jordan, Dutton, Moreton, Dickson, Sheridan, Annear, Isambert, Wakefield, Kates Kellett, Bulcock, McMaster, S. W. Brooks, Salkeld, Morgan, Higson, Thorn, and Allan.

Question resolved in the negative.

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

Question put.

Mr. STEVENSON said, with all due deference to the Chairman, that was not the question. That question had been decided.

The PREMIER said the question he moved was that the Chairman leave the chair, report no progress, and ask leave to sit again. That was a totally different question from the one that had just been negatived.

Mr. STEVENSON said he did not know that the Premier had moved the subsequent motion, and he thought the Chairman was again putting the question that had just been decided. At the same time he wanted to know how long that farce was going to be carried on by the Government? They all knew that they were not sincere in making the proposed line. The question was decided by the House last year that the line from Warwick towards St. George should be carried out, but the Government, when they found the Lower House carried it, arranged with the Upper House to decide it in the negative. And supposing now that the stonewalling stopped and they let the railway pass, would the Premier give his word that he would arrange for the Upper House to pass it? Of course the whole thing was a pure matter of arrangement. If it passed that House the hon. gentleman would simply again arrange that it should not pass the Upper House. Last year it was not passed in the Upper House simply by a member being kept away, that member being a late resident of Warwick. He would read the division in the Upper House on that occasion:—

For the railway:—

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

Against it—

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

With the exception of Mr. Macansh, not one of those who voted for the motion knew what they were voting for; but most of those who voted against it were members who did know something about it. If the Government had been in earnest in passing the railway they had a splendid chance of doing so last year, because they could have got several members of the Upper House to be present to pass the railway after it had been passed by the Assembly. After the late Postmaster-General had pretended to attempt to pass the railway in the Upper House, what was his reply to a deputation that waited on him in order to get a bi-weekly or tri-weekly mail between Warwick and Goondiwindi? The answer was that the traffic would not justify him in giving even a tri-weekly mail. Did not that show that the Ministry were not in earnest last year? If the then leader of the Upper House was not justified in giving a tri-weekly mail, how could the Government be justified in making a railway? The Ministry had simply tried to befool the members for the district into the belief that they were in earnest, whereas they were very glad that the motion was being stonewalled. If the motion had not been stonewalled the Government would have found some other means of blocking the railway.

The PREMIER said he did not often take any notice of what fell from the hon. member for Normanby, and he only rose now to say that

everybody who knew anything about the subject knew that last session the Government used their utmost endeavours to get the line approved by the Upper House, and that he personally took a great deal of trouble in the matter. It was almost the only occasion on which he ever had personally taken trouble to get anything through the Upper House. Everybody who knew anything about the matter knew those were the facts, and the hon. member was either speaking without information on the subject, or else with the knowledge that the facts were as he (the Premier) had stated.

Mr. STEVENSON said he had spoken on very good authority, and he repeated that he believed it was a matter of arrangement that the Upper House should not pass the railway. It was from a conversation he had with Mr. Macdonald-Paterson at the Queensland Club in the evening after he came from the House that he believed the Ministry did not want to pass the railway. Immediately the vote was passed the Hon. Dr. Taylor appeared upon the scene, as much as to say, "I wanted to be here," but he had no doubt it was arranged, and if it had not been arranged with Dr. Taylor it would have been arranged with someone else that there should not be a majority, notwithstanding what the Premier said.

Mr. KELLETT said a majority of the members of the Queensland Club understood that private conversations which took place there were not to be repeated outside.

The PREMIER: All gentlemen understand that.

Mr. KELLETT said that, unfortunately for the Queensland Club, there were some members who were not gentlemen, who had not the least bit of gentlemanliness in their composition, and could never learn to be gentlemen. Some people were not born gentlemen, but still learned to act in as manly a way as those who were. He would go further, and say, in the absence of the late Postmaster-General from a place where he could take notice of what was said in that Chamber, that he was perfectly satisfied that that gentleman never made any statement to the hon. member for Normanby, or to anybody else tantamount to what had been stated by the hon. member—namely, that the Ministry tried to block the railway in the Upper House. He was thoroughly satisfied, from what he knew of the late Postmaster-General, that he did everything in his power to pass the railway, and that there was nothing he felt so much as the rejection of the line through an unfortunate accident. Most people in the House and in the country would take that gentleman's word ten thousand times to one before the word of the hon. member who tried to traduce him there. It was one of the most unmanly statements he had ever heard in that Chamber, and he had heard a good many bad ones.

The PREMIER: Nobody believes it.

