

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 1887**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 8 November, 1887.

Petition—Toohey Estate Enabling Bill.—Ministerial Statement—Conduct of Business.—Motion for Adjournment—Railway Bridges on the Central Line—Charges against Ex-Ministers.—Prince of Wales's Birthday.—Adjournment.—South Brisbane Branch Railway.—Normanton to Croydon Railway Bill—second reading.—Adjournment.

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

## PETITION.

## TOOHEY ESTATE ENABLING BILL.

Mr. FOXTON presented a petition from the trustees in the estate of the late James Toohey, praying that a Bill may be introduced to enable them to deal with and dispose of certain trust property; and moved that the petition be received.

Question put and passed.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

## CONDUCT OF BUSINESS.

The PREMIER (Hon. Sir S. W. Griffith) said: Mr. Speaker,—Before the House passes to the business of the day I desire to say a few words about the business proposed to be dealt with. Hon. members are aware that we have devoted five sittings, one of them extending the length of twenty hours, to the consideration of the Warwick to Thane's Creek railway, and that the result of those long deliberations is, that we are no further forward than when we began. Whatever might be the proper course to adopt, under the circumstances, at the beginning of a session, I think, under the existing circumstances of the present session, the Government are not justified in pressing the matter any further upon the attention of the House, and it is not proposed to do so. The Government are of opinion, however, that the matters relating to railway construction which have been placed upon the paper should be dealt with upon their merits, and it is not desired to make any one dependent upon another. The South Brisbane railway stands upon the paper, and the House will be asked to agree to that, and also to the Normanton to Croydon Railway Bill. The Government desire to submit these two matters for the consideration of the House; but they do not desire to occupy five days over them. They will be submitted for the consideration of the House. My hon. friend the Minister for Works will therefore move the resolution which stands upon the paper, and after hon. members have had an opportunity of saying what they wish, I shall then be able to give the House further information as to what the Government propose to do. The Government also desire to deal with the Normanton to Croydon

Railway Bill. The Government do not propose to ask the House to consider any of the other Bills upon the paper. That is the only business, except two matters which are not now before the House, and which relate to extensions of railway lines. One of them is in regard to the extension of the railway line towards Gympie, about which I do not think there will be much difference of opinion. The plans are not quite ready yet, but I believe they will be in two or three days. The other is a short extension of the Sandgate line. The distance is something between a quarter of a mile and half-a-mile, and I am told that it will be a great convenience to the people, and will cost a very small sum of money. I wish it to be understood that the Government do not desire to introduce any more contentious business during the present session. Whether those two matters that I have referred to on the paper now, and the other two to which I have referred, are contentious matters, and to what extent they are contentious matters, will appear when they come on for consideration. Of course, some emergency may arise, but I know of nothing at the present time.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to ask the Premier one question in regard to further business that is likely to be introduced during the present session, and upon which he was silent; I mean in regard to certain expenditure we were told we should be asked to deal with in connection with our naval defences, that is to say, a certain semi-obligation between the Premier and the Imperial Government. Shall we be asked to sanction this?

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I did not refer to that matter, because the scheme is not yet ripe for submission to the House, and I do not think there is any chance of its being so; I have pointed out before that the matter cannot be submitted for the consideration of the House until the basis of the contributions has been agreed upon. Up to the present time, I am sorry to say, no agreement has been come to, nor, so far as I know, have any steps been taken in that direction; so that it is hopeless to expect that the Government will be able to deal with that matter during the present session.

## MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

## RAILWAY BRIDGES ON THE CENTRAL LINE.—CHARGES AGAINST EX-MINISTERS.

Mr. SCOTT said: Mr. Speaker,—I intend to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of calling attention to a matter that is of very great importance indeed. It is in regard to the state of the timber bridges on the Central Railway. I have received a telegram from the chairman of the Bauhinia Divisional Board to the following effect:—

"At meeting of Bauhinia Divisional Board held yesterday it was decided to ask you and Mr. Dutton to draw the attention of the Government to the following resolution made by the board viz. 'That in the opinion of this board it is desirable that the attention of the Government be drawn to the dangerous state of some of the bridges on the Central Queensland Railway line between Emerald and Rockhampton through decay of the timber in said bridges. Kindly endeavour to have necessary steps taken to prevent accident.'"

The only way of doing that, I think, is by bringing it under the notice of the House. It is a matter that concerns not only the people of Bauhinia, but all the inhabitants of the Central district, and all the travellers who may be going up and down the line. I cannot speak from my own personal experience as to the state of the bridges, but I cannot understand that the board should take the trouble to send such a telegram as this to me unless they had very good grounds indeed for stating that the bridges are in a bad

state, and, in fact, dangerous. I merely wish to call the attention of the Government to the subject, and hope that something will be done. I beg to move the adjournment of the House.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. C. B. Dutton) said: Mr. Speaker,—I also have received a telegram from the Bauhinia Divisional Board, in the Springsure district, and I was very much startled by it, although I do not attach much importance to what is said by divisional boards in matters of that kind. I cannot help thinking there is some mistake; they must be referring to bridges in the district other than railway bridges, although the telegram is clear enough as read by my colleague, the hon. member for Leichhardt. I at once wired to the superintendent of maintenance on the Central line, and this is the answer I received from him:—

"Your telegram of even date. All railway bridges between Emerald and Rockhampton are in a thoroughly safe condition. They are constantly being inspected by competent men and all needful repairs promptly executed. If the resolution of the board refers to railway bridges it is an unwarrantable one totally unsupported by facts. Perhaps the board refer to the old road bridges outside the railway fences."

I cannot understand what the members of the divisional board can know about matters of this kind, and I think the information contained in their telegram most unreliable; on the other hand, we have the assurance of the superintendent of maintenance, Mr. Rodger, who is really a very good officer, that the bridges are in a thoroughly safe and sound condition.

Mr. MURPHY said: Mr. Speaker,—I have seen the telegram from the Bauhinia Divisional Board, which was handed to me by the hon. member for Leichhardt, Mr. Scott, and I most decidedly think that it refers to the bridges on the Central line. The wording of the telegram is in no way ambiguous, because it says that the attention of the Government should be drawn to the dangerous state of some of the bridges on the Central Queensland Railway line. If it referred to bridges on the ordinary roads in the division they would have referred to them as bridges on such and such a road. Though the Minister for Works has a very poor opinion of the competency of the members of the Bauhinia Divisional Board to decide upon a question of railway bridges, still we must remember that these bridges are made of timber; they are not made of stone or brickwork, or anything about which they might not be able to give an opinion; and it is competent for anyone to say whether white ants are in the timber or whether it is decayed. I would just as soon take the opinion of those men, not being interested parties, but disinterested in a great measure, upon a matter of this kind, as the opinion of those who are responsible for the neglect, if those bridges are in the state in which they are reported to be. I hope the Minister for Works will not simply be satisfied with the *ex-parte* opinion he has received from his officer, but will make a thorough inquiry into the matter, and send some independent engineer to make an examination of the bridges, in order to see whether the statement of the Bauhinia Divisional Board is borne out. In the interests of the travelling public the Minister for Works ought to do this.

Mr. FERGUSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I am quite satisfied with the explanation given by the Minister for Works. I know the officer alluded to, and I feel quite satisfied that he would not send such a telegram unless he was satisfied that the bridges were in good order. I am also certain that there is some mistake in the telegram from the Bauhinia Divisional Board, or else the members are making themselves too officious, interfering with things they know nothing about. I think the Government can thoroughly trust the officer whose duty it is to attend to these

things and carry them out satisfactorily, because there is not a more efficient officer in the public service of Queensland than the gentleman who sent this telegram to the Minister for Works.

Mr. PATTISON said: Mr. Speaker,—I quite agree with what has fallen from the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Ferguson, in reference to Mr. Rodger. I have every confidence in that gentleman, and I think the Minister for Works may be perfectly sure that he has received a truthful report. I do not, however, share the hon. member for Rockhampton's opinion that the members of the Bauhinia Divisional Board are too officious; because if they think any of the Government works in their district are in a dangerous condition, it is their duty to call the attention of the Government to them, whether they are roads or railways. At the same time, I think we may be satisfied that there is no danger at the present time, after hearing the report sent down by Mr. Rodger.

Mr. HIGSON said: Mr. Speaker,—I am quite satisfied with the telegram from Mr. Rodger; and I am quite sure that the mind of anyone who knows that gentleman's ability will be at ease so far as the railway bridges in that part of the colony are concerned. I am positive there is no better man or one more attentive to his duties than Mr. Rodger on any railway, and I only wish there were many more in the Government service as well qualified as that gentleman is.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—The discussion on the railway bridges having apparently closed, I will ask the hon. Minister for Lands when he expects to lay on the table those papers alluded to on Friday night, and previously by the Minister for Works, having regard to certain charges against the late Premier, Sir Thomas McIlwraith, and the late Minister for Lands, Mr. Perkins?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. H. Jordan) said: Mr. Speaker,—I have not yet had time to get all the papers. Two of them have been found, and probably when the House meets again I shall be able to lay all the papers on the table.

Mr. SCOTT said: Mr. Speaker,—It is impossible that the telegram from the Bauhinia Divisional Board can have been sent to me without some grounds for the statements contained in it, and it clearly refers to bridges on the Central Railway. I beg to withdraw the motion.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I did not wish to take part in the discussion while the members for the district were saying what they had to say. Like those hon. members, I can speak very highly of Mr. Rodger; I believe he is a very efficient officer. At the same time I should like the Minister for Works not to be quite satisfied with the telegram he has received on the matter. I recollect the state of some bridges on the Western line being brought under my notice accidentally, and I never saw bridges in such a state. If the travelling public had been aware of the condition of some of the bridges they were going over at the rate of twenty miles an hour, I am sure the nervous people would have been very much frightened. Their defects had to be remedied very quickly. I know there are some very high bridges between Westwood and Emerald, and if any of those have shown any indication of dry-rot the sooner they are attended to the better. The bridges on the Western line to which I referred were affected by dry-rot to such an extent that I took pieces out of some of the piles twice the size of my two fists. Such piles certainly could not be considered very safe, and if anything approaching that state of things exists

on the Central line the sooner the Minister for Works attends to the matter the better. Whilst I have every faith in Mr. Rodger as a careful officer, I can hardly believe that the members of the Bauhinia Divisional Board would go so far as to send such an alarming telegram as they did to the hon. member for Leichhardt, Mr. Scott, unless they believed they had good reason for the statement they made.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

#### PRINCE OF WALES'S BIRTHDAY.

##### ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said : Mr. Speaker,—Before the House proceeds to the business of the day, I desire to make a motion with respect to the next sitting day. I apprehend that it is not desired to sit to-morrow, which is to be observed as a public holiday. It is not usual to meet on that day, and I therefore move that this House at its rising adjourn till Thursday next.

Mr. MOREHEAD said : Mr. Speaker,—I think it would be more conducive to the conduct of public business, and would tend materially to shorten the, I hope, only few remaining days of this Parliament if we sat to-morrow. I really do not see why we should adjourn until Thursday, but of course I shall bow to the decision of the majority of the House. Although I believe it has been usual to adjourn over the 9th November—the Prince of Wales's Birthday—still I do not see why it should be so. There is a lot of business yet to do, and the weather is getting uncomfortably hot; and I do not see any reason why we should not get through our work as quickly as possible. If the question goes to a division I shall vote against it, but I shall be led to a great extent by the expression of the opinions of members of the House.

Mr. ALAND said : Mr. Speaker,—It has always been the custom to adjourn over the Prince of Wales's birthday; and although at the present time most hon. members would be only too glad to sit to-morrow, still I daresay that nearly all of us have made certain arrangements for holiday-keeping, and perhaps it would be an inconvenience to alter the arrangements we have entered into at so short a notice.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said : Mr. Speaker,—I seriously hope that we shall have a holiday to-morrow. After the hard work we had last week I think it is quite desirable that we should have a holiday. The leader of the Opposition, as well as other hon. members, knows perfectly well that almost every member has made arrangements for entertainment of some kind to-morrow, either for going to the races or for a picnic, or some other recreation. I do not see that there is the slightest necessity for any opposition to the proposed adjournment. It is well known that it is usual to adjourn on such an occasion, and in this case I think the holiday would be most acceptable to a large majority of the House.

Mr. STEVENSON said : Mr. Speaker,—It is all very well for the hon. member for Cook to speak in that way now that he resides in Brisbane, but he was not so anxious to have these adjournments when he was a resident of Rosewood. In the interests of hon. members who have to come a long way and are now wasting their time in Brisbane to the neglect of their own business—I refer to the representatives of the Northern and Western constituencies—I think it is not fair that advantage should be taken of every opportunity to have a holiday. But that is not the only objection to the proposed adjournment. There is also the expense that it will be to the country. These outside members, whether they are doing parliamentary work or not, are paid for the whole of their time,

Members residing in Brisbane and its vicinity are, of course, only paid for the time they are actually in attendance at Parliament. At the same time the adjournment will be an expense to the country, and I am perfectly satisfied that most hon. members would as soon sit to-morrow as not.

Mr. KELLETT said : Mr. Speaker,—I think the last speaker has made a mistake about the members for the Northern and outside districts. I believe they have already received their £200. Perhaps that is the reason they do not want to wait here any longer. The adjournment would therefore involve no more expense to the country.

Mr. MURPHY said : Mr. Speaker,—As a country member I appeal to the Premier to allow us to get on with the business of the session. I think a very fair compromise would be to meet after the dinner-hour to-morrow. If hon. members have made arrangements to go to the races or otherwise amuse themselves, they will have returned from their various sports and amusements by dinner-time, and I think it would be a fair compromise to meet for the despatch of business after dinner. As a member representing a country constituency, and as one who is stopping here at very considerable inconvenience, I distinctly repudiate the charge made by the hon. member for Stanley, Mr. Kellett, that, as we have now earned our 200 guineas, we are quite willing to go away at any time. We are not stopping here like he and other hon. members who act with him on that side of the House are, purely for the 200 guineas. We on this side of the House are willing to give up our 200 guineas at any time, and it is well known to the hon. member that if it were left to the Opposition there would never have been such a waste of public money. It is a great waste of money, especially when it is lavished on members like the representatives of Stanley.

Mr. PALMER said : Mr. Speaker,—If the leader of the Opposition wants any support to continue the business to-morrow, I will heartily give him mine. As a Northern member I shall be very glad to get away as soon as I can, but for certain reasons I do not care to leave until the close of the session. I see no reason why we should not meet after dinner to-morrow. That has been done before. It was done a few weeks ago on a holiday, and I hope the House will not consent to adjourn till Thursday.

The HON. J. M. MACROSSAN said : Mr. Speaker,—I certainly think we should be far better employed doing the business of the country to-morrow than in attending to our own pleasure, and if the leader of the Opposition goes any further in his objection to the motion I shall support him in it.

Question put, and the House divided :—

AYES, 26.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Jordan, Dutton, Foote, Rutledge, Moreton, Kellett, Dickson, Sheridan, Kates, Lumley Hill, McMaster, Bulcock, Wakefield, Isambert, Buckland, Foxton, Hamilton, Jessop, Mellor, Aland, W. Brookes, Fraser, Higson, S. W. Brooks, and Morgan.

NOES, 15.

Messrs. Morehead, Norton, Macrossan, Palmer, Allan, Murphy, Scott, Stevenson, Donaldson, Pattison, White, Lissner, Campbell, Adams, and Black.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

#### SOUTH BRISBANE BRANCH RAILWAY.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS, in moving—

That the Speaker do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the following resolutions, namely :—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the South Brisbane branch of the Southern and Western Railway to Melbourne street, as laid upon the table of the House on Thursday, the 1st of September, 1887.

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

—said: Mr. Speaker,—This line commences on the South Brisbane extension of the Southern and Western line near the gaol, and it runs parallel to the existing line some short distance—about twenty-five chains—and then branches in the direction of the proposed terminus, passing between the boys' and girls' national school, and crossing the Boggo road at its junction with the Park road. It goes under Gloucester street, and by a short tunnel under Stephens street, and after passing under Vulture street runs midway between Hope street and Grey street to Melbourne street, the length being 2 miles 9 chains 39 links. There have been several examinations of the route proposed to be taken by this line, but after very careful examination this was decided upon. There was one other route on which some time was spent in discovering the difficulties of carrying it through. In that case the resumption of land would have been very much heavier than in this case. The present proposed line is more direct; tunnels are used instead of cuttings, and in that way the surface of the ground is preserved and the necessity for costly resumption is avoided. It was thought that it might be desirable to bring the present line down from its present terminus and then along the river side of Stanley street, so as to make the terminus at the South Brisbane wharves, but it was found there would be great difficulty in getting round or over the dock, and if that had been surmounted there would not be sufficient land between Stanley street and the river to have had a terminus of the kind required for the South Coast line. That line would require a great deal of station accommodation, and, in addition to that, another objection was that the area of land in Stanley street would have been less than the position now alluded to, and the cost greater. As was explained by the Premier when the line was referred to on a former occasion, it is not the intention of the Government to proceed with the line, but to get authority to secure the land, leaving it to some future time when the necessities are greater to construct the line. If we left it for a few years the value of the land would go on increasing in the meantime, and the great object now is to secure the land and prevent the necessity of still more costly resumption in the future. I do not think anybody can doubt the necessity there will be in the future—I will not say at what time it will be—of extending this line into the town, whether it be into Melbourne street or any other central position in South Brisbane. Anyone who has visited the present terminus of the South Brisbane branch of the Southern and Western line must know that it can never be utilised for a passenger or even for a goods station to meet the increase of traffic which is taking place, and which certainly will take place by the extension of the lines at present in progress of construction, and those projected now on the south coast side. The present terminus is nothing but a terminus for the shipping of coal, and it is utterly impossible, with the space there is there, to establish a passenger or goods station on the present site—in conjunction, of course, with the coal traffic. From the increase in the coal traffic within the past two or three years, we may assume that in a few years more it will have assumed considerable proportions, and there will certainly be no more space available at the terminus of the South Coast line than will be absolutely necessary for the requirements of the coal trade. There are lines in course of construction and others projected which will be connected with the South Coast line, and many of these lines will really be suburban

lines, carrying a very large suburban passenger traffic. The extension of the population in that part of the country has been very rapid indeed within the last two or three years, and is likely to continue more rapidly still when the convenience is afforded of reaching those suburbs by railway. The South Coast line will be to a certain extent a suburban line; the Cleveland branch will be distinctly a suburban line as the present Sandgate line is, and the population is increasing rapidly along the routes of both those lines. Suburban traffic is generally admitted to be the most payable traffic we can have, but in order to secure it the line must bring the traffic right into the town. If you do not provide suburban lines with a convenient terminus for passenger traffic, people will look to other means of transit rather than to a railway which does not bring them right into the city—they will turn to the omnibuses and trams if the railway line does not bring them to the centre of population. Unless we bring the line right into the city on the South Brisbane side—into Melbourne street as here proposed—we can never expect to have a successful suburban traffic on any one of these south coast lines, and to the suburban traffic we must look as one of the chief sources of profit from these lines. In addition to that, the goods traffic that will come in from the South Coast line will, I presume, be mainly agricultural produce, and that also it is necessary to bring as closely into contact with distributors and consumers as it is possible to do; otherwise the agriculturists will be handicapped by the trouble and additional expense of dray carriage. This will, of course, have to be incurred to some extent in almost any case, but if the distance of carriage can be lessened it will of course be a very material consideration. I am quite prepared to admit that at the present time there is no real necessity for the extension in this way, but that necessity will soon arise in view of the completion and extension of the South Coast lines—one to Beaudesert, one to Nerang and Southport, and one to Cleveland. These will ultimately be very important lines indeed, not only for suburban passenger traffic but for the carriage of agricultural produce; and unless we can get a terminus as near the centre of population as possible the main object of all these lines will be frustrated. We cannot go back on the present line towards Woollongabba to establish a station. That would be something like shifting the present railway station at North Brisbane back towards Milton, and hon. members will admit that such a proposition as that would not be entertained for a moment. The only way in which we can secure a station fit for the work to be done in connection with these lines will either be by bringing it on to South Brisbane, to Melbourne street, as proposed, or by going back to Woollongabba to make the station. The last proposal hon. members will no doubt consider is quite out of the question, and the question then arises, where can the line be brought to in South Brisbane in such a way as to meet all requirements? After very careful consideration the Government have come to the conclusion that the only way to do it is to bring the line, in the way proposed, into Melbourne street. Of course there is the alternative proposition mentioned by the hon. member for Townsville the other night. That looks very well, but it would involve an enormously increased cost—double or treble what is proposed here—and the proposition the Government have brought before the House will meet all the requirements of trade and carriage on this line. The cost of the resumption is estimated by the Government valuator at about £56,000.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: How much do the people value it at, and who was the Government valuator—Mr. Thomson?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Mr. Thomson is not the Government valuator. The Government have employed other persons to get at the probable cost of the resumptions that will be necessary, and, of course, that all has to run the gauntlet of the arbitrator, possibly of the Supreme Court, and possibly also of a committee of this House.

Mr. MOREHEAD: And the cost of construction?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The cost of construction is estimated at about £112,862. In addition to that there has to be constructed, to connect it with the Cleveland line, a distance of twenty-one chains, which will cost £3,568; so that the cost will be something over £116,000.

Mr. NORTON: And £56,000 for resumption.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: And £56,000 for resumption. What the Government ask the House to consent to now, in passing this line, is to enable them to make the purchase of the land, so that it may be secured when the time arrives when it will be necessary to construct this line. That, I think, would be a wise and judicious thing for the House to do, because the line must be made some time or other, and every day's delay will add to the cost of acquiring the necessary land.

Mr. NORTON: Is the land along the connecting link with the Cleveland line included in the cost of resumption?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes; the estimate of resumption includes the whole cost of resumption. I think I need not say any more on this subject. I have touched upon the main considerations which have induced the Government to ask the House to assent to this proposal, and I trust the House generally will agree to this proposal, and decide that it is necessary to secure this land. That is all we want now. I believe we are all agreed that this extension will have to be made, and it would have been wise if, many years ago, the same thing had been foreseen, and the resumption of land to bring this railway into the centre of population had then been provided for. The time when it will be necessary to construct this line will be another matter altogether. There is, however, no doubt that the requirements of the extension of the present South Coast line, the building of the Cleveland line, and the increase of population along those lines will justify the building of the line now proposed. But to secure the land for the purpose is now the great want. When that is secured, the question will then have to be determined when the line is to be extended.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not know that we have gained very much information from the Minister for Works, except on two points, both of which are rather immaterial. The Minister for Works, as I understand him, now states that this resolution we are asked to pass is not really what the Government intends. This resolution asks the House to go into committee for a certain specific purpose, namely:—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the South Brisbane branch of the Southern and Western Railway to Melbourne street, as laid upon the table of the House on Thursday, the 1st 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.

But the Minister for Works, in his speech, does not ask for that at all. He asks the House to consent to an expenditure of £45,000 for the purchase of land through which this railway is to be constructed.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: £56,000.

The PREMIER: That is all that is available.

Mr. MOREHEAD: I will make it £56,000 if the Minister for Works prefers it. This is an insidious way of getting the House—I admit that it is cunningly devised—to commit itself to the plan, section, and book of reference that we are now asked to go into committee for the purpose of passing. It is evident that if this £56,000 is applied to the purchase of the land in question, it will bind the House to this particular extension. I have no doubt that is what the Government are driving at; but I contend that the statement of the Minister for Works is not strictly in accord with what the Committee are asked to decide upon. I was very much struck with one remark of the Minister for Works, and no doubt other hon. members also will have been struck with it. The hon. gentleman said, "I admit there is no real necessity at the present time to make this extension." I believe this House has long ago come to the conclusion that no great public work, which is not absolutely necessary, should be undertaken in the present condition of our finances; and we have an admission on the part of the Minister for Works that there is no immediate necessity for this extension—an extension which, if sanctioned, will cost about £172,000. That is a very large sum of money at any time for us to vote for such an extension as is proposed. No doubt railway accommodation in South Brisbane may possibly be slightly inadequate, yet it must be borne in mind that the inhabitants of that portion of the city and those who do business on that railway have had to a considerable extent their wants attended to; whereas there are large portions of the colony whose railway wants have been utterly neglected up to the present time. Surely some consideration should be given to them before this duplicate line—for such it practically is for a short distance—should be given to a portion of the city, although it may be necessary at some future period that some other arrangement should be made with regard to the terminal point in South Brisbane. But even with regard to that there appears to be a great difference of opinion. I have heard, both directly and indirectly, from many persons in South Brisbane, that this proposal is one that does not meet with the approbation of a large section of the inhabitants of South Brisbane. The Minister for Works has himself admitted that there is a considerable diversity of opinion on the question. Such being the case, the matter should have properly been relegated to a select committee. The House would then have dealt with it on the report of that committee, instead of on a decision arrived at by the Minister himself and his colleagues—a decision arrived at, to a great extent, irrespective of the complaints of many people interested in this particular line. However, I do not intend to detain the House at any length at this stage; and on a former occasion I, acting on behalf of the Opposition, stated the line we intended to pursue as regarded any railway construction, except those which were absolutely of an emergent nature, that may be asked for this session. The history of the position taken up by us is contained in the *Hansard* of last week. I will tell the Minister for Works that though this motion to go into committee may be carried, we shall do all we can to prevent it going any further, for the reasons I have given. If there were strong

reasons against the Thane's Creek railway, there are also strong reasons against this. It was urged, though I do not think successfully—at any rate, not to my mind—that the Thane's Creek extension might open up a considerable district which was at the present time pining for the want of railway communication. That line of argument cannot apply to this deviation and extension with South Brisbane. And when we have, on the top of that, the statement of the Minister for Works that there is no real necessity at the present time for making this extension, although at some future period it may be necessary, I say we ought to deal with the question at that future period when the necessity for it has arisen, when our finances, I trust, will be in a more flourishing condition than they are at the present time. For the reasons given I shall, with the Opposition, oppose the motion, and shall continue that opposition if it is to be proceeded with in committee.

Mr. W. BROOKES said: Mr. Speaker,—I have not much to say, but I rise thus early in order to have my views made clear at once. I came here this afternoon very earnestly and sincerely hoping that the Premier would have presented a very different statement to the House. I confess at once, and plainly, that I am very much disappointed by the Premier not having settled the discord in this House at once and for all this session. I feel that all the more, because I have been for some time of the opinion that the Government ought really, on constitutional grounds, not to introduce even such contentious matters as those which are now before the House. I have looked into the question with some little care, and I have some time since come to the conclusion that it is quite irregular, after what has passed in this House, for the Government to attempt to force anything on the House; and that the simple and proper course—the course which, I believe, would be pursued by the House of Commons under similar circumstances—would be to proceed with the Estimates, and let us go to our constituencies. But, sir, that is not all. I could not vote for the matter now before the House, and be consistent with the vote I gave—or rather with the side I took—last week. I was one of those who spoke on the opposition side of the question, because I considered that the financial position of the colony was not such as to justify any further expenditure whatever which was avoidable; and to be consistent I must continue to take that course. I am not saying now that under other circumstances I should oppose this motion. Under different circumstances I would willingly discuss, and possibly might vote for it. But the present circumstances are not such; and when we hear the Minister for Works himself say that there is no immediate necessity for this extension, it appears to me that the case is given up. I really can say nothing more. I wish it to be clearly understood that in voting against this proposal I am merely pursuing the course I took last week, and which I see no reason whatever to deviate from, but which, on the contrary, I see a growing necessity to adhere to.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—The representatives of South Brisbane do not seem to take the opportunity which is offered to them for showing their reasons why this extension should be made now. They have got nice snug Government billets, both of them, and want to keep them.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: That is more useful a great deal. I am a resident of South Brisbane and live very near the course of the proposed line. I live in Vulture street, just above the Dry Dock. The railway is almost under my nose.

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I see Woollongabba and I go past the Stanley-street station every morning as I come into town. I have looked at the Dry Dock, which is supposed to be such an obstacle to the railway being continued along Stanley street; I have carefully studied it, not as a professional engineer, because I am not that. But I have been to a certain extent a practical engineer in a good many cases—have had to study engineers' work. I have also had friends of mine to inspect it and consider it, and I see not the slightest difficulty in getting round the end of that Dry Dock, and running down the right-hand side of Stanley street right along the railway wharves. An extension of sixty chains in that direction would bring the line right up to Victoria Bridge, to a much more central position for passenger traffic than it will be in if it goes to Melbourne street, and it will not cost one-half the money. The members for Brisbane say "No." They do so because they know that if the terminus is made near the bridge in Stanley street half the trade will be taken away from the North Brisbane side. Therefore, no doubt, the members for North Brisbane and Bulimba, too, will support this proposal—with the exception of my hon. friend, the junior member for North Brisbane, who has just sat down, and who is a bit of an independent patriot. I will say that much for him. I have seen all along, not only in this colony, but also in New South Wales and in Melbourne, that they have always made the mistake of not carrying their railways at once to deep water, and thereby establishing direct communication with the shipping; and now, sir, we are going to perpetuate that evil. Although the Government see the defect, and what is wanting, they avoid doing what they can to remedy it. I would point out that it would be far cheaper—that the cost of the land would be less, that the cost of construction would be less—to adopt the course I suggest. Instead of £112,000 for two miles of railway, the cost would not be in excess of, I should say, £10,000. I believe that would easily make that line these sixty chains.

The PREMIER: What about the cost of the land?

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: The Premier asks what about the cost of buying the land. It would cost less than £56,000 a great deal.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No, no!

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I have spoken to several wharf-owners along the line, and they told me they would be quite willing to give the Government the privilege of running a double line there, giving the land for the sake of the advantage the line would give to their trade and business. The Premier shakes his head; but there is not the slightest possibility of this line being passed, and I say it would be a very good thing if the Government would appoint a commission of some sort to inquire into the relative cost of the two lines. In my opinion, there can be no doubt whatever as to which of the two would be productive of the most benefit to the people of South Brisbane, and of the colony. Country producers would then be able to send their wool and produce right down to the ship's side. Bales of wool could be taken off the trucks and rolled into the ships without any loading again, as is the case at the North Brisbane station, and as will be the case if this line is made to Melbourne street.

Mr. FRASER: No.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Of course the wool will have to be put on trollies and brought down.

Mr. FRASER: No.

Mr. MURPHY: Will they roll the wool down the street?

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Will they roll the wool down the street! The hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Fraser, must think I know very little about shipping business or wool or anything else. I contend that it will give a tremendous impetus to the trade of South Brisbane if the railway is carried along Stanley street. The coal traffic could be taken down the river as far as the powder magazine, skirting along the bank of the river, which is all Government property. Wharves could be erected there quite sufficient for the whole of the coal traffic. The only obstacle in the way is the little tunnel under Vulture street, which, I may state, goes under my house. That is simply a goose-neck, which would make the present line inadequate to the immense development of trade which would take place if the line were running along the wharves at the back of Stanley street. But I would suggest the old powder magazine for the coal traffic, which would be very easy indeed by putting a second tunnel under Vulture street. That would be far less costly, and far more effective and useful for all practical purposes for the citizens of South Brisbane, than this projected enterprise as far as Melbourne street. I maintain that the amount put down here by the Minister for Works as compensation for resumptions—£56,000—will be utterly inadequate unless he makes confiscation pay for compensation. Numbers of people along this proposed route are residents who do not want to be thrust out of their houses and homes. The alternative line I propose along Stanley street will not interfere with a single resident of any sort or kind. It will disturb some of the sawmills, the owners of which will have to shift some of their machinery perhaps, but they will be exceedingly glad to welcome the line there, and will be prepared to give the land to the country for a very reasonable price. I consider it a very fortunate thing that this delay is going to take place, so that the Government may have time and opportunity to get information during the recess as to the cost and advantages of the alternative route, which I point out clearly to this House is by far the most advantageous to the people of South Brisbane. The Minister for Works said that this would be chiefly a suburban line; that we were to expect an immense amount of traffic from the people who are going to live in the suburbs, and who will come in by train to do their business. That is all very well in its way, but I say let us get the traffic first, and then there will be the more business for those living along the line to come in and attend to. Let us look further than the suburbs—the outskirts of the city. I say, get trade from the farthest point of the colony you can, and even from the other colony if possible. I say, looking ahead to the future, and the near future too, that it is inevitable that South Brisbane must become the terminus of the real *via recta*—that is, the shortest route to Sydney. We have heard a great deal about the *via recta* and Thane's Creek, but the route from South Brisbane *via* Beaudesert and Richmond Gap is over 100 miles shorter than any route you can take the line *via* Warwick and Wallangarra. The hon. member for Warwick, Mr. Morgan, says "No." I refer him to a comparative statement of the lines, which is a parliamentary paper laid on the table of the Assembly on the 29th October, 1885, "Construction of Railway Lines upon the 4 ft. 8½ in. gauge." Speaking of the route *via* Nerang to the Tweed and thence by the proposed line to Casino and Grafton, the report says:—

"The distance by this route between Brisbane and Sydney, assuming a coastal line to be made from Newcastle to Grafton, may be taken approximately at 580 miles."

Mr. MORGAN: There is no line there yet.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I have no doubt there will be one. I hear an hon. member say it is the South Brisbane line we are discussing. I take it I am perfectly in order in pointing out the futurities of South Brisbane, which its representatives seem wholly blind to. I am an elector of South Brisbane, and I own property there; therefore I am anxious to see the wants of South Brisbane attended to. I hope I am able to see a little beyond my nose. I do not look merely to suburban traffic; I look far beyond that—to opening up the country to its utmost limits, and increasing the facility of communication with the metropolis. Possibly we shall get some trade from Sydney if we construct our railways on business principles. That is the distance *via* Nerang—580 miles. Another route is—

"By the proposed extension of the Logan branch to Beaudesert, thence up the watershed of Christmas Creek to the Richmond Gap in the Macpherson Range, and by the valley of the Richmond River to Casino. This, if feasible, would be the most direct route, and the through distance by it would probably not be more than 570 miles."

That line is ten miles shorter.

Mr. KATES: The country is no good.

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: I happen to know that the country is pretty good, and the Logan country and the country at Christmas Creek will compare favourably in its lucerne-growing capabilities, its maize-growing capabilities, and its general agricultural capabilities, with any land on the Darling Downs; and it has this additional advantage, that it is ever so much nearer the market. To our border by Christmas Creek and Richmond Gap is only seventy-six miles, and that is another great advantage in favour of the Southern line—because when we have, as I have no doubt we shall, an even gauge with New South Wales, we shall only have seventy-six miles of railway to alter, instead of 177 miles to Wallangarra by the shortest route, and over exceedingly difficult country, where the engineering expenses will be enormously heavy. I think, Mr. Speaker, that if the people of South Brisbane take this point into consideration, and look at the relative merits of this line and that proposed by the leader of the Opposition, and which I know was proposed to the Government years ago, they will think they have been very much neglected, and their interests overlooked by their representatives. I know that I look upon it in that light, and if there is any opposition to them in the coming election, I shall go against them as far as possible, because I consider the electors' interests have been shamefully overlooked and utterly neglected; the members have been here simply as supporters of the Ministry and nothing else. I am very glad to hear from the leader of the Opposition his intention of stonewalling this railway if ever it gets into committee. I can assure him that he will have my utmost support in the matter.

Mr. FRASER said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not intend to speak at much length at the present time, because it is evident that the fate of this motion is a foregone conclusion. However, sir, I cannot compliment the last hon. member either upon the opening or closing of his speech. That hon. member began with one of those insinuations which he is so fond of scattering in all directions, attributing to hon. members of this House the most unworthy motives, as if nothing could animate himself but the purest motives and the highest patriotism. I fling the insinuation in the hon. member's face with contempt. Anyone listening to the hon. member would imagine that he is perfectly sure of being the coming representative of South Brisbane, which I do not think is by any means probable. Now, sir, I should like to say that a mistake is made in designating this simply a South Brisbane line.

There is no doubt at all that it may be expected to be of some considerable benefit to South Brisbane, but it must not be forgotten that it is an indispensable link in the line we are extending to our southern border. It is part and parcel, and an important part and parcel, of the South Coast line. I would also point out this: We are pushing out this line to the south through the agricultural districts of the Logan, Albert, and Nerang, and we are making very considerable progress with it; but, were that line finished to-morrow, it would be a comparatively profitless line if we leave this section unfinished. We should bring the produce, whatever it is, into Woollongabba; but it would actually cost the farmer bringing produce from Beenleigh or elsewhere as much to cart it into the central market as the whole freight from the Logan and Albert. The farmers themselves have told me that they cannot afford to send produce to the Brisbane market.