Mr. MOREHEAD rose to a point of order. He did not think that either the hon. member who had just sat down or the Premier was in order in disbelieving a statement made by a member of that Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order in one hon. member not believing a statement made by another hon. member, but it would be a point of order if an hon. member repeated a statement which had been denied by another hon. member.

Mr. STEVENSON said the Premier interjected just now, "Nobody believes him."

The PREMIER: I said "Nobody believes it."

Mr. STEVENSON said the Premier distinctly used the words "Nobody believes him." He was perfectly willing to take a division on that point; and notwithstanding what the Premier said, he was perfectly willing to put his word against the word of that hon. gentleman, or against the word of the hon. member for Stanley. He quite agreed that all the members of the Queensland Club were not gentlemen.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not suppose that any hon. member cared two straws whether the members of the Queensland Club were gentlemen or not. The word "gentleman" was one that was applicable far beyond the number of those who were included within the select circle over the road. Anyone who paid his way, and told the truth, and did his duty honestly in the state of life into which he was called, was as much a gentleman as anybody on the earth. He was sorry the word had been introduced into the debate at all.

"When Adam dived and Eve span,
Who was then a gentleman?"

Anyone who paid his way honestly was a gentleman. He was not a socialist or a communist, but still he held that opinion. It was quite another matter when an hon. member was directly contradicted by the Premier. That was a breach of order.

The PREMIER: To contradict a charge made against the honour of the Government was a breach of order!

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought the Government was something like a corporation, without a soul to be saved or something else to be kicked. He was now generalising; but if the Premier wished to bring his statement home to himself he was at liberty to do so. If the Premier thought the Government of which he (Mr. Morehead) was a member, was a Government of rogues, he was welcome to think so. He was no rogue, and he knew that no member of that Government was a rogue, and he knew that the combination were no rogues. He did not care if the Premier was pleased to consider the Government that preceded him was a Government of rogues, while he (Mr. Morehead) knew they were honest. The contradiction given by the Premier to the statement made by the hon. member for Normanby was unworthy of him, and unworthy of the position he held.

The PREMIER: According to the hon. member, it was wrong to deny a false charge.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he did not say so. But it was wrong to assert that a statement made by a gentleman was false until it was proved to be false.

Mr. CHUBB said it was a great pity that their two nights' discussion should terminate in such an angry manner. Up to the present the discussion had gone on with perfect good temper, and it was much to be deprecated that they should separate with angry feelings. He thought both members had gone a little too far.

Mr. STEVENSON said he did not care whether the hon. member for Bowen thought he had gone too far or not; he would maintain the position he had taken up. Since Mr. Macdonald-Paterson had vacated the position of leader of the Upper House he had heard him advise members of the Assembly before they voted for the railway to go and look at the country. Several hon. members could bear witness to that statement, and he was very sorry Mr. Macdonald-Paterson could not be present to back up the statement he made. Did the Premier mean to say that he (Mr. Stevenson) had stated what was not true in the Committee? He had not said one single word

inside or outside that he could not prove to be true, notwithstanding anything to the contrary the Premier might say. The Premier did not like the truth, and that was why he objected to the statement he had made. The whole railway was a sham from beginning to end, and even if it were passed by that Committee, the Premier would arrange to have it blocked in the Upper House. At any rate, he was in such a position that he could not construct the line, even if it passed both Houses of Parliament, because the finances of the colony were in such a state that he could not get the money. The Premier knew very well that there were other lines that ought to be constructed long before that from Warwick to Thane's Creek.

Mr. KELLETT said he had risen to take the part of an absent member. He was sure that if Mr. Macdonald-Paterson had been present, no such statement would ever have been made in that Committee as had been.

Mr. MURPHY: What authority have you for saying that?

Mr. KELLETT said he had the very best authority—that of the late Postmaster-General, whose word was better than the word or even the bond of a good many hon. members on the other side of the Committee. He judged men by what he knew of them. He knew a good many hon. members who sat opposite; he knew the inside of them. He had had their measure for many years.

Mr. MURPHY: There's not much inside of you.

Mr. KELLETT said he had lived in the country long before many of those members who had come from Victoria knew anything about it, and he knew previous history that the hon. member for Barcoo did not know. But he knew an honourable man when he met him, and he said again that he was satisfied that if Mr. Macdonald-Paterson was in that Chamber no such statement would ever have been made. If he lived long enough he would be there again, and on the floor of the House he would be able to defend himself in language much more forcible than he (Mr. Kellett) had made use of. He was satisfied that that gentleman had used his utmost endeavours to get that railway passed through the Upper House. He knew well, also, that nothing could grieve him more than when that line was lost in the Upper House. He would go further, and say that though Mr. Macdonald-Paterson had thought fit to sever his connection with his party he did so honourably, and that he was still an honourable and consistent member of the Liberal party.