Mr. NORTON: Will they if the line is extended to Melbourne street?

Mr. FRASER: Yes, they will. The question of the particular route to be taken by the extension had been under consideration for a considerable time before it was decided upon. The engineering difficulties in connection with other routes suggested are very great. I do not mean to say that they are insurmountable, as it would be a very difficult matter to say what is insurmountable from an engineering point of view; but I presume the engineer did not care to face the other routes. The hon. junior member for Cook may pretend to understand the question infinitely better than the engineer. I do not profess to do so; but I know that it was after careful consideration that the proposed route was adopted. The hon. member talked about taking the line round the upper end of the Dry Dock. But that Dry Dock has been extended once already, and I am perfectly satisfied that it is only a question of a very short time before a still further extension will be necessary.

Mr. MURPHY: Take the dock away altogether.

Mr. FRASER: The Dry Dock is too serviceable where it is, and it pays too well to remove it. The hon. member has suggested that it would be very convenient to run the line along the wharves. So it would; there is no doubt about that. But the locality selected for a station is only a few chains from the wharves. The hon. member also says it will necessitate transshipment and cartage. He thinks, possibly, that I do not know much about transshipment. I do not know as much about wool as he does, perhaps, but I have seen a good deal in connection with shipping, and have seen also engineering difficulties overcome. It would only need a few chains of railway to allow loaded trucks to go down to Parbury, Lamb, and Company's wharf, and the new Corporation wharves.

Mr. NORTON: Take it along Stanley street.

Mr. FRASER: There is no occasion for it. The hon. junior member for Cook laid considerable emphasis upon the suburban traffic, as if that was the sole object of the construction of the line. I do not think the suburban traffic is to be ignored in the construction of a line of this kind. There are three lines there, the branch line from the Southern and Western line, the South Coast line, and the Cleveland line; and along those three lines there are some of the most attractive and beautiful suburbs there are around Brisbane, and I have not the slightest doubt that in the course of a very short time there will be a very large suburban population settled there, which will contribute largely to make this a re-

munerative line. However, that is only a secondary matter. There is another point to be urged, and that is, that there is not the slightest doubt that property owners along the proposed route of the line in question have been very considerably disturbed. They are uncertain as to what will be the future issue in regard to their property, and they want to know whether the line is to be taken in the direction proposed or not. In all fairness to those people, the matter should be decided at as early a date as possible. I certainly was somewhat surprised, if not disappointed, to hear the Minister for Works say that there was no necessity for the line. I maintain that there is. There is a very urgent necessity for determining the question.

The PREMIER: No immediate necessity for the construction of the line.

Mr. FRASER: I do not agree with the Minister for Works, because I maintain that this extension should be constructed too early. There is a great deal with which I agree in what the hon. junior member for Cook has said. I am quite prepared to say that this is by far the best line to connect with the *via recta* to New South Wales, and I have not the slightest doubt that on the completion of the line we shall secure a very large amount of traffic from the Tweed River and that locality. There is another matter, Mr. Speaker, and that is that the sum anticipated by the Minister for Works will not be sufficient for the construction of the line. I might make a suggestion in connection with that—namely, that along the part of the line where it is proposed to resume land, the Government will have sufficient room to enable them to sell some of the frontages at a very considerable advance. A suggestion was thrown out the other day that it would be a good plan to extend this proposed line to North Brisbane. I have not the slightest doubt that the time will come when that will be done. Our systems of railways, North and South, will have to be united. In respect to what was said by the leader of the Opposition, that this line is not approved of by a large section of the people of South Brisbane, I must confess that that is information for me. I think, Mr. Speaker, I know the feeling of the people there—

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: A large section of them do not.

Mr. FRASER: Of course, if the hon. junior member for Cook considers himself a large section of the people of South Brisbane the case is different. But so far as the residents of South Brisbane are concerned, I know, on the contrary, that there is almost a consensus of opinion in favour of the extension being completed as soon as possible. It is useless to continue the debate on this question if the same tactics we have experienced during the past week are to be resorted to; at the same time I am glad to find that the objection is not so much to the line itself as to the particular route proposed. There seems to be a general opinion that sooner or later the line must come, whether by the proposed route or not. I may say that I am decidedly in favour of the present route. If it be brought along the bank of the river, along the wharves, I do not see where sufficient station accommodation can be obtained for the traffic that may be expected, either passenger or goods.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I am one of those who cannot see any present necessity for the construction of this line, and I think the only excuse which can be offered for it is that which was suggested the other day by the hon. member for Townsville—that if it is made it should not terminate at Melbourne street, but be carried across the river, and run to the terminus at the top of George street. I shall not attempt to

answer the arguments of the hon. member who has just sat down, and I am sure that when he uses such an argument as he did with regard to selling the frontages of the land at a profit, after resuming the whole, he can hardly expect hon. members who oppose his views to attach any very great importance to them. I take very strong objection to this line on the ground that in the first place, as has been pointed out by the leader of the Opposition, the object the Government have in view is not to go on with the construction of the line, but merely to resume and purchase the land along its course, and construct the line at some future indefinite period. Apart from that, I take up the position that no money has ever been voted for the construction of this line. In 1884 the sum of £122,000 was voted on the Loan Estimates for certain purposes in South Brisbane, part for the completion of the South Brisbane Railway, and part for the extension of the wharves; the sum of £20,000 was voted for the resumption of land, and £30,000 for the continuation of the present line from its present terminus across Stanley street and terminating near the Victoria Bridge. But where does this line go? It is a new line altogether, and absolutely distinct from the line for which money was voted in 1884; the new portion, at any rate, is very much longer than the portion which is identical with that which was put before the House in 1884. I think that is a very strong objection from a technical point of view; and if it came to a point I think the question might be raised, whether it was competent for the Government to use the money which was voted for a line which it was represented to us would be constructed, for the line they are now bringing down without an Act of Parliament to authorise the use of that money. But instead of being kept down to the £50,000 voted in 1884 for the purchase of land and the continuation of the railway, we find that the country is to be put to the cost, according to the estimate, of over £172,000, and probably it will be found to be about £200,000, or even more, when the work is completed. I say it is not a fair thing to ask the House now to assent to a different line, a line brought in with a different object and requiring about four times the expenditure of money. I believe that if it had been stated in 1884 that the extension would have cost £200,000 instead of £50,000, there would have been much more opposition to the vote; I do not say I am sure, because the Committee that passed the Loan Estimates were in such a condition that they accepted many propositions which under ordinary circumstances would not have been listened to. The Colonial Treasurer, when he moved the item of £122,000, explained the different items; and I will quote from his own words to show that I am correct in my statement as to the money to be devoted to this particular extension. At page 1953 of the 44th volume of *Hansard* :—

"The COLONIAL TREASURER said that the estimate of £50,000 for extension covered £20,000 as cost of land."

Then I asked if the point had been fixed where the extension was to stop, and the Minister for Works replied :—

"To the end of the bridge."

And in reply to another question the Minister for Works said :—

"The object was to serve the passenger traffic."

Of course we know that if a line of this kind is constructed there will be much more than passenger traffic; there will also be produce traffic. I think from the discussion—I will not call it debate—such as it was, which took place on the question in 1884—a discussion which occupied only two columns and three-quarters of *Hansard*—it can easily be seen that the matter was not then very seriously

discussed. At that time the object was to provide for passenger traffic; but I say that passenger traffic will not be provided for if the line is carried out, as proposed by this plan, merely to Melbourne street. It will be seven chains from the station to the end of the bridge: a good many passengers will still need some means of conveyance to get to the city, and all the produce will need to be carted in drays, because I am quite sure the hon. member for South Brisbane's scheme of running a railway along the streets will not be adopted. Unless the line is to be continued across the river to the present station it will be almost useless, and I think all the advantages to be derived from the line as now proposed would be obtained by continuing the present line, as has been suggested, along the bank of the river to Victoria Bridge. I know there are difficulties in the way of that, but the difficulties are not insuperable. But, in any case, there is another way in which a line might be constructed which would provide as great an amount of accommodation for passenger traffic as the scheme now under consideration, and which would also be the means of providing for all other traffic in addition. Let any hon. member look at the map which has been laid on the table and he will see that if the present line was continued, not from the end at Stanley street but from the end where it backs down the river, it might be extended along the river-bank to the present Alice-street ferry, or beyond that down to Gibbs, Bright, and Company's wharf. The line could be continued there without any difficulty, and it would provide for any amount of shipping that would require to take produce from the wharves, and goods could easily be carried from the line across the river on the steam punts and carted into the middle of the city. That could be done just as conveniently as goods could be carted from Melbourne street into the city proper, and all the other traffic would be provided for quite as well there as in any other place. The line would be quite as near the centre of the city as the proposed extension, and passengers could, as people do now, cross the ferry from Kangaroo Point. Is not that plan worth considering, if we are to construct a line that will provide for both passenger and goods traffic? Certainly the goods traffic is worth considering. The coal wharves will need a great deal of attention, and by adopting this scheme they could be continued all round the river; all the accommodation that will be required for the next hundred years could be provided without buying one acre of land. I suggest that scheme to show that if we have occasion to carry out any extension of this line it might be done in that way and at much less cost to the country, and with greater advantage than the present proposal. For my part, as I said before, I cannot see what advantage we should gain by constructing a line with a tunnel 122 yards long, and a number of deep cuttings for a distance of two and three-quarter miles, when the same object as that in view can be achieved by a much cheaper scheme. If the line is extended as proposed, the terminus will then be about seven chains from Victoria Bridge. The present terminus is only a little more than half-a-mile from the bridge, and trams are running continually by the very gates which could bring passengers right into the city. I venture to say that if there are passengers to be brought down from the station, arrangements could be made with the tramway company to run trams to meet the trains. There could be no difficulty about that. To my mind, all the arguments which have been brought forward in favour of this line are of a most specious character. I cannot see any reason for a proposal

of the kind, and I think that the mere fact that the money was never voted for this line, but for an extension from the end of the present line across Stanley street and along the back of the properties there, is a very serious reason why this proposal should not be entertained. But apart from that, I take up the position that my hon. friend the leader of the Opposition has taken up, and I say that we are bound to oppose the construction of any questionable, or, rather, any disputable line at the present time, and I am quite prepared to give him my assistance, if any assistance should be required, to prevent the adoption of these plans by the House.

Mr. ADAMS said: Mr. Speaker,—I am personally very sorry that the Government have brought forward these plans at the present time. I am under the impression that it is not the intention of the Government to carry out the promise they made to South Brisbane. It is evident, from what has fallen from the Minister for Works, that some change has been made, and also that if the plans and book of reference are passed by this House to-night, or even this session, the Government do not intend to carry out this particular line. This is not the line that it was originally intended to construct; the route has been altered, and the hon. gentleman now wants the plans passed for the simple reason that he may be able to spend a portion of the money in resuming certain land along the railway. Taking into consideration that the route has been altered since the money was voted, what guarantee have we, if the plans are passed this evening, that it will not be altered again? If the money is expended for the purpose of resuming this land, is it not just possible that at some future time another and better route may be found where the land to be resumed may cost more or less than £56,000? It has been urged that it will be necessary in the near future to connect the South Brisbane line with the North Brisbane line. If that is correct, I think it would be far wiser for the Government to practise economy—they are practising economy now, but in a poor way—at once, and formulate a scheme to connect the two lines. It has been said by the Minister for Works that to leave the terminus at Woollongabba would handicap the farmers with their produce. No doubt a large quantity of produce may come down that line, but I cannot see where the handicapping comes in. If the railway is extended to Melbourne street they will have to cart their produce, and if the terminus is still at Woollongabba they have only to do the same. A short distance like that does not handicap the farmer so much as the handling of his produce, and when once he has it on his dray he can cart it a certain distance for a certain amount, and it does not matter whether it is 500 yards or half-a-mile. I know that is so in my district, and I believe it is the same in Brisbane. Therefore I say that it is not handicapping the farmers. They cannot consume their own produce at the railway station, and when it comes down it will have to be carted to certain places where it will be sold to the public. But in the present state of the finances of the country, it is not justifiable to spend the large amount of money necessary for resumption, especially when a new route may be discovered. It is evident to my mind that the Government do not intend to carry out the line, and want merely to resume the land. Now, I cannot understand why these plans are always left over to the end of the session. Why can they not be brought in at an earlier period of the session? If I were to ask the Government that question, I should probably be told that it was not convenient. It is just possible it is not convenient. It is more convenient to leave it to the end of the session when hon. members who have business elsewhere have gone away, and the Government desire to

carry plans through in a small House. I maintain that they ought to bring a matter of this kind before a full House, and not wait until so many hon. members have gone away to their homes. Speaking personally, I will stop here until Christmas and do my utmost to stop an expenditure of this kind. I do not believe that many people are in favour of this line. I have seen myself, both in the colonies and at home, that property owners are glad to keep the terminus of a railway away from them, and I know it is of no benefit whatever to people who hold property alongside a terminus. I certainly sympathise very much with the Minister for Lands. I know very well he has been promised this line, and I may quote the words he made use of last session in reference to the extension into Melbourne street. He said:—

“At the beginning of last session I had a definite promise by the Ministry that the plans of that railway should be laid on the table that session, and at the end of the session I called the attention of the Premier to the matter, and he expressed surprise that they had not been. Perhaps he had forgotten it or did not see the necessity of seeing the promise carried out.”

I do not believe he sees the necessity at the present day. I do not see the necessity of carrying out this line. We must know that carrying a railway line through thickly populated places, such as South Brisbane, entails a very heavy expense. We are told that the resumption of land will only necessitate the expenditure of something like £56,000. That is the estimate probably of some of the officers of the department; but are these estimates ever kept? They are never kept, and I believe that instead of costing only £56,000 the resumption of this land will cost £100,000. I shall therefore do all that lies in my power to obstruct the carrying of this line.

Mr. DICKSON said: Mr. Speaker,—The only part of the speech of the hon. member who has just sat down with which I entirely agree is that the Government have allowed the consideration of this railway to take place too late in the session. I certainly think that is an error of judgment, and that they should have had the plans considered before the Redistribution Bill was finally disposed of, because some hon. members think that we are debarred from the consideration of other business after that Bill has been passed. Well, I think there is a certain amount of force in that if we are called upon to consider new business, new projects, or a new policy of the Government, but this is by no means a new policy. It is necessary, and I am sure hon. members on both sides will agree with me, that the South Brisbane line must be brought into a central position in the city in the same way that the North Brisbane line must be brought into a central position instead of the terminus being at Roma street; especially seeing that these railways will be largely affected by suburban traffic, it is absolutely necessary that the people who travel on these lines should be brought to a central position in the city. It has been for a long time a complaint on the north side that it is inconvenient for suburban travellers to be landed in Roma street, right away from the business part of the city, and I am sure anyone who inspects the terminus at South Brisbane will observe its extreme inconvenience, so far is it from the bridge and the whole of the city. It is a matter of time only when the railway coming into South Brisbane will have to be brought into a more central position. I may frankly say that I am quite in accord with the views expressed by the hon. member for Townsville the other evening. I believe the time will come, although we may be looking rather far ahead, but I hope the time will be expedited as much as possible, when we shall have the railways under one central management. I believe the time

will come when the South Coast Railway running into South Brisbane will be continued across the river to Roma street so as to be under one central management. Perhaps that is too large a scheme to enter into at the present time, and, of course, I am not expressing myself on that matter with a view of censuring the Government for not having formulated such a scheme. It is a scheme, however, that I have no doubt will be propounded by either the present Government or some other Government in the early future. There can be no doubt that the accommodation between the north and south sides of the river is inadequate at the present time—the accommodation afforded by the Victoria Bridge. There is not the slightest doubt that a second bridge will have to be erected, and it is a question whether the Government of the day and the corporation might not jointly enter upon the construction of such a work, whereby the Government would be able to run their lines over to the north side. I am certainly in accord with the views expressed on that matter by the hon. member for Townsville, because I think it inevitable that our railways must be brought to one central station. That, however, need not defer the extension of the South Brisbane line to a more convenient position than that occupied by the present terminus. I think in view of the increasing value of property we should admit the necessity of giving the Government the powers asked for to provide for the extension of this line from its present admittedly undesirable situation. The present terminus is most inconvenient and out of the way, and the line must almost immediately be extended to a more central position, and I say the Government might fairly be entrusted with the powers asked for this evening to obtain possession of the land it will be necessary to resume for the extension of this line. I am afraid that the project to carry the line along the South Brisbane wharves would be found extremely expensive, in addition to the not inconsiderable obstacle afforded by the dock. Unless the line could be carried over the caisson of the dock, I do not know how it could be crossed; and before this I have inquired into the affair and have obtained the advice of engineers on the subject. But even if that obstacle could be surmounted, the cost of bringing the line along the wharves to the foot of the bridge would be so great, and the total cost would attain such proportions, as would very likely prevent this House from considering the project. I believe that bringing the line under Blakeney's Hill would be better than from Woollongabba, as at present. Under all the circumstances, I am of opinion that the Government should be entrusted with the power of resuming the land for the extension of the line as proposed. As I said before, I cannot see any force in arguments based on the inadvisability of entering upon a new railway policy as applied to this line, as this scheme is not new, and has been before the House for two sessions. It has been pretty well debated, and every member of the House has been well aware of it.

MR. MURPHY: Not this route.

MR. DICKSON: No; but the extension of the line from its present undesirable position.

MR. MURPHY: That is a different thing.

MR. DICKSON: I am inclined to accept the advice of the engineers upon the route it should take. I do not think either the present Minister for Works or his predecessor suggested the route which has now been recommended to the Government by the engineers after serious deliberation, and I think now, that the Government should be entrusted with the power to resume the land necessary for this extension.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS said: Mr. Speaker, — I know the Engineer-in-Chief is strongly of opinion that the southern system of railways should have their terminus somewhere near the centre of the city, and further that he is of opinion that Melbourne street is sufficiently near for all purposes. I cannot, therefore, placing great dependence upon his views as a practical man of large experience, at all agree with the suggestion made by the hon. member for Townsville, or the view he takes of the matter, that the time will shortly come, when even if the line is extended to Melbourne street it will have to be carried across to Roma street. The Roma street station is itself too far from the centre of the city, and if the hon. member means that the line should go round by Roma street into Adelaide street I do not consider that at all a feasible plan. I know that the Engineer-in-Chief is of opinion that Melbourne street is sufficiently near the centre of the city for the terminus of our great southern system of railways authorised and under construction.

MR. NORTON: There is no room for a station there.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is plenty of room there for a station. The hon. member's objection would obtain and be a valid objection to the scheme for bringing the line along the bank of the river to the foot of the bridge, but there is plenty of room for a station where it is at present proposed it should be established. To say that this is not part of the scheme authorised in 1884 is to make a great mistake. The Loan Act of 1884 provides for £120,000 to be expended in extending the present line, which terminates at the coal wharf, across Grey street into Melbourne street. That would have been attended with many difficulties, as there are several objections to it. In the first place, as has been already remarked by the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hill, the present terminus would not suffice for the large passenger and general traffic which would come by such a line. There is no room for that purpose, and it would be necessary, in order to provide for the large passenger and general traffic which it is certain will be created by the construction of our southern system of railways, to secure a site for a proper terminus, a great railway station that will accommodate the people and be sufficiently near the centre of the city for all the traffic which may be expected from those united lines. The hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hill, has already said that if we get the line extended towards the Tweed, or towards that part of the border of New South Wales, we should have an immense traffic coming on by-and-by. The hon. member mentioned that in connection with the scheme proposed for running the line along the wharves to the bridge. We have the line already made to Beaudesert, and I suppose twenty miles or less would carry it as far as the agricultural population is likely to settle within our own colony. The hon. member says that the land round Beaudesert and beyond is equal in agricultural capabilities to any land on the Darling Downs, and we may no doubt assume that there will be a very large agricultural settlement in that direction. I was told some years ago, by a gentleman who resided in the neighbourhood for many years, that if we had a line to the Tweed it would attract an immense traffic from the Richmond and Clarence districts. That statement was made some years ago, and he further stated that as much or more maize was grown on the Clarence as in all the rest of New South Wales put together. That seems an extraordinary statement, and I, of course, would not vouch for its truth, though I

place the greatest dependence upon what that gentleman said. We know there is a large agricultural settlement on the Clarence and Richmond Rivers, and that those districts should have belonged to this colony. If we had a railway extended to the Tweed, it would attract a great number of passengers and a very large amount of traffic arising out of the large agricultural settlement already upon that river.

Mr. NELSON: What would become of our own farmers?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is some difficulty in carrying on such a traffic by sea, because the Tweed bar is so dangerous that it is very difficult for vessels to get out, and that is an additional reason for supposing that if we extended the railway to the Tweed we might expect an immense traffic from the settlement now existing on both sides of that river, to say nothing of what we should get from the settlement in the Clarence and Richmond districts.

Mr. MOREHEAD: That is assisting competition by farmers from another colony.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The present proposal is simply to provide a suitable terminus for the large passenger and general traffic of our southern system of railways. It is necessary that this terminus should be as near as possible to the centre of the city, and I do not think any scheme has been propounded in this House in connection with the great railway policy of the Government which has proposed stronger reasons for its adoption than the proposed extension into Melbourne street. We have nearly finished the line to Beaudesert; we are extending the line to Southport and Nerang; a line is proposed to be carried to Cleveland; and it is only a question of a very short time when the line will be extended to the Tweed River; and it is necessary to make suitable provision for the traffic to be expected from those lines. I do not agree with my hon. colleague that there is no immediate necessity for the construction of this extension. I think he simply meant that we have no immediate means at present for building the line, and I believe he is thoroughly impressed with the necessity for its construction, and looks upon it as a necessary part of the southern system of railways. He said the building of the line was only a question of time—I think he meant a very short time—and he makes this proposition on the ground that, as this extension to Melbourne street was approved by the House three years ago, it is now high time to make it secure by at least obtaining sanction for the purchase of the land. There cannot be a doubt existing in the mind of any hon. member that this work will have to be done. We shall have to make a great central station in the centre of the city, and it is a mere question of time, and a very short time. The hon. member for Port Curtis has stated that there are very great—I do not know whether he did not say “insuperable”—difficulties in bringing the line along the bank of the river.

Mr. NORTON: I said “not insuperable.”

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Those difficulties have been recognised for a long time, and several alternative schemes have been suggested for this extension into Melbourne street. Years have passed away since the House voted the money for the purpose, and now, when the Government are going to fulfil their pledge, which they always intended to do, somebody suggests some other scheme; and if that were found practicable it also would be objected to. There are a few members in this House who would oppose any scheme, however advisable it might be, and however irresistible the argument that could be brought in favour of it. There are

actually some hon. members who would oppose it on that very account. I do not know any hon. member who has signalled himself so much as the junior member for Cook in opposing everything good, bad, or indifferent. It is because of the urgency of this particular line, and the strong reasons there are for it, that he opposes the building of this line. I am satisfied the Government have been sincere from the beginning. I had occasion, as a representative of South Brisbane, to complain once or twice of delay in the matter; but they have been sincere throughout. They wish to make it. They are determined to make it, I ought to say. It has been approved of by the House, and they wish to make it in this way. The Engineer-in-Chief has recommended this deviation, and no objection can possibly be taken to what is now asked for. We can buy the land now at a reasonable price, whereas the longer we wait the more we shall have to pay for it. That of itself, apart from the other arguments of my hon. colleague, is a sufficient reason why we should allow this motion to pass, and consider the plans, estimates, and book of reference in committee, with the view of enabling the Government to secure the land which will be required for the construction of the line.

Mr. McMASTER said: Mr. Speaker,—I must say I was somewhat surprised to hear the Minister for Works make the remark—I hope it was a slip—that there was no immediate necessity for the construction of this extension. To my mind it is very necessary that this line should be extended. It has been said by some hon. members, particularly by the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Lumley Hill, that the line ought to be carried along between Stanley street and the river, and that the parties owning the land there would very likely give the land required for the construction of the line free, gratis, and for nothing. I am very much afraid they would not. The property between Stanley street and the river is much too valuable to be given away for any such purpose. No doubt it would be very convenient for the owners of wharf property, if a railway came immediately at the back of their wharves, and no doubt it would be a very great convenience to shippers who sent goods down the country. But the block between Stanley street and the river is not, in my opinion, sufficiently large to have sheds, stores, and business accommodation fronting the street, behind which the line would run, to do anything like a large trade. And it must not be forgotten that permission has already been obtained to make South Brisbane a separate municipality, and it would not do for all the south coast traffic, from Southport, Logan, Nerang, Beaudesert, and Cleveland, to converge at Woollongabba. Some hon. member—I think it was the hon. member for Port Curtis—asked why the farmers did not send their produce from the Logan by rail now? For this simple reason, as was pointed out by the hon. member for South Brisbane, that it would cost as much to cart the produce from Woollongabba to the market as it would cost to bring it to Woollongabba by rail. At present the little produce sent from the Logan comes mostly by water. They would not send it to Woollongabba, if they had to pay extra cartage to get it into the centre of the city, when they can bring it by water. The extra charge from Woollongabba would be more than they could afford to pay for it. But let the railway come into Melbourne street, which I consider is the heart of South Brisbane, and the farmers would then be able to bring their produce by rail to the very door of the market. It must not be forgotten that there is a market reserve in South Brisbane, and the Brisbane Corporation, before separation was decided upon, considered seriously whether it

was not desirable to build a market in South Brisbane for the produce of the south coast. The market reserve is close to the proposed terminus in Melbourne street, and as soon as the station is constructed I have not the slightest doubt a market building will be erected on the vacant block of land reserved for that purpose. Therefore I consider, Mr. Speaker, that the extension of that railway is very necessary for the convenience of the citizens of South Brisbane in general. The hon. member for Port Curtis also stated that the tram company had their trams passing the present station. So they have passing Melbourne street. The tram line passes much closer to the Melbourne-street station than it does to the Woollongabba station. Any hon. member who has looked at the present terminus will at once see that it has nothing like the conveniences that it ought to have, nor is there room there to make a convenient station for passenger traffic and coal traffic. It has been suggested that this is not the line that was spoken of a year or two ago. I think it would be a great pity if the line spoken of two years ago were carried out. It would ruin South Brisbane. If the present line was continued at the upper end of the Dry Dock, crossing Stanley street and Grey street, and going into Melbourne street, it would ruin that portion of the city by having those streets closed, or comparatively closed. It must be remembered that there is practically only one inlet to South Brisbane from the farming districts—namely, Stanley street; and if they had a railway crossing it, with railway gates—

Mr. MURPHY: The line would go underneath.

Mr. McMASTER: No, it would not. I know quite as well as the hon. member for Barcoo. There would be level crossings with gates at Stanley street, and at Grey street, which would block the whole of the traffic coming into South Brisbane, comparatively. I think the Government have acted very wisely in diverting the route, and bringing the line into Melbourne street by the way proposed—bringing the three lines into a focus in a central and convenient place for Brisbane, and for South Brisbane in particular. It is a very short distance from the station to the wharves, and I have no doubt that, as the hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Fraser, said, some means will be found, by tram or otherwise, of sending goods to the wharves, if it is really necessary. As to carrying passenger traffic and coal traffic together, that is simply absurd. You will never carry coal traffic and passenger traffic together, and I do think that the Government would act wisely in endeavouring, at all events, to secure the land, by resuming it. If they leave it over to another year, instead of paying £56,000 they will probably have to pay £20,000 more.

Mr. BLACK: No.

Mr. McMASTER: I believe, yes.

Mr. BLACK: Land is falling in value everywhere.

Mr. McMASTER: It may be where the hon. member's interests are—in Mackay.

Mr. BLACK: No; in Brisbane.

Mr. McMASTER: Not in South Brisbane. The hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Ferguson, does not believe that. He sees a future for South Brisbane, or he would not have invested so largely in South Brisbane as he has done. And the only depreciation at Mackay is perhaps in the sugar plantations surrounding that town. I do not know anything about them, but I am certain there is no depreciation of property in South Brisbane, and that twelve months hence there will be a very large amount paid there for land if it is not resumed

now. I am satisfied that if the Government had resumed lands for railway purposes in the centre of the city five years ago, they would have got it for half the amount they have to pay for it now. I believe it is desirable this line should be pushed on with at once. I believe there is sufficient money in the vote to resume the land and construct most of the line. There is £56,000 required for resuming the land, and I do not think the other is a large item. There is £120,000 on the Loan vote.

The PREMIER: A good deal of it has been spent, unfortunately.

Mr. McMASTER: I am not aware of what has been spent. I only see on the Loan vote an item for the extension of the line to South Brisbane, £120,000.

Mr. NORTON: No; £50,000.

Mr. McMASTER: £120,000.

The PREMIER: That is right.

Mr. NORTON: Which has been devoted to other purposes.

The PREMIER: A good deal has been spent.

Mr. McMASTER: I say I do not know what has been spent. I go by what I see on the Loan Estimates—£120,000 for the extension of the South Brisbane line—for the completion—

Mr. NORTON: That is not the extension.

Mr. McMASTER: What was it voted for? For the completion of the work. I watched that vote very carefully when it was taken, and I say it was understood all through that the vote was for the extension of that line into Melbourne street.

Mr. NORTON: No.

Mr. McMASTER: I say it was. I do not say the route is the same. The first was to cross Stanley street, and I think the Government have acted wisely in throwing that out. If the money is not there, then I say spend the money that is available as far as it will go. If it is not sufficient to construct the line, if they have the £56,000 to resume the land, the sooner it is done the better. They will not resume it twelve months hence for £20,000 more.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—The debate has not occupied a great deal of time, but the little that has been said is sufficient, I think, to show what will be the course of it if it is continued much longer. I am not prepared to ask the House to devote a week to the consideration of this line of railway, and I am afraid it would take at least a week, perhaps more, before any practical result would come from the further discussion of it. I regret, sir, that it has been brought in necessarily so late in the session. It has been said that it should have been brought in before the Redistribution Bill was passed. It is very easy to say that, but if hon. members will bear in mind the history of the session they will see that every available day had to be taken up in considering the Redistribution Bill. And even now, after all the expedition that was used in connection with that Bill, it will not become law more than two or three days before the 21st November, which is the last day allowed by law for revising the existing rolls; so that, with all the expedition we could use, without deducting any days for other business, if we can get it through by the very earliest date possible, it will only be just in time to stop that revision of the rolls, and thus prevent great inconvenience or else the necessity of introducing another Bill during the present session to allow any elections to come on at all next year. We have run it very close indeed, and it was absolutely necessary that that business should be pressed on, to the exclusion of other matters, which had to wait.

Mr. NORTON: You did other business.

The PREMIER: If hon. members will look at the notice-paper they will see there was not a single day lost on the Redistribution Bill. The other business done did not interfere in any way with the Redistribution Bill. The arrangement of the business of the House is, of course, a matter of difficulty, especially when various opinions exist as to what business should come on first. I do not think the Government can be blamed for anything in that respect. If they had had an opportunity they were certainly willing that those matters should have been dealt with that have had to wait. However, after the experience of last week, and having been informed by hon. members sitting opposite that this line, if passed at all, must be passed by sheer physical strength, I am not disposed to engage in a test of strength of that kind. Although I am satisfied that the construction of the line is very desirable, and that the authorisation of it at the present time would save the country a great deal of money, nevertheless I am not prepared to enter upon a trial of physical strength, and I think I shall best consult the interests of the Government and of the Parliament by moving that this debate be adjourned.

Question put and passed, and resumption of debate made an Order of the Day for Thursday next.

#### NORMANTON TO CROYDON RAILWAY BILL.

##### SECOND READING.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I have already said more than once that the railway proposals of the Government during the present session would be dealt with each on its merits, irrespective of what happened with regard to any other; and one of the proposals of the Government to which I adverted is that for the construction of a line from Normanton to the Croydon Gold Field. There is no actual money appropriated for that purpose at the present time, but £500,000 has been authorised to be raised for the construction of a line from Cloncurry to the Gulf of Carpentaria, and it has since been settled by this House that that line shall start from Normanton. Since then the discovery of the Croydon Gold Field has placed a new complexion upon the matter, so far as that part of the colony is concerned. I believe the construction of a line from Normanton to Cloncurry will be of very great advantage, as it will open up a very large mineral district and also a very large pastoral district; but it certainly will take a very considerable time before that line can be finished, though, if the new principle the Government have determined to try on that line is successful, it will be carried out much more rapidly than otherwise would be the case. The hon. member for Burke, Mr. Palmer, the other day, moved that it was desirable to construct a line from Normanton to Croydon, and an amendment was moved and accepted by him, to the effect that provision should be made for the construction of that line by the diversion of a part of the vote for the line from Normanton to Cloncurry. The Government after that considered it their duty, having accepted that resolution, to bring in a Bill to that effect. Now, it is quite clear that during the present session we cannot authorise the borrowing of any more money, so that if the line is to be made it must be made out of that Loan vote. It by no means follows—and I should be very sorry that it should be thought for one moment that it was intended—that the line from Normanton to Cloncurry should not also be carried out. The present proposal may possibly involve a delay in carrying it out, because further sums will have to be borrowed before both lines can be completed. I assume—it is only a rough estimate—that at least £300,000 will be

required to construct the line from Normanton to Croydon—perhaps a little more or a little less. Now, there are two questions to be considered, one of which is much more important than the other. The first is whether it is desirable just at the present time to make a line from Normanton to Croydon; and the second is—If that is so, is it justifiable temporarily to appropriate part of the £500,000 voted for another purpose to construct that line? Now, as to the second point—taking it first—I think if it is desirable to construct the Normanton-Croydon line, there can be no objection to diverting a part of that amount to the purpose. The distance is much shorter, and the immediate objects to be attained are much greater, and the completion of the line to Cloncurry is not likely to be much delayed. I assume that any future parliament will agree as to the policy of making a line from Normanton to Cloncurry, and that it will, when the time comes, authorise the raising of the money necessary for the completion of that line. The main question, therefore, to be considered is whether it is desirable; but let me first add this: Supposing £300,000 is diverted to the construction of the line to Croydon, I think, before the remaining £200,000 is all spent on the line to Cloncurry, the Parliament is sure to be asked to vote further sums for the construction of railways in that district. The main question, therefore, is—Is it desirable at the present time to make a line to Croydon? Or that point I confess I have felt some doubts and some difficulties, which I expressed the other day when speaking on the motion of the hon. member for Burke; but on the whole the reasons in favour of proceeding at once with the line seem to preponderate. The Croydon Gold Field, as we know, contains a very large number of people, and the prospects, as far as they are known, are very promising; but the hindrances to the development of the field are very great, in consequence of the want of means of communication. I have not been over the road to Croydon myself—I believe only one member of this House has—but I understand that the track to it in fine weather is only disagreeable from dust, whilst in wet weather it is almost impassable. Teams absolutely cannot travel during wet weather, so that during the three months of the wet season communication is practically impossible, while at all times the cost of carriage is very great. We know from experience that the cost of carriage is the most important element in the development of a goldfield. Of that no better illustration can be given than the case of the Etheridge Gold Field, which, I believe, from all the information we can get, is probably the most extensive goldfield in the colony and probably the richest; but owing to difficulties of communication its development has been very much retarded, so that there are not very many more people there now than there were twelve or thirteen years ago. Having come to the conclusion that it is desirable that this line should be made, the Government have brought in this Bill, which they submit for the consideration of the House entirely on its merits. As to the line itself, there is no difficulty in its construction. It will possibly be just as well if I refer here to the 2nd clause of the Bill, and the difficulty which it proposes to deal with. Under our Railway Acts, although money may be voted for the construction of a line, the Government are not authorised to construct it until the plans have been approved by both Houses of Parliament. Now, in the present case it is obviously quite impossible to get plans approved during the present session, and if anything is to be done at once, the construction of the line must be authorised without them. Next session of Parliament will be too late to save the wet