Mr. MOREHEAD said, of course he did not know what the internal construction of hon. members on his side was.

Mr. KELLETT: I do.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he thought the hon. member would be a very valuable medical adviser if he knew the construction of the insides of the people. He was not going to dispute the wild and vehement statements of the hon. member—he appeared to be rather too fiery a gentleman to deal quietly with; but with regard to his defence of Mr. Macdonald-Paterson, he had no doubt that gentleman would appear on the floor of the House some day and defend himself, but he did not think he would walk in at the door at that present moment and explain what he did and what he did not, and he thought they might fairly wait until the proper period arrived. It would be much pleasanter to listen to what Mr. Macdonald-Paterson had to say, because, from his knowledge of him, he was sure that he would speak in a more moderate and less fiery manner

than his attorney, or friend, or relation, the member for Stanley. Now he really did not know why that excessive exuberance of debate had come on. They had got on very nicely before, and he really did not know what had brought on the warmth.

The PREMIER: You were not here when I moved the Chairman out of the chair.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he was aware of that; he was aware of the position that had been vacated by the gentleman who so amply filled the position that Mr. Fraser occupied. He had no desire to introduce any element of discord into the debate. He was willing that the Chairman should leave the chair, and he was quite sure that the Chairman desired the rest and quietness and peace which he would get by leaving the chair. But he (Mr. Morehead) wanted to see the chair vacated without any jarring and unpleasant remarks. They had been fighting a good fight, and whether there was going to be a truce or a surrender, he was not prepared to say; but whatever it might be, he was quite sure that the hon. member at the head of the Government was as desirous as he was that the Chairman should leave the chair. His (Mr. Morehead's) side of the House was perfectly satisfied with the work that had been done, and he was only sorry that any language of a strong nature used by hon. gentlemen opposite had induced any unpleasantness.

Mr. KELLETT: It was on your side.

Mr. MOREHEAD said he hoped that hon. gentlemen would not interrupt him. He was not using language calculated to provoke a breach of the peace, and, in fact, he was so alarmed at the attitude taken up by the Colonial Secretary the other night that he was very careful what language he did use. He trusted that the Chairman would be allowed to leave the chair, and, he hoped, not to resume it during the current Parliament.

Mr. STEVENSON said, before the Chairman left the chair he wished to say a few words in defence of the late Postmaster-General, and, without using any private conversations at all, he wished simply to point to that gentleman's public statement. As he had already said, he had introduced a deputation to him in regard to a bi-weekly or tri-weekly mail service from Warwick to Goondiwindi, and that hon. gentleman distinctly stated that the traffic along that line was not sufficient to justify him in granting a bi-weekly or tri-weekly mail service. Well, was not that a proof, on the face of it, that he was not in earnest in trying to pass the Warwick to St. George railway? He thought that must be patent to every hon. gentleman in the House, and that was all he had got to say with regard to the late Postmaster-General.

Mr. MORGAN said he thought it right to say a word or two in reply to the matter which had been imported into the debate by the hon. member for Normanby. The hon. gentleman rose for the express purpose of accusing the Government of insincerity in regard to that railway, which had been before the Committee four or five times during the present session. Well, the conduct of the gentlemen who sat with the member for Normanby during the past forty-eight hours had amply demonstrated to them that if they, on his side, had weak friends they had got very strong and uncompromising foes on the other side. That was perfectly clear, and was a fact not to be lost sight of. He wished to make that remark, and also to say that the hon. member's references to the late Postmaster-General contained serious aspersions upon the sincerity of that gentleman's actions in the Legislative Council, and also upon those of another

gentleman of the Council, the Hon. Dr. Taylor, which were not borne out by the facts. He was pretty familiar with the details which led to the unfortunate blunder made in the Legislative Council last year. It was a bungle, and nothing else, produced by a combination of circumstances unfortunate to those who desired to see that railway constructed. There had not been the slightest premeditation in the matter, and he did not believe the members of the Government or their supporters had acted in a treacherous manner.

The PREMIER: Nor does anyone else.

Mr. MORGAN said that was his opinion, and it was founded upon a knowledge of the facts more extensive than that of the hon. member for Normanby.

Question—That the Chairman leave the chair, report no progress, and ask leave to sit again—put and passed.

The House resumed, and, on the motion of the MINISTER FOR WORKS, the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

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

Question put and passed, and the House adjourned at seven minutes to 11 o'clock.