season of 1889, whereas if the line is authorised now, I think there is every reason to suppose that by pushing on the work it may be completed, or very nearly completed, by the end of next year. The Government have therefore proposed the unusual course—unprecedented, in this colony—of proceeding with the construction of the line, notwithstanding that the plans, sections, and books of reference have not been approved by Parliament. That, I admit, is a very dangerous precedent, or might be a very dangerous precedent; it is a very unusual course; but I do not think that the circumstances of this line are similar to those of any other part of the colony, unless indeed we take the almost uninhabited part of Cape York Peninsula. If this Bill is passed, what the Government propose is this: to construct the line along the left bank of the Norman River from Normanton southwards—the river there runs almost due north and south, almost a straight line—to what is called the Rocky Crossing, about sixteen miles from Normanton, and then to cross the river. It is a sort of natural bridge; the railway might almost cross on the bed of the river or on piles three or four feet in height. From there to Croydon all that is to be done is what the Czar of Russia did when he was going to make a line from St. Petersburg to Moscow—draw a straight line on the map and make the railway follow that line. From that crossing to Croydon the ground is absolutely level; I am not sure there is even a creek, scarcely a gully; and the land is altogether Crown land, so that there is no room for any difference of opinion as to what would be the proper route to take there. There might be a little mound or gully here and there to be avoided, but practically you might draw a straight line on the map and make the railway in that direction. The Government would propose to make the line from Normanton to the Rocky Crossing, part of the line to Cloncurry also. At the present time the plans already approved of by Parliament for the construction of the line from Normanton towards Cloncurry go about south-west—or south-west by west, I think, more correctly—from Normanton to the crossing of the Flinders. I believe there is but one selection, or at the most two, in the whole distance to be traversed between Normanton and Croydon. I think that is a sufficient justification for the Government asking permission to construct this particular line without the previous approval of the plans by Parliament. The route I have mentioned is the obvious route. There is no other that can be suggested except that of crossing the Norman at Normanton, and crossing a great mangrove flat on the eastern side of the river. The route suggested is the only one anyone would think of suggesting. It will involve a deviation of the line to the Flinders crossing; but it will make sixteen miles of the line common to both railways, and the distance out of the direct way on the Cloncurry line is not more than three or four miles, or perhaps five miles. The people in these districts—the Burke, Normanton, and Cloncurry—have had their minds very much exercised, since the proposal has been mooted, by the fear that the authorising of this line will delay the construction of the Cloncurry line. To some extent that may be true, no doubt, because the amount available will be diminished to a large extent. But I think it is possible to avoid much delay. The first sixteen miles, as the Government propose, are common to both lines, and although it will be necessary to be careful in the expenditure of money until further sums are voted by Parliament for the construction of the line to Cloncurry, it will not be necessary to stop the construction of that line, notwithstanding that the Croydon

line will be under construction too. It might be possible to amend the 2nd clause if thought desirable, so as to cover a change in the route to the Flinders River. The Government being most desirous to construct the line to Cloncurry, which is a very important one, for reasons before stated, I think the people in that district need not be afraid that that line will not be carried on. A great deal has been also said lately about calling for tenders. Of course with the new system of Phillips's sleepers, it is no use calling for tenders for the construction of a line, because all the work is the manual labour of laying the sleepers, and so far as I see at present and understand the views of my colleague the Minister for Works, instead of calling for tenders for the construction of these lines they will be done under a different arrangement. There is one other matter I ought to refer to, and that is, what amount of expenditure is likely to be involved? If this line is authorised there will not be very much money spent on it during the present financial year. The amount contemplated to be paid for permanent way during the current year, as set out in the loan estimate which was laid on the table of the House last week, is sufficient to cover all expenditure for this purpose. But during the following financial year, of course, a very large sum will have to be expended, and it will be just as well if I point out the obligations the Government are really committed to already. Without going into details, I may say that the works which are going on, and those which can scarcely be stopped—such as harbours and rivers, loans to public bodies, water supply, and so on, in addition to railways—will, entirely irrespective of the Croydon line, and irrespective of any extension of the Central line beyond Barcaldine, involve about £1,250,000 during the next financial year. If this line is authorised it will probably involve an expenditure during that year of about £300,000 additional. The arguments used by hon. members on the other side of the House, and by some hon. members on this side also, in respect to the matters under consideration during last week and to-day, if they are accepted as sound would be fatal obstacles to the incurring of any obligation of this kind. But the Government have not accepted those arguments, and I do not think they are sound. The question simply is now whether it is desirable to proceed with the construction of this line at once. The Government have come to the conclusion that it is desirable. The advantages to be gained from the construction of this line are very great, and have led the Government to adopt the exceptional course proposed by them now. I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. DICKSON said: Mr. Speaker,—When this matter was first mooted by the Government I entered my protest against what I conceived to be a very improper diversion of public money from the appropriation which had been made by Parliament, and that position I still take up, and if I require anything to strengthen the views which I have previously expressed, it has been the action of hon. members during the last ten days. My views are to the effect that we have now performed all that this Parliament is expected to perform, except making provision for the requirements of the public service, and that we are not called upon at the present time to enter into any new policy either of administration or legislation. Certainly the present proposal of the Government as to the construction of an entirely new line of railway, and one of which we heard nothing before this session, cannot be regarded by any member of this House but as a new departure in railway construction, and I feel myself, if the Government are sincere in their

desire to open up the question of increased railway construction, the requirements of the constituencies represented by hon. members in this House, many of them like my own, which have remained neglected for years—have an equal claim upon the consideration of this House for provision for their requirements. I am justified in saying that if the Government intend to formulate a new railway policy I shall deem it my duty—after the affirmation which this House so kindly gave me approving of a line of railway in the electorate of Enoggera being provided for amongst the first fresh railway proposals of the Government—to say that I shall be prepared, even at this late period of the session, to insist that the Government should now recognise the necessity for that line. But taking a larger view of the question of railways, I do say that the proposals now made by the Government come at a very inopportune period. No money has been voted for this line, which stands upon an entirely different platform from the proposals lately submitted to the House concerning the two lines of railway which have been rejected. In those cases provision had been made to a certain extent; but no provision has been made for this line to Croydon, and not only so, but we are asked to take a very important step—namely, to divert money from the purposes for which it was originally appropriated by Parliament; and in making this diversion the Premier has to admit that it will probably delay the construction of a line of railway which we all approve of—namely, that from Normanton to Cloncurry. Now, some hon. members object, I know, to the phrase, “national line of policy,” but I trust I shall not touch upon the sensitiveness of gentlemen who consider these are platitudes, and that there is no sincerity in such expressions. I must say I consider that the line from Normanton to Cloncurry is the backbone of the railway system of this colony; and I have no hesitation in saying that that line will supersede the transcontinental railway, which has at times been a menace to the colony, and in which I did not believe when it was originally proposed. That line from Normanton to Cloncurry will form a backbone throughout this great territory, which will supersede the necessity for our future deliberations concerning a transcontinental railway policy; and, holding that view, I was glad to see the appropriation made by Parliament for the construction of that line, and I should regret very much to find any of that money withdrawn from its legitimate purpose—namely, the construction of that line through the great back-western interior. It has been urged by hon. members during the past ten days that we have no right to enter upon any new line of railway policy, and since that position has been accepted by the Premier, I cannot see why, at the present time, he should press this line. I do not wish it to be understood that I am opposed to a line from Normanton to Croydon—if provision can be legitimately made for that line after a new Parliament has been formed; but I think, instead of entering upon any new railway policy at the present time, we ought to take the opinion of the constituencies; and, not having parliamentary appropriation, to consider it premature at this time to enter upon the consideration of the subject. I do not at all approve of withdrawing the safeguards connected with railway construction, and vesting them wholly in the Executive of the day. I do not say this with a feeling that the Government would not act conscientiously in this matter; at the same time I say that the safeguards provided by Parliament, as to the plans and specifications being laid on the table of the House for the consideration of members, is a safeguard that ought

not hastily to be relinquished; and if we establish the precedent of vesting in the Government power to make a railway without first submitting the plans to Parliament, we shall be establishing a precedent which may be fruitful of disastrous consequences in the future; and on that ground alone I should object to the introduction of the Bill. But I take my strong objection on the ground that no money has been voted for the line, that the proposals made by the Government for transferring a portion of a vote which of itself will not be sufficient for the construction of the line from Normanton to Cloncurry is a matter that ought not to be sanctioned, and we have no precedents that will encourage us to such a line of action. There have been certainly two cases—they can hardly be called precedents—in the past, one in connection with the Highfields line and the other in connection with the line from Bowen to Haughton Gap; but these are not parallels or precedents for present action. The Highfields line was first presented to this House in the shape of a vote for £6,000 for the construction of a line, on the principle of the Rigi line in Switzerland, from Highfields station up the range to Highfields. Two years afterwards, in 1878, Mr. Perkins moved that the original vote of £6,000 for the construction of a line from Highfields station to Highfields should be rescinded, and that was carried. I presume that the money was merged into the following appropriation for a line of railway from Toowoomba to Highfields. That is not parallel to the present case, where, in the same Parliament which provided for a certain sum for the construction of a line from Normanton to Cloncurry, it is now sought at the very end of its existence to divert a portion for the construction of a line never dreamed of at the commencement of the session. The second case was that of the Bowen line. In 1882 the sum of £150,000 was voted for a railway from Bowen to Haughton Gap; and in this Parliament, in 1884, an additional sum was voted for a line from Bowen to Coalfields. These two sums were transferred by legislative enactment last session to a line from Bowen to Townsville; but even that is not a parallel case, because it received deliberate consideration during two or three consecutive sessions of Parliament; whereas this comes upon us almost, I may say, in the light of a surprise motion—that is to say, it has not received any consideration except during the last six weeks or two months. I think that the Croydon will demand a railway undoubtedly, but I do not think I am saying too much when I state that larger goldfields than Croydon have had to wait a little longer.

Mr. HAMILTON : And suffer in consequence.

Mr. DICKSON : They may have suffered in consequence; at the same time there is such a thing as being too expeditious. I do not wish in any way to decry the merits of the Croydon Gold Field. I have no doubt that it will be a permanent field, and will demand provision for a railway to Normanton; I even go further, and say that the Government should urge on the line from Normanton to Cloncurry to the Rocky Crossing, which is about sixteen miles from Normanton, on the left bank of the Norman, as that would, to a certain extent, reduce the distance drays would have to travel to the field. That might be proceeded with, being part of the main line from Normanton to Cloncurry, and being a legitimate expenditure within the original parliamentary appropriation; but anything beyond that, as contemplated by the Bill, is not only outside the original parliamentary appropriation, but is requesting us at the present time, when Parliament is said to have passed its useful period of existence, to assent to a

measure which I am sure the majority of hon. members will consider highly inexpedient if not dangerous just now to affirm. I have given this matter every consideration from the time I first entered my protest against it; and though I fear, speaking as I have done, that I am not in accord with hon. members who represent the Northern goldfields, particularly the Gulf district, at the same time I have a higher duty to perform than endeavouring to please individuals; and I say that in the present condition of the vote and the present condition of the goldfield we may very well wait until we have received a new commission from our constituencies, and the Government are prepared to make adequate and legitimate provision for the line of railway under consideration. I shall therefore oppose the second reading of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS said: Mr. Speaker,—From what the hon. member has just said it would appear that this House is in such a condition as to be no longer able to deal with the requirements of the country, but I maintain that we are just as well able to deal with them now as we were the first week of the existence of this Parliament; otherwise we have no business to be here. He has also tried to draw a parallel between the Croydon railway and the Bowen and Highfields railways; but there is no similitude whatever between those lines—there is nothing analogous in them. There is no doubt that this Croydon line is a necessity that has sprung into existence since the Government formulated their railway policy; and within the last two years it has become perfectly apparent to anybody who has watched the progress of the Croydon Gold Field, knowing the future possibilities of the mineral lands in the northern portion of Queensland, that if they are to have an opportunity of being developed it must be by a line from Normanton to Croydon, to be extended at some future time to the Etheridge. When you reach Croydon you are also within a very short distance, comparatively speaking, of the Etheridge. The railway, when it is built, will bring that field into such near communication with Croydon as will enable it to be worked by capitalists and miners generally; but until that is done the field is practically barred to anybody, no matter whether they be miners or capitalists. The hon. member has also said that he looks upon the Normanton to Cloncurry line as one of paramount importance to the northern portion of the colony.

Mr. DICKSON: I said the whole colony.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Well, the whole colony then. I look at it from a rather different point of view. Since the Croydon Gold Field has sprung into existence, it has become evident that a line from Normanton to Croydon will be a valuable line, and that it will be a benefit to the country generally to construct it. It will undoubtedly be a good line in the future, and it is really a fortunate thing that the Government have had the opportunity of accepting the proposal for diverting a portion of the money voted for the Cloncurry railway to the construction of a line from Normanton to Croydon. I believe the proposed line will be a paying line almost immediately. If its construction is delayed it will have the effect of preventing or retarding the development of the Croydon Gold Field, because when we get into the wet season it will be impossible for packers to supply the wants of the diggers and others who have established themselves at Croydon. Hon. members, on this side of the House at all events, have no conception of the difficulties of getting through to Croydon in the wet season. The first fifty miles after passing Rocky Crossing is nothing but a vast tea-tree flat, it

is not possible to get wheeled vehicles through country of that description, and one can scarcely ride through it in the wet season in the northern portion of Queensland. What, then, will be the position of those people when the rainy season sets in? How will they get machinery to develop the field and the means to keep men alive there? It will practically mean the abandonment of that field as soon as the wet season sets in, as there will be no possibility of working and developing the numberless reefs that have been exposed to view by the miners up to the present time. I do hope that in dealing with this measure no members of the House will be influenced by any feelings they may have with reference to the opposition they have met with on other railway proposals from different quarters. I do not sympathise in any sense whatever with the opposition that was organised last week against the railway then under consideration; I think the members who organised that opposition were entirely wrong, and I hope that the members who were defeated by their shortsightedness will set an example of disinterested patriotism, and support this national undertaking—the railway from Normanton to Croydon. I say that earnestly, with a thorough conviction that it is correct, and though I have no reason to be particularly thankful to Northern members for anything, and know that they are utterly selfish, getting what they can, and blocking what they can that is in the interest of the South, I say that this line is more than a Northern work, because the South will get as much by that railway being constructed as the North. If hon. members had heard what I have heard about the extent and value of the gold-bearing country in the North, within the last two or three weeks, they would not, with that knowledge, doubt for one moment that the line proposed to be constructed will be a valuable line. If I have any doubt at all in connection with the construction of the railway it is about the use of steel sleepers. But if it is to be built at all, and is to be of service to the diggers, it must be constructed with rapidity, and the only way in which the work can be carried out with rapidity is by some such scheme as that proposed by Mr. Phillips. I only hope that hon. members on this side in discussing the question will look at Queensland as a whole, and not regard the matter with any sore feeling on account of the opposition they experienced from the other side with reference to the other railways that have been before the House. I trust that they will set them an example of disinterested patriotism. They will now have an opportunity of heaping coals of fire upon their heads, and I think that they ought to take advantage of it. If they do that and pass this line, it can never be said of them that they view with narrow-mindedness or short-sightedness Northern interests, but their action will be in striking contrast to that of the Northern members, who do not care whether they block other matters so long as they get their railway. I do hope that this question will be considered solely on its merits, and that members will look at it from every point of view. If they do, they will see that the South will benefit as much by this line as the North, and that it will be of immense benefit to both North and South. I believe that if we get authority to build the line, we shall be able to construct it in fourteen or sixteen months from the present time, on the Phillips principle. At all events, Mr. Phillips says that if he gets the material placed at his disposal he will carry the work through in fourteen months from the time he starts, and I have no reason to doubt the accuracy of his calculations. I can only repeat that I trust hon. members will regard this as a national undertaking and set aside all personal feelings, dealing with it solely on its merits.

Mr. KELLETT said: Mr. Speaker,—There seems to be a certain amount of diffidence about hon. members speaking on this question, and that is my only reason for rising to speak at the present time. I think the 2nd clause of the Bill is quite enough to induce any sensible man to throw out the measure. I do not think we ought to put in the hands of any Government the power to allow the Commissioner for Railways to build a railway whenever he likes. I have a very good opinion, to a certain extent, of the gentlemen who hold the reins of power at the present time, but I would not like to give them any such power. I do not think it would be advisable, because there might be some Government in power hereafter who would not treat the matter in the same way as they do. If we place such power in the hands of the present Government, and pass this measure, a similar proposal will be often made in future. I was very much amused at the new patriot who came before us to-night, in the Minister for Works. We have heard the hon. gentleman a great many times on different subjects, but never as a patriot before. I am very glad he is improving, for there is much room for improvement, but I am afraid his patriotism is too sudden. When I look at the lame manner in which the hon. gentleman brought forward the Thane's Creek railway and the South Brisbane extension, it strikes me as very extraordinary that he should advocate so strongly this Northern railway. This is a new railway that never was thought of by this Parliament, and yet the hon. gentleman poses as a patriot and says it is for the good of the country. No matter what hon. members may say on the other side, he says it is a national undertaking. But when we find the lame way in which he introduced the Warwick to St. George and the South Brisbane extension railways, the money for which has been voted by Parliament, we cannot help feeling astonished at the manner in which he advocates this line. There was more to be said in one hour upon either of those lines than can be said in seven years in favour of this line, and I cannot help saying that in proposing to take away a portion of the £500,000 voted for the Cloncurry line and devote it to a line from Normanton to Croydon we are robbing that district, and the proposal should not be entertained by Parliament. I believe that the Normanton to Cloncurry line is justifiable, and it is a railway that if begun will take away the possibility of any Parliament proposing the transcontinental scheme again. We know that if by any unlucky chance the Opposition come into power with their late leader—and I understand there is a chance of his coming back here again—he has the transcontinental scheme so ingrained into him that I believe he would advocate it; but if we had started the Cloncurry line I think it would break the back of any transcontinental railway scheme. We find by a Bill that was before the House the other day that the transcontinental railway men are not dead yet. I see by their names flourishing in print that they come here to construct the Urangan railway, and they will be ready to start the transcontinental railway if they get half a chance, but I hope they will not get the chance. At any rate, apart from that, I think clause 2 of this Bill, giving power to the Government to construct this railway at their will and when they like, is a very dangerous power to give to any Government, and if only for that reason I shall strongly object to the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. NORTON said: Mr. Speaker,—I have listened with interest to the speeches of Ministers on this railway, and I cannot help thinking of the times that have passed, and of the very strong remarks which were made with regard to a proposal of the late Government to carry rail-

ways towards the setting sun. Now, these satirical remarks about the railways that were proposed by the late Government have been allowed to drop. The hon. gentleman himself, or rather his Colonial Treasurer, in 1884 asked Parliament to grant a sum of over £1,000,000 to make three railways westward. Well, after speaking in the manner in which he did in regard to carrying railways to the setting sun and then bringing in a Bill asking for a vote of over £1,000,000 to carry three railways westward, pretty well settles that little point. But this Bill caps everything I have ever heard of. Where is the line to go in the first place? How far is it from Normanton to Croydon? Can the hon. gentleman tell us? About 80 or 100 miles?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Eighty-five miles.

Mr. NORTON: How far will the railway have to go? The hon. gentleman says it is about eighty-five miles, but no survey has been made. And then again, how much will it take to complete the work? The hon. gentleman says a sufficient sum is all that is required, but what is a sufficient sum? It may be any portion of the money voted for the line from Normanton to Cloncurry. Then, in addition to that, we are asked to entrust to a Government that we have already said from this side of the House we consider is unfit to be trusted—we are asked to entrust that Government with the expenditure of this sum of money, whatever it may be, for the construction of a line the length of which we do not know and the difficulties of which are only partially known, and to give them power to construct that line according to any route which they may choose to survey. Now, I must say that I have very strong objections to give this most unusual power to a Government which is about to dissolve Parliament. For my part, when I referred to the matter the other night, I did not oppose the construction of a railway line from Normanton to Croydon, but I do not think the argument used by the Minister for Works with regard to the line being a national undertaking is so very good. I think that a much stronger argument than that is that, so far as we can judge with the information before us, the line will be as paying, and probably a better paying line than any other that has been constructed in the colony. There is every indication of that. There is every chance that as soon as the line is constructed it will give a larger return than any railway line yet made in the colony of Queensland. I do not intend to oppose the second reading of this Bill, but I do think that when it gets into committee some amendment will have to be made in regard to the 2nd clause. I think we may take it for granted that the distance which is estimated from Normanton to Croydon is approximately correct; and I think, from what we have heard outside the House, rather than what has fallen from Ministers, that the difficulties to be encountered are comparatively small. I think that, if the line is to be constructed on the new principle with Phillips's patent sleepers, it would probably cost a comparatively small sum per mile. At the present time I believe I am right in saying that plans have been brought down and approved of by this House of the first section of between thirty and forty miles of the line between Normanton and Cloncurry. Well, we are told by the Premier that if this line from Normanton to Croydon is constructed it will probably go over the same course as the line from Normanton to Cloncurry for the first sixteen miles—that that length of line will convey the traffic of the two places. Well, now, the Government have power at present to go on with the construction of that

first portion of the Cloncurry line. At any time after this they can call for tenders for the construction of that first section, and that would be so much work completed in connection with the line from Normanton to Croydon. The surveys can be made and the permanent plans prepared for the line from Normanton to Croydon, and they can be submitted to the next Parliament, and arrangements can then be made by which—if the new Parliament consents to the work being carried out according to those plans—tenders can be called for at once, and the line completed before the wet season of next year. The present wet season will very shortly commence, and when it has begun it will be impossible to go on with this work, even if the necessary power were given to the Government. I say that as soon as they have surveyors at liberty to go up there, they can put them on to lay down the permanent survey of the line and prepare the plans. They can have them ready when the next House meets, and then I say, this sixteen miles common to both being constructed, they would be in a position, as soon as the plans could be approved by Parliament, to have the additional distance of the line to Croydon—about seventy miles—completed before the commencement of the next wet season. If they cannot do that, then the country must be very much worse for railway construction than it is represented to be. I am quite sure that over country such as this is represented to be, and using Phillips's sleepers, if there is a desire to push on a line expeditiously it can be done in very much less time than a line constructed in the ordinary way. If that plan is adopted we shall, at any rate, have the commencement of the Cloncurry line. The Premier told us, in moving the second reading of this Bill, that the diversion of a portion of the Cloncurry vote may have the effect of delaying the completion of that line to Cloncurry; but I think the people of Cloncurry have a right to ask that it should not delay the commencement of that line. They are entitled to the full consideration of this House, and the House ought to see that no diversion of a part of the vote for their line should delay to an indefinite time the commencement of that line which has been so long promised, and the plans of the first section of which have been already approved by Parliament. I do not like the 2nd clause of this Bill, because, if passed as it stands, it will give the Government a power which was never given before, and a power which, I am sure, this House ought to be very chary in giving to any Government at all. I shall not oppose the second reading of the Bill, because, as I have said, I believe that the construction of a line from Normanton to Croydon is desirable, that the expenditure will be comparatively small, and that it will be the most remunerative line, when constructed, that we shall have in this colony.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN said: Mr. Speaker,—The debate upon the second reading of this Bill, so far as it has gone, has taken the form of an objection to the 2nd clause. All the members who have yet spoken upon the subject agree that a line should be made to Croydon from Normanton, and very little objection has been taken, except by the ex-Treasurer, the hon. member for Enoggera, against the appropriation of a certain amount of money voted by the Loan Act for a line from Cloncurry to the Gulf of Carpentaria, for the purpose of making this line to Croydon. I must admit at once that the objection to the 2nd clause is a strong one. It is a thing which has never been done in this colony before, and I do not know that it has been done in any of the other colonies of Australia; but if we look at it very carefully there is not so much danger in

it as hon. members seem to imagine. There is certainly a precedent being established for giving power to the Government to make a line without the plans and sections having first been approved of by Parliament. But if we look at this line we shall find it is very different from other lines which have been made, or have to be made, under the authority of our Railway Acts, inasmuch as every inch of land this line will go through is Crown land, and from the point of crossing of the Norman River—what the Premier calls “Rocky Crossing”—to Croydon is almost as straight as the crow flies. We may ask ourselves, therefore, what purpose the Government would serve in meandering about the country with this line instead of following the straight line. Whom can it injure or whom can it benefit to leave the straight line? I cannot see that anyone would be injured or benefited by the Government deviating one yard from the straight line. If the line was going through private property it might be said that the Government, having umbrage against certain persons, might take the line through or away from their properties to injure them. This line is going through Crown land, and no such danger can arise by giving the Government power to make this line without the plans and specifications being approved by Parliament. I think we may very well give the Government that authority in this instance. If the distance is, as stated by the Minister for Works, eighty-five miles, I should like to know whether that is the distance from Normanton or from the Norman River crossing?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: From Normanton.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: That will leave about seventy miles from the crossing, and I do not, therefore, think it possible that the line can cost the sum the Premier estimates it to cost—£300,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is extravagant.

The Hon. J. M. MACROSSAN: It cannot cost that sum for the kind of line proposed to be constructed. Under Phillips's plan of construction the cost will not amount to more than about £2,000 per mile. So that £300,000 cannot be required to make eighty-five miles of such a line, and equip it, and build the kind of stations that will be required on that line. They will not require to be as elaborate as the stations down here; and the intervening stations will be mere stopping-places, and will be far between. The ex-Colonial Treasurer himself gave authority for the re-appropriation of money already appropriated for a different purpose, so that I need not answer him on that point, especially as he answered himself as he went on by quoting the Highfields line and the lines from Bowen to Houghton Gap and Bowen to the Coalfields. There is something in clause No. 1 to which I should like to call attention, and I am extremely sorry the Premier-Treasurer is not here to explain it. Perhaps in his absence the Minister for Works will be able to explain it. As the clause reads it would appear that the money which is to be used for making this railway from Normanton to Croydon is only to be used when raised by the next instalment of loan of 1884. The clause says:—

“A sufficient part of the said sum of five hundred thousand pounds, which by the said recited Act is authorised to be raised for the construction of a line of railway from Cloncurry to the Gulf of Carpentaria, shall and may, when so raised, be appropriated towards defraying the cost of the construction of a line of railway from Normanton to the Croydon Gold Fields.”

That certainly seems to me to mean that this money is to be applied to the making of the Normanton to Croydon line only, when it has been

raised; so that this will not authorise the Government to use any money which they may have in hand at present which has been raised for the making of the line from Normanton to Cloncurry. I should like the Premier to answer that question before this debate is closed. It seems to me to be a very important question, and one which, if I interpret it correctly, would obviate entirely any good which may arise from the passing of the Bill. It will be no use debating the question and pretending to pass a measure for the making of that railway if we have to wait for the making of the railway until the money has been raised by the floating of the next instalment of the loan. I hope the line will be considered entirely on its merits, and that the Bill will be read a second time and pass through committee. The country has, I have no doubt, been correctly described by the Minister for Works. It is one which, in the wet season, cannot even be ridden over. I have not been in that particular part of the country myself, but I have been in similar country in the North, and I know what it is. All vehicular traffic is stopped for at least three months, in some seasons even longer. We know we cannot do the Croydon field much good during the coming wet season, but if the intentions of the Government are carried out it will be very different in the following wet season. The line will be then so far advanced that the traffic by rail will be brought within a very short distance of the field. Now that I see the Premier in his place, I wish him to explain the meaning of clause 1, which I have just read. It seems to me to read, as I stated, that the line from Normanton to Croydon can only be made when a sum of money has been raised under the authority of the Loan Act of 1884—that is, by the next instalment of the loan being floated.

THE PREMIER: Oh, no; the money must be in hand before it is spent. That is all it means.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: It says, "when so raised."

THE PREMIER: "Raised" means getting it in hand. You must have the money before you spend it.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: I should like the Government always to have money before they spend it. They often spend money before they get it. In this particular case they seem to have taken double precaution against the spending of the money before it is raised.

THE PREMIER: It is exactly the same phraseology as is used in the Bowen Railway Bill.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: That is not spent yet. Technically, we may perhaps consider that it has been raised, and yet that it has not been raised, because we do not know for what particular lines the portion of the £10,000,000 loan which has been floated has been raised.

THE PREMIER: It is all put into one common fund.

THE HON. J. M. MACROSSAN: And the appropriation is made afterwards, I know, in the Treasury. Still the phraseology of the clause seems very strange, and to me it looks a little suspicious. However, as the hon. gentlemen assure me that it is the same phraseology that is used in the appropriation for the Bowen line, I am satisfied—although I hope it will have a much quicker termination than the Bowen line seems to have had since it got so far.

MR. LUMLEY HILL said: Mr. Speaker,—I should like to draw your attention to the different sort of reception that this line meets with now, after what has taken place within the last week, from what it met with when it was

first introduced on the 30th September. I do not refer so much to the speeches uttered, but rather to the mutterings I hear around me by people who have been disappointed in their pet log-rolling schemes, and who, because they did not get their railways, are going to block this one. When first brought forward it was the almost unanimous opinion of the House that the railway was absolutely necessary and most essential, and that it would benefit not only the district but the colony at large. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley, Mr. McMaster, says it only got through by a fluke. The division was 30 to 4, or  $7\frac{1}{2}$  to 1, in favour of the line upon its merits purely. If the hon. member had been here on that occasion, he might not have liked it from what I said—that it would be very much better for the whole colony if the money, instead of being taken from the Normanton to Cloncurry line, were taken from the Fortitude Valley line. It would even have benefited Brisbane more than spending it on that wretched Valley line ever will. What the hon. member for Fortitude Valley has to grumble about I cannot see, except that he could not get an additional £30,000 or £40,000 of plunder for his constituency in the shape of that racecourse swamp the other day. The West Moreton bunch are also muttering and grumbling around. But I do not fear them much as "stonewallers," as although the hon. gentleman, Mr. Foote, who sits immediately in front of me, was said to be an admirable "stonewaller," yet he gave in in a lamentably weak-backed manner on the previous occasion. I do not expect much more from him on this occasion. As far as "stonewalling" is concerned, I am not much afraid of him, especially as I can attack him in the rear, and I believe he is very vulnerable in those parts. I would point out, in all earnestness that if this work be not undertaken now, a whole year, and more than a year, will be wasted before the railway can be commenced. That it will be commenced I have not the slightest doubt, nor have I that it is thoroughly justifiable. And it is imperative that it should be undertaken at once. The hon. member for Stanley, Mr. Kellett, contrasted the warmth of the Minister for Works in bringing on this railway with that which he displayed in bringing on the Thane's Creek and South Brisbane lines. I do not wonder at his warmth on the subject. He sees, as does every impartial member of the House, the absolute necessity there is for this line; and he could hardly be expected to have his heart in the work of bringing the lame, political, log-rolling fragment of the *via recta*, beginning at the back end of it, or that other South Brisbane job. How could he be expected to warm to his work and bring them forward with any enthusiasm? A line like this recommends itself to the intelligence, not only of the whole of this Assembly, but of the colony at large. There is no log-rolling about this. It is not an electioneering line in any way. When first brought in it was simply a line in the huge district represented by one member, the member for Burke, Mr. Palmer. What political dodgery can there be about that? Was there anything to catch votes there? The hon. member for Burke himself brought it in in the interests of his own constituents, he sitting on the Opposition benches, and it was accepted at once by the Government and by a large majority of their supporters. Is there any electioneering dodge or anything to catch votes in that? None whatever. The line was brought in purely and simply on its merits, and as such it was accepted at once by an overwhelming majority in this House—thirty to four. And now, because a few individual members, a few bunches, feel aggrieved that they have not been able to get their political axes sufficiently

ground, are going to turn round upon this line, which will be a most useful reproductive railway, and a first-rate addition to our security in the London money market. They are going to turn round upon it in a way that can only compare to that dog-in-the-manger business—"because we cannot get our lines you shall not have yours." I do not think they are all prepared to go that distance. I think some of them see the necessity and the desirability, in the interests of the colony at large, of supporting this railway. And if the others do resort to the extremity of setting up a stone wall in defiance of the expressed opinion of this House, and of the public, I do not think they will be able to maintain that stone wall very long. I, for one, shall be prepared to bombard it for a considerable period. I hope the second reading of this Bill will pass, that it will go through committee, and that the line will be commenced as soon as possible. I do not see the slightest danger in the 2nd clause, any more than exists under the present *régime*. Directly the plans, specifications, and book of reference of a railway are passed we are entirely in the hands of the Commissioner for Railways, the Ministry of the day, and more especially the Minister for Works. Now, are there half-a-dozen—are there three—members in this House who would know anything about the plans, sections, and book of reference if they were laid upon the table of this House? I am certain there are not three. I know the hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, has got a grudge against this kind of railway. It is going to be constructed with a kind of steel sleepers that railway contractors do not like. There is not much plunder to be got out of it. There is not much construction in the business. This is to be a cheaply constructed line, and I believe it is universally looked upon with disfavour by railway contractors, simply because it does not entail heavy earthworks, heavy ballasting, culverts, drainage, and all that sort of thing. I believe the hon. member, Mr. Annear's, sympathies are entirely with the craft to which he belongs, and I daresay I should look upon it in the same way if I were a railway contractor myself. But as I am not a railway contractor, as I am studying purely the interests of the colony and of the public purse, and as I have inspected the sample of these sleepers which has been available to all of us, I am thoroughly satisfied that they will be successful in that part of the country, of which I have some knowledge. I do hope and trust, sir, that this House will put it in the power of the Government to commence this work as soon as possible, and thus solve the question as to whether this system of railway sleepers is an undoubted success or not. I myself have no doubt whatever about it. I hope also that the members who have been disappointed themselves in the past will refrain from exercising their vengeance upon a line such as this, which has been acknowledged by an overwhelming majority of the House to be a necessity. The hon. member for Enoggera, Mr. Bulcock, interjects something about Bills. He and other members about Brisbane do not know much about the business, at any rate at a place so far away as Normanton. They know very little of the colony, and they expressed no dissent to this railway upon the previous occasion when it was before the House. Why did they induce the Government to waste time in bringing in this Bill if they did not recognise the necessity of constructing this railway? I know perfectly well that the hon. member's own constituents, about Enoggera and Fortitude Valley—they are certainly as much enlightened as their representatives—I am sure that they see the advisability of constructing this line to Croydon. Many of them have their friends and even their bread-winners there; many of them

are doing business with the Croydon Gold Fields, and I am sure they are thoroughly anxious that this line, which is eminently a non-political line, should be constructed as soon as possible.

Mr. ANNEAR said: I am very glad, Mr. Speaker, to see the hon. member for North Brisbane, Mr. Brookes, in his place. I heard that gentleman this evening speak on the resolutions previously before the House for the consideration of the South Brisbane railway, and he opposed that line because he said he wished to be consistent. The hon. gentleman did not say whether he believed in the line or not. He did not believe in the one before the House the other night, and because he voted against the first, he therefore intended to vote against the second, and I suppose he is going to vote against this line as well. If he does not, the hon. gentleman is very inconsistent, and I am very much surprised at it. I had a much higher opinion of that hon. gentleman before than I have now, since I heard his speech this evening. I shall vote against the second reading of this Bill, because I believe we are entering on a departure that will be a very bad precedent for all time to come. We never, as a Parliament, should enter upon the construction of any railway until the plans and sections are laid upon the table of this House to be perused by hon. members. Hon. members on this side have seen for the last week or so how the hon. member for Cook has opposed two other railways without giving any argument. He opposed them because they were to be constructed in the southern portion of the colony. I am sure that the members who opposed the previous two railways are ashamed of themselves this evening for the position they took up in opposition to the Thane's Creek and South Brisbane railways. I am sure that hon. members who are opposed to this railway will show that we are as strong as they, and can stop in this House and debate this question in the same way as they prevented the other two lines from passing. This Bill may get into committee, but I am sure it will never get out of it this session.

Mr. WHITE: Nonsense!

Mr. ANNEAR: I would like to know what influence has been at work with the hon. member for Stanley. Where is his argument? No argument had been brought forward against the other two lines, and what argument has been brought forward for this line? The money has not been voted for this line yet. There is another consideration. If this Bill pass, the Government ought to change places with the Opposition, because the Opposition members will go forth to the country saying, "We are the real Government of the day." The hon. member for Townsville has told us that in wet weather a horse cannot travel over the country through which this railway is to pass. Then how is a railway going to stand in wet weather?

Mr. MOREHEAD: With Phillips's sleepers.

Mr. ANNEAR: The hon. member talks of Phillips's sleepers as if they were something new. Steel sleepers and iron sleepers have been used on railways for the last forty years, and on a far better system than these. Time will show who is right. Let the railway be built with these sleepers, and when the wet weather the hon. member for Townsville speaks of comes on they will have to put on relays of men to dig the railway out sometimes. The question is not Mr. Phillips's sleepers at all; the question is whether we can construct railways on a new principle, against the recognised principles of railway construction throughout the whole of the civilised world. From the papers this morning we see that the heavy rains in

Victoria have destroyed the ballasted roads in many places, and the trains are stopped running to-day in Victoria. If that is the case where there are good consolidated roads well ballasted, I ask hon. members to use their own common sense as to what would be the case with this railway. Now, Mr. Speaker, we have been told that this railway is going to be made for £3,000 a mile; but I believe it will cost £5,000 a mile. Time will tell all things; that is the true indicator—it will be the true indicator of what I am saying this evening. The first flood in this country will tell whether we can make railways without ballast. Now, Mr. Speaker, there is very great urgency in hon. members opposite, and the hon. member for Cook, Mr. Hill, and one or two others he has with him. They say this is a national work—that no other place in the colony can show such a case for the construction of a railway as this. Why, Mr. Speaker, in my district for ten or twelve years we were advocating for the construction of a railway from Maryborough to Gympie. The goldfield was in existence, I think, seven or eight years with a population of 10,000 or 12,000. Year after year no attempt was made to construct a railway. I recollect many a time in Maryborough having open-air meetings, agitating, spending time, spending money—

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Spending wind!

Mr. ANNEAR: Well, I think it was to good purpose. There was not so much idle wind indulged in in the advocacy of that railway as has emanated from the hon. member for Cook during the last three or four days. The hon. member said to-night that he heard a lot of mutterings around him. The hon. member himself is continually muttering. If he were to get on his feet about once a week instead of about twenty-five times in one evening, and say what he had to say, I am sure he would be better thought of by hon. members in this House. The hon. member says I am opposed to this railway because there are no extensive earthworks. What has that to do with me? Every hon. member must know that in a desolate plain, as I believe it is from Normanton to Croydon, there cannot be any earthworks at all. It is merely the laying of the permanent way, putting a locomotive on the line, and keeping it in repair. I am sure I speak the feelings of a good many hon. members on this side of the House when I say we are not going to be bluffed this time. We are not going to be talked over in that soft, kind way we have heard from the other side of the House this evening. The South Brisbane railway has been rejected to-night, although I am sure there never will be a time in the history of this colony when the land could be obtained for such a low price as it could be at the present time. The hon. member for Cook spoke about bringing it down along the wharves, but that is impossible. The line of railway should go, as shown by the plans on the table, from the gaol into Melbourne street. It is not the South Brisbane of to-day we have to think about—it is the South Brisbane of twenty or thirty years hence, when the hon. member for Cook and myself will not be here, I daresay—when we will be somewhere else. Now, I do think this line can wait until it receives parliamentary sanction in accordance with parliamentary rule. If it is passed to-night, we shall be passing a railway in a way that has never before been seen in the history of this colony. I feel sure that the constituents—that is, the constituents in Liberal constituencies, where people live—

Mr. LUMLEY HILL: Do not they live at Cloncurry?

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Mr. ANNEAR: Very few people live where many members come from who are always talking about representing the people of this colony. There is very little there except some gum trees and a few sheep.

Mr. DONALDSON: They have as much intelligence as you have.

Mr. ANNEAR: I do not know why the hon. member for Warrego is sitting on this side this evening. We get enough of the hon. member's interruptions when he is opposite. I very seldom interrupt an hon. member myself. If I am going to get a dressing-down I shall sit down and take it quietly. I shall give way for a few minutes until the hon. member has taken that task upon himself. We had a fight last week which I thought was only just beginning when it came to an end; but if there is going to be a fight over this line I hope it will be continuous. The line will not become law this session.

Mr. FOOTE said: Mr. Speaker,—I wish to make a few observations before this question is disposed of. I acknowledge that I was very favourably disposed towards the line when it was last before the House, and my opinion has not altered in the slightest degree. I believe the line is needed, and that it will be productive of very much good, as well as a great convenience. It will increase the settlement of the country to a very great extent. In fact, I know nothing that settles a district so quickly or even so securely as a permanent gold diggings. Of course there are cases where there are rushes, and in which, after a little gold is found, the population goes away as quick or quicker than it came. But Croydon is a field that appears to be permanent, and, although it is possible that there may not always be as large a population there as there is now, it is also possible that there may be a greater population. It is quite clear that there is a great difficulty in getting goods from the port to the diggings; but I am quite satisfied that no measure which this House can pass, and that no steps that we can take, can hasten the matter to any great degree. The wet season will be here directly, and when it has once set in, nothing can be done until the weather takes up again. The matter is in the hands of the diggers themselves, and they had better see that their supplies are in before the wet season comes on. If they do not do so they will be obliged to submit to very great privations. It always seems, from what hon. members say, that every new line is going to pay better than any other line in the country; but that is an utter fallacy. We cannot expect them to pay. If a railway settles people upon the land through which it runs, it will have done good service, if it pays at all in proportion to the outlay. Many hon. members who have asserted that new lines will pay readily, know that many railways do not pay at the present time. How many lines are there that are not paying now? I am satisfied that the greater portion of them do not pay. The Western line from Dalby outwards has not paid, and many others are in a similar position. The colony does not expect them to pay at present; but there is no doubt that ultimately they will pay handsomely, and be amongst the most valuable assets the colony possesses—that is, they will yield ample returns for the money invested in them. The hon. junior member for Cook, and others, always think fit to oppose the railways down south, such as the Thane's Creek railway. The stand taken by the Opposition is simply this: "You shall not have any railways down here, but we will have all the railways we require up north." In fact, they have adopted the rôle of dictators to the Government. They say, "You shall go thus far, and no farther,"

But what is "sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander." The hon. junior member for Cook asserts that he is quite capable of talking out any question that he does not want to pass through this House, and that, on the other hand, by employing certain tactics, the Northern members can carry any resolution that they think fit. I think on this occasion the hon. member will find he is mistaken. There is a measure of reasonableness, as it were, in all things. People should stand to their opinions as long as they can with decency and propriety and with regard to the opinions and feelings of others; but that can be carried too far, and then they show very bad taste. The hon. member came down here and accused us of log-rolling, or being in a state of temper in regard to the motion before the House, and hon. members opposite say, in practice, if not in words, that we are not going to allow the line to pass because certain other lines have not been allowed to pass. If those hon. members think they can raise the feelings of the House one week and soothe them down the next week by any amount of soft soap or salve that they choose, they will find themselves mistaken. I do not think this Bill will go into committee, and I do not think it will be necessary to stonewall it in the slightest degree. We are quite numerous enough to deal with the question without resorting to those low and base tactics that have been resorted to on previous occasions. Hon. members on this side are prepared to go to a division to test the question as to whether the line shall be made or not. Whatever measure may be passed in this House, nothing much can be done this session. Nothing can be done before a future House is summoned together, or very little. Of course the Government can order a survey; they can do that without the sanction of the House. They can take the initiatory steps, but can go very little further. The wet season will be on shortly, and then there will be a stop to all railway-making up north. In fact, from what is sometimes said, it does not appear to be possible for horses to travel on that road without being bogged and sinking down into the earth as into a quicksand in a river. I should almost imagine, from the descriptions given, that if a carriage or truck got off the line there would be no possibility of getting it on again; in fact, so far as one can understand, there appears to be no bottom to the place. The Minister for Works introduced the motion in a very hearty manner, professing to show the immediate and absolute necessity there is for the line, and he was very anxious that hon. members should forget the injustice that had been done to them, and heap coals of fire on the heads of those who had opposed other lines, by passing this line without any obstruction. We like to have some instruction from the Ministerial benches occasionally, and are carried away more or less with the information we receive, but, nevertheless, I am afraid on this occasion it will scarcely take effect—in fact, I do not desire that it should take effect. I think it is unwise of us to waste time in discussing the second reading of this Bill, either its *pros* or its *cons*, with a view of going into committee, because I do not see why it should ever reach that stage. I was astonished that the Minister for Works did not take up a position somewhat different, and seek to guard his office carefully, in order that no intrusion may be made upon it; and I think he will find it necessary before long to guard it carefully and see that he does not depart from the usual course. My experience in this House has been that all hasty legislation as a rule has been bad, and I do not remember a single case in which it has not been characterised more or less

by disaster. More than once we have passed measures in times of excitement that we would not have passed on more mature consideration. These things show that we should not be too hasty in legislation; therefore I move, as an amendment, that the word "now" be omitted with the view of adding the words "this day six months."

Mr. MACFARLANE said: Mr. Speaker,—We have been informed by the Premier that he is anxious that the line should be considered on its merits, and we had the same desire expressed by him in reference to other railways. On each of the previous occasions the leader of the Opposition stated what course of procedure the Opposition would take, but he has made it convenient to-night to sit and take no notice; therefore I should like the leader of the Opposition to tell the House on this occasion also what position his side of the House are going to take up. He stonewalled the other two railways, but he seems to be leaving this side to stonewall the present line. Even the father of this proposed railway has said nothing in defence of his little baby. I believe the line will be a good one; and I suppose some of the constituents of every member have gone away to Croydon, so that we are all interested in seeing a direct line from Normanton to Croydon. I would like the leader of the Opposition to inform the House what he means to do, so that we may not waste any time but get on with business, if there is to be no business done but the Estimates. Is he going to leave this side of the House to stonewall the measure in order that when we go to the country he may take credit for not having stonewalled the Bill, and say it was opposed by members on this side of the House?

Mr. HAMILTON said: Mr. Speaker,—A few days ago a motion was proposed affirming the desirability of introducing a Bill for the construction of this railway, and nearly every member voted in favour of it. I notice that many who voted in favour of the introduction of that Bill, now, when the Bill is introduced, are speaking against it. Something must have occurred since which has caused this change of feeling, and it is only rational to suppose, judging from what has been said by hon. members to-night, that it is because certain schemes of their own have failed to pass within the last few days—the South Brisbane railway and the *via recta*, for example. Now, I do not think those are praiseworthy motives, and I really fail to see what other motives there can be. The hon. member for Enoggera, Mr. Dickson, states that the proposal is a new departure in railway construction; but if it is a new departure the circumstances justify it. We have in a far distant part of the colony a large thriving town, springing up like a mushroom; where one or two short years ago not seventy men resided, now over 7,000 people are residing, with insufficient means of communication with a port. Therefore, I think the circumstances justify this new departure, if the departure be a new one. But the hon. member admitted that he himself sanctioned a similar departure, during this present parliament—namely, in diverting a sum of money which was on the Estimates for a railway from Bowen to Haughton Gap to a line from Bowen to a coalfield; but he stated that that was done after mature consideration. As for the consideration, though they took a long time to consider the matter, I think the result of the deliberations in that case was not so justifiable under the circumstances as the result of the deliberations of the Government in this instance; because in that case, after mature deliberation, the Government decided to make a railway to a burnt-out coalfield, whereas in this case they propose to make a railway to a thriving

goldfield, regarding which there is no question that it will be one of the best paying lines in the colony. The hon. member for Stanley, Mr. Kellett, objected to the Bill on the ground that if the line were made the railway to Cloncurry would not be made, and it was desirable to make a line to Cloncurry, in order to prevent the trans-continental line being brought forward if the party now in opposition should get into power again. In the first place it has been clearly shown that it will not prevent the construction of the Cloncurry railway, and secondly, we know perfectly well that a line cannot be made on similarly advantageous terms to those offered to the colony some years ago for the construction of the trans-continental railway. We have not the ten millions of acres which it was then proposed should be given to the syndicate to construct the line, because more than ten times that area has been given to the squatters on indefinite leases for twenty-one years. It has also been stated that the Northern members have shown selfishness in their action in this matter. But the construction of this railway will not personally benefit any Northern members who are voting for it. It will benefit the southern portion of the colony just as much as it will benefit the northern portion. Anyone going to the wharves and seeing the large steamers leaving week after week for Normanton crowded with men, taking away the surplus labour, the men who are unable to find employment down here, to good wages in the North, and loaded with dutiable goods from which considerable revenue is received, will have a practical exhibition of how that goldfield benefits the southern portion of Queensland. The hon. member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, objected to this line, but I think if he will look into the matter he will find that the non-construction of this railway will more seriously affect Maryborough than any other southern portion of the colony. I know a single claim in Croydon, and the company working it are getting £3,000 or £4,000 worth of machinery from one firm in Maryborough. If the company find, after getting the machinery to Normanton, that there are no means of transit they will probably not get any more machinery, and Maryborough will suffer in consequence. The hon. member for Enoggera, Mr. Dickson, says the making of the Croydon line in the manner proposed will delay the construction of the Cloncurry railway; I fail to see how it can have that effect. Even if we commence to spend on both railways the money voted for the Cloncurry line, and make the two railways simultaneously, the money will not be expended any sooner than money appropriated for the construction of other lines has been spent, so that there is really nothing in that argument. An additional vote will be required to complete the various lines in the colony, and when that occurs, a new loan can be incurred to complete the Croydon and Cloncurry lines. The hon. member further stated that other goldfields have had to wait for a railway for a longer time than this field has waited. That is true; they have waited and suffered, and the hon. member is one of those who caused that suffering. It is on record that when the line from Maryborough to Gympie was proposed—a line which has paid well—the hon. member was the author of the saying that it would not pay for the grease on the wheels. I venture to say that if there were such a field as Croydon in the south of Queensland, within ninety or a hundred miles of the coast, and having a population of 7,000, every member on that side of the House would vote for the immediate construction of a railway to it. If this line is rejected, that will be another argument in favour of separation, because any impartial person will at once realise that if a field of this description

were situated anywhere in the southern part of the colony, and it suffered from the same want of communication as now exists at Croydon, means would at once be adopted to afford it better communication. I notice that one hon. member—I think it was the member for Ipswich—said that all the Northern members opposed the *via recta* and the South Brisbane extension. But that statement is not correct. The Attorney-General is a Northern member and he did not oppose those lines, and the hon. member must recollect that a far larger proportion of Southern members opposed the *via recta*. They did so for the simple reason that they did not consider that it was a justifiable proceeding, under present circumstances, to expend such a large sum of money on those particular lines. The arguments in favour of the line now under discussion are that it will be immediately payable. In fact I believe it will be one of the most payable lines in the colony. It is well known that lines to goldfields are yielding larger average returns than other railways, and I believe this will be one of the best of those railways. There is a great necessity for the line. Any person who has travelled in the rainy season must know the difficulties that attend travelling at that period of the year, and how difficult it is to carry provisions to places any distance inland. I have seen a man coming down the road from the Palmer during the wet season offer £1 for a pound of flour; and a similar state of things will occur on the Croydon field if some better means of communication than it at present possesses are not soon provided. We must further bear in mind that not only is it a payable goldfield, but it is also indirectly a benefit to the whole colony. Goldfields have stood this colony in good stead in times of trouble, and great benefit has resulted to the whole of Queensland from the Croydon Gold Field.

Mr. FRASER said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not like to give a silent vote on this question. A certain principle was laid down this evening in discussing the previous line that was before the House. That principle was that money voted for the extension of the South Brisbane line could not possibly apply to the line as projected by the Government. If the argument had any force in that case, where the deviation was very slight, it will surely apply with a very great deal more force to the line we are now dealing with, as the vote has already been appropriated to another line altogether. Another principle has been laid down, and that is that at the present stage of the session there is a decided objection to enter into any further legislation of an important character, and that our duty now is to confine ourselves to the passing of the Estimates, and then go to the country, especially as we have carried the Redistribution Bill. In fact, those two principles were involved in the carrying of the Redistribution Bill. Now, I feel that I am quite justified in supporting the amendment of the hon. member for Bundamba. Besides, although it might be possible that Croydon is a goldfield that may surpass anything that has yet been discovered, that has not yet been proved. Although it has been spoken of so confidently this evening, yet there are rumours abroad that there is a large amount of misrepresentation concerning the Croydon Gold Field; I hope it may not prove true, but that is not my reason for opposing the Bill. Even if we pass it, as has been pointed out, no immediate practical result can come of it. I am told that the survey is going on already, and if that is the case there will be ample time to deal with the question as it ought to be dealt with when the next Parliament meets. If the survey is prepared there will be ample time to

complete the line so far as to meet the necessities of the case by the next season. Now, I was rather struck by a remark made by the senior member for Cook, Mr. Hamilton, who said that the field would save us during a great commercial depression; but I am not aware that there is anything to save us from. I have stated the reasons why I feel called upon to support the amendment of the hon. member for Bundanba. We have been asked to deal with this question upon its merits. I desire to do so, and would support the Bill gladly if I saw my way to do so. I cannot do so, but I disclaim being animated by any antagonistic feeling.

Mr. MOREHEAD said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not speak at the invitation of the hon. member for Ipswich, or at the invitation of any member of this House, nor do I see that I should be called upon to speak at all with regard to this railway, as the Bill is one introduced by the Government, which I do not intend to oppose, although if it ever gets into committee I must admit that there are some clauses of it which require a great amount of modification. I have spoken, Mr. Speaker, very strongly in favour of a railway that, I consider, is one of emergency. I consider this railway is one. The two railways to which this side of the House is opposed I do not think can be included under this head. I therefore shall give this railway the support which I have always said I would. However, before I sit down I wish to point out that whether hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House, who are not members of the Ministry, have been instructed how to vote I do not profess to know, but I think that they almost individually and collectively have announced their intention of opposing the Bill, purely, I believe, for the reason that a stand was taken by the Opposition in regard to other measures which those hon. gentlemen individually and collectively were wedded to. Well, I, for one, am perfectly prepared, as leader of the Opposition, and having as supporters the Northern members, to accept that position. I am perfectly willing to have it said that although we did all we could to get what is almost a necessity to the whole colony, we were refused on the ground that we refused to allow two railways to pass which we did not think the Government were justified in constructing in the present state of the colony. I shall, of course, vote for the second reading of this Bill, which I take it will only be supported by the members of the Government, although I admit I will not support it in its entirety as it stands at present, because I do not think that, as it now stands, it will be a good precedent. In many ways it wants material alteration.

The PREMIER: In what way?

Mr. MOREHEAD: I will indicate to the hon. gentleman the direction in which it should be amended when it gets into committee. I do not think it is a wise thing to show one's hand until it is absolutely advisable, although it is not advisable to do as the Minister for Works does at times—keep a card up his sleeve. When it is advisable to play the card I shall play it, but I will not show it until the game comes on. Having now satisfied the curiosity of the hon. member for Ipswich, and having given my reasons for voting for the second reading—having given reasons why I take some exception to the measure—I will resume my seat, simply saying again that I shall vote for the second reading, and, of course, oppose the amendment of the hon. member for Bundanba.

Mr. W. BROOKES said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. the senior member for Maryborough, Mr. Annear, is not here.

Mr. MOREHEAD: No; he is afar.

Mr. W. BROOKES: Well, he will read what I say in *Hansard* to-morrow morning. I wish to tell that hon. member that I never was so hard hit in my life as he hit me. There is no mistake about it—he hit the target plumb-centre, and I own to the soft impeachment. I at once admit that I am hit, and I will just show how. The reason I opposed the two previous railways was that I held fundamentally that the Government in its present position—which the hon. gentlemen opposite so often dilate upon with unctious as being moribund, and dead, and dying—are not in a position to carry out this work. However, passing over these mere figures of speech, I wish to say I opposed those two railways on the ground—as I thought, either rightly or wrongly—that in the present condition of the country the Government should not proceed with any contentious measure; and I feel—and I wish the House to understand that I feel—that I do not see how I can logically support this Bill. I should have had a great deal more difficulty in the matter if it had not been for what fell from the Premier—that he Bill was to be judged on its merits, that it was not a party question; and I thought that by taking my own sweet will I would not touch the Government in any way. Now I do object to this Bill, and here I again have the opportunity, which I gladly avail myself of, of coming to terms of amity with the ex-Colonial Treasurer. I am not going to carry a grudge about with me all my life; I have never found it worth while to do that. I will tell the ex-Colonial Treasurer now that I agree with him in everything he said. He carried my mind with him in all he said on this question, and I should be traitorous to myself and very mean and shabby, I consider, if I did not, having so good an opportunity, at once say to the ex-Colonial Treasurer that he made a speech for once with which I can find no fault, and with which I am quite in accord. That is saying a good deal. I object to this Bill for a great many reasons: one is that it appears to me to involve the abdication by Parliament of a power which it should strenuously hold. Then there are reasons why I feel inclined to agree with the Bill, and I may briefly state them. I look at Croydon in the distance. There are 7,000 people there, and there may be 8,000 or 10,000 there, and they have terribly bad country to cross from Normanton; the wet season is coming on, and there will be all manner of difficulties of conveyance; carriage will run up to fabulously high prices, the same as was seen in the early times of Victoria, and I wish it to be understood that if I saw that the passage of this Bill—and here is the point—if I saw that the passage of this Bill would hasten the construction of the railway to Croydon by one month, I would vote for it, but I do not see that it would have any such effect. Here is the wet season coming on, and the surveys are not yet completed, and I say, taking these considerations into account, and especially looking at the other reasons which are very important, I think no loss will accrue to the people of Croydon by relegating this matter to the new Parliament. I wish the people of Croydon to understand that in saying this I do not lose sight of their immediate and pressing wants; but they will have to face those wants in any case, and the passing of this Bill now would not alleviate those wants in the least. I may go so far as to say that even if the passing of this Bill would bring about communication a little bit sooner—it cannot be sooner than after the expiration of the rainy season, of course—even then, so highly do I estimate the value and importance of this Assembly keeping its powers within itself and not abdicating

any of those powers or handing them over to the Governor and the Executive Council—there is an immense danger if we begin that course, as there is no telling where it would stop—valuing, then, as I do the privileges of the people as represented by this Assembly, I must vote against this Bill.

Mr. PALMER said: Mr. Speaker,—Before the debate closes I wish to say a few words, though not at the instance of the hon. member for Ipswich, because I intended to hear what hon. members had to say about this Bill before speaking upon it myself. Hon. members will appreciate the peculiar position in which I stand with regard to this Bill, seeing that the Bill is introduced to build one line at the expense of another line, which I, with other hon. members, helped to pass. I remind hon. members that they concurred also, only a few weeks ago, in a very unanimous resolution supporting the construction of this line out of that vote. In my anxiety to do what is right, I feel that I can scarcely explain the position in which I stand with regard to this line, especially on account of the manner in which it has been taken up this evening. It looks as if a little political spite, or retaliation, has been thrown into the matter, because other members and I did not support the lines brought forward last week. In fact, I may say that overtures were made to me that if I would support those lines I should receive support in connection with the Croydon line, and that, if I did not support those lines, there was not the slightest chance of the Croydon line being carried. Hon. members in this House hinted that very strongly to me. That is a principle I strongly object to, and one which I look upon with the greatest contempt. It is called “log-rolling” in this House, but I will say that if I could be assured that this Croydon line would be sanctioned by my voting for the Thane’s Creek or South Brisbane lines I would let it go, for I would not buy it at that price. I object to the Thane’s Creek line on principle. If those in favour of it can show such arguments for its construction as we can show for the construction of this line, a great deal of the opposition to that line would have been removed. Can they show a population of 8,000 or 10,000 people at a terminal point on the railway who are likely to have to starve? Can they show that by the construction of that line two large centres of population would be connected, and one of them a seaport town? They can do nothing of the kind. This can all be shown in support of this proposed line to Croydon, and this is why I maintain I stand on firmer grounds; and why I could not consent to support the Thane’s Creek line, in addition to being unable to support it on political principle. With regard to the South Brisbane line, there is no urgent necessity for that line, in the peculiar condition of the finances of the colony. If that line is not carried out no one will suffer and no trade will be injured, but if the Croydon line is not carried out there will be a great hindrance to trade in Brisbane, and to the prospects of leading business people, and, in addition, a large number of hard-working miners in this country will be disappointed, and their fortunes thrown in the background. It must be remembered that there are not many members in this House representing mining constituencies, and hon. members must admit that the mining community is not sufficiently represented here. There is but one mining member in the House—the hon. member for Gympie, Mr. Smyth. The hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, who has followed mining, represents a town, and not a mining town, and yet here is Croydon, which will have, and should have, two members representing it, having no voice at all in the decision of this question; hon. members, I maintain, should take that into consideration. The mining

interests of the North, the largest interests now coming to the front in Queensland, are not represented here as they should be, and that should be remembered when it is proposed to throw in the background a promising field like this, because of a little political spite and retaliation. Hon. members, I have no doubt, will exonerate me from any personal ill-feeling on the subject. I have borne very good-humouredly the opposition to this line, and will continue to do so, but I would not buy this railway by voting now for the Thane’s Creek line, or sanctioning it in any way. The hon. member for Enoggera, Mr. Dickson, stated as one of his objections to this line, that it was not included in the Government railway policy. I would like to ask the hon. gentleman, where was Croydon when that railway policy was formulated? It was an unknown field at the time. There are many lines provided for on the £10,000,000 loan that it was well known were not urgently required. Fortitude Valley was well known, and the people had at the time both railway and tramway accommodation. But that railway is being carried out, and here is a field which has since then sprung into existence, and the reasonable proposal of this Bill is not to be sanctioned because the line to Thane’s Creek was not carried out. It has been openly stated this evening by several hon. members that they only object to this line in a great measure because their line was thrown out. However, if this Bill is thrown out, and the Government are sincere in their determination to go on with the line, as I believe they are, they can, in spite of that, go on with the construction of sixteen miles of it towards Cloncurry, and the rest of the line can be finished at some future time. I am surprised at the tone which has been put into the debate this evening by some hon. members. The cat has been let out of the bag in a most open manner, and I am quite surprised that hon. members should look upon a matter of this kind in so small and parochial a spirit. In fact, I cannot understand it. If the keynote of separation was ever sounded thoroughly, it has been sounded by the tone that has been adopted with regard to this railway. Mining constituencies, which are rapidly increasing, will very soon find it out, and nothing will stir them up and make them more determined in their demand for separation than the action which has been taken by hon. members this evening. It is an action which will revert tenfold to the southern part of the colony. Merely because a line like that to Thane’s Creek, which could only be supported on the miserable evidence taken before a select committee of the Upper House, was not carried out, a promising goldfield must be retarded indefinitely. Hon. members do not seem to know what the position of affairs will be on that field during the long wet season. During the last wet season flour was 2s. 6d. a pound, and meat over 1s. a pound, while mining requisites were impossible to be obtained at all. Now there are 8,000 to 10,000 people there; goods are arriving at Normanton by every weekly steamer; and yet the supply of rations is very little in advance of the daily wants of the population. So much is timber and machinery required that they are actually taking up that merchandise in preference to rations. Now that the wet season is coming on, I feel quite alarmed at the hardships which will have to be endured on that field. Let hon. members take that into consideration when they are, as it were, voting against this line, because one or two other almost impossible lines could not be carried out.

Mr. MORGAN said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. gentleman who has just sat down has harped a good deal on what he assumes to be a fact, that

the opposition to this line is the outcome entirely of the rejection of the Thane's Creek line by this House last week; and he seemed to hint at threats having been held out to him that if he opposed that line, we—that is, the members who supported it—would oppose the line from Normanton to Croydon. As I was interested to some extent in the Thane's Creek line, perhaps it may be imagined that his remarks apply to me. I do not know whether they do or not, but I may tell him and the House that I never held out such a threat in any shape or form, and that his remarks are certainly not true if he intended them to apply directly or indirectly to me.

Mr. HAMILTON: He did not apply them to you.

Mr. MORGAN: He did not say to whom he applied them, and the House might assume that he applied them to me. I do not go in for any log-rolling of that kind, nor do I look upon the Thane's Creek line as an impossible line. I think the House ought to know that the hon. member, in speaking in that way, knows nothing whatever, except what was said in debate here, about the Thane's Creek line. He knows nothing of the country. It simply suited his purpose as a party man to take prejudiced evidence from the evidence given before the select committee of the Upper House, to justify the action he took in opposing it. He had a perfect right to oppose the line, and I, for one, do not feel the smallest enmity towards him for doing so; but when he speaks of it as an impossible line, I repeat that he is speaking without any personal knowledge of the country that line was to traverse, and without sufficient evidence to justify his opposition or the language he uses in describing that line. The hon. gentleman has got himself into rather a tight place over this Croydon line. He introduced a motion here some time ago for the construction of a line from Normanton to Croydon, and the Premier suggested that if he would consent to the diversion of a part of the vote for the railway from Normanton to Cloncurry for that purpose the Government might be able to meet him. He rose to the bait at once, but the fly is going to escape him, Mr. Speaker, and he is finding out now that his constituents at Normanton did not at all appreciate his action, that the people at Cloncurry view it in the same light, and that the people at Croydon whom he wished to benefit are not going to be benefited. He will find himself, I think, between two stools in the end. He will have pleased nobody, and will have seriously offended a very large section of his constituents. That, however, is a matter that he will have to reckon with when he goes back for re-election. I intend to vote against this line, though I voted for permission to bring in a Bill on the subject. I believe I was perfectly right in voting so, but now that the Bill has been introduced I am of opinion that the House, in the light of recent events, will be perfectly justified in rejecting it. And I am perfectly certain it will be rejected. It may get into committee, but if it does it will certainly not get any further. In the light of recent events the House will be perfectly justified in refusing to allow the Bill to pass. A good deal has been said recently as to the financial condition of the country; but this evening hon. members have spoken in support of the Bill who within the last week plainly told the House that in their opinion the financial condition of the country did not warrant the Government undertaking any further responsibilities whatever. The hon. member for Townsville, Mr. Macrossan, who, as we all know, is an authority on such subjects, speaking on the railway proposals a few weeks ago, justified his position on the ground

that the finances of the country were in such a state that the Government were not warranted in entering upon any fresh expenditure. He was speaking on the Warwick to Thane's Creek line, and these are his words:—

"We have the plans before us, but I think it would conduce to better order and better government if the Government had simply carried out the original plan and allowed the Thane's Creek line to go by the board. Now, I object to this on the broad financial ground mentioned by the leader of the Opposition. I believe if I sat on the other side of the House at the present time, and saw the state of the country as clearly as I believe I see it now, I would not support this railway; and I hope hon. members will consider carefully what I am going to say upon the question. I believe the statement that I am going to make in regard to our financial position can be proven. In fact, I will try to prove it, and I think if I do, even the Government will pause before they go any further."

Mr. ADAMS: I rise to a point of order. I believe it has been ruled by yourself, sir, that no debates of the present session can be read in the House?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is reading from a debate on railways, and as the subject of making a railway is now before the House, the hon. member is perfectly in order.

Mr. MORGAN: I hope the hon. member is satisfied. I am. I will continue:—

"Of course, I assume that if we pass these plans the Government will call for tenders. I do not assume for a moment that we are going through a farce; that we are simply doing a little piece of burlesquing, as the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government accused the hon. member for Fassifern last night of being guilty of. I assume that the Government will call for tenders for the line if these plans and sections are approved of. Therefore I am taking up the objection that we are not able in our present financial position to go on with this line."

Now, setting aside the relative merits of the two lines altogether, if the country is not in a position to go on with the Thane's Creek line, which we know from the engineer's estimate will only cost £97,000, and for which the money was voted four years ago, and raised by loan on the authority of this House, I ask, how can the hon. member get up here and tell us the country is justified in spending £300,000 in the construction of a railway through country almost unknown, quite innocent of settlement, and to a goldfield which may or may not be permanent, and which certainly has not yet been proved to be permanent? We are told frequently in this House, by gentlemen who call themselves mining members, that there is a population of 7,000 on Croydon, but that statement has not been proved. We have no actual evidence before us that there are 7,000 people there. We have not yet had any proof that the field is likely to be permanent. We know that there is a great extent of reefing country there, that the reefs there are yielding gold, that they are yielding also a large quantity of silver; the gold is of comparatively little value; the sinking is not yet down any depth, and there is not sufficient evidence that the field is permanent. We know that fields have sprung suddenly into existence in this colony and have had large populations; they have flickered for a few months—aye, a few years—and have then gone out, and where population reigned before is now a howling wilderness. We have no evidence that this will not be the case with Croydon. But supposing the permanency of the field had already been proved, and that we knew a population was going to be settled there, I should like to know if this House is justified in giving the Commissioner for Railways power, on his own responsibility, and without subsequent reference to this House, to undertake the construction of a railway on a system that is as yet a simple experiment? We are to have Phillips's

steel sleepers, which may or may not prove suitable to the country in which they are to be adopted. But, assuming even that the principle of these sleepers had been proved to be a good one in certain work done down south, we have no evidence before us that it will prove suitable to the country which this line will have to traverse. It has been described as boggy and rotten; and I anticipate that even if we do lay down Phillips's sleepers we might not have unfrequent reports of railway accidents there. We might find some day, after starting a train from Normanton, and it got into this rotten country, that not only the line, but the train—freight, passengers, and all—had disappeared entirely. I think we should pause before we rush into this matter, Mr. Speaker; that we ought to wait a little while, and have a proper survey of the country intervening between Normanton and Croydon made. We ought to know what the features of the country are. It is all very well for the Premier and the Minister for Works to get up and tell us that they will only have to divert the line here and there to avoid an ant-hill, or that a small culvert will have to be constructed to get over a gully; but this flat country is very often subject to considerable floods. And notwithstanding what has been said of Mr. Phillips's steel sleepers by the hon. member for Stanley, Mr. White, and one or two others, I am not satisfied that it has been proved that they are the true panacea for all the evils we have hitherto suffered from in making railways. They may prove an additional failure. But this notwithstanding, the point I take is that there has been no money voted by this House for a line from Normanton to Croydon. There is no money voted on the Loan Estimates; we have no plans of the line; and adding to that the contention, not only of the hon. member for Townsville, but also of the leader of the Opposition, and all the prominent members on the other side of the House, that we are not justified in the present state of the finances of the country in going on with any fresh works, I think this House ought to reject this Bill on the second reading.

Mr. LISSNER said: Mr. Speaker,—Having not long returned from England, where I went as a separationist, I have not yet addressed the House this session, but I must make a few remarks upon the matter before it goes to a vote. I think there is a good deal of hide-and-seek business about these railway matters that have been brought before us during the last week. I do not think we are very naughty on this side of the House, because we had to stonewall such luxuries as the railway from Warwick to Thane's Creek, where celebrated goldfields and all sorts of things are to be got if the railway goes there. We did not stonewall anything else, but the other motion for railway extension in South Brisbane died a natural death. I have heard from speeches made outside the House—which I do not often repeat—that there would be a feeling of retaliation when this railway to Croydon came before the House. I do not care what hon. members on the other side of the House say about it; that was the feeling on the other side, and I am very sorry to see that some of them have turned round so quickly against the motion introduced by the Government this evening. It looks very bad for the Government if it continues like that. However, by the speeches made this evening, it is very easy to see what the vote on this line will be, and the longer I am in the House the more satisfied I am that while the House is composed of sections such as exist now, it is not fit to regulate business for the whole of Queensland at any rate. Anyone who has any affection for the

colony or desire to benefit it must know that there is a vast difference between the railway now proposed and the railway from Warwick to Thane's Creek. We do not want a railway to carry population to Croydon. There is a population there already of 6,000 or 7,000, or of 8,000 for all we know. They are all good men—men who will support the country and will support this railway, and be a benefit to Queensland hereafter. However, it appears that this line cannot pass, on the principle that "you have beaten my dog, I will beat yours." There is one argument why this railway should not pass *pro forma*—because it was not trotted out on the bill of fare. When the Government formulated their railway policy there was no such thing as a population at Croydon; but any member who has a love of his country at heart and wants to do anything for the benefit of his country, will certainly vote for the railway to Croydon now. The sooner that railway can be built the sooner it will pay. It is all very well to repeat those melancholy stories about mines running out. As far as I remember, and I think I can prove it, the lines that tap goldfields now are the best paying lines in the colony. I refer to the lines to Charters Towers and Gympie. There is nothing to show why Croydon should not be a permanent field. However, I bow to the decision of the House. I do not like to work a dead horse, and the sooner we come to a vote the better. Let the public decide at the next election whether they want the railway from Warwick to Thane's Creek or the railway from Normanton to Croydon.

Mr. ALLAN said: Mr. Speaker,—I had no intention of saying anything on the second reading of this Bill to-night, but as two members on this side have insinuated that many of us intend to vote against the second reading because we did not get our own way on other lines, I think it right to enter my protest against that. I certainly never promised to vote for the Croydon line at any time, and I trust I am not one of those alluded to as taking this course. I do not mean to take up the time of the House by reiterating arguments that have been used so often to-night, but should this Bill pass the second reading and get into committee, I shall take the opportunity of saying a good deal more about it then. The only feasible arguments used against the Thane's Creek railway being passed that I recollect much of, were that the country was not in a position to go on with any further expenditure at the present time, and that the present state of parties did not warrant such expenditure being gone on with. Those were, I admit, feasible arguments; but both for that line and the line before the House before tea, the money had been voted on the Loan Estimates, so that, at all events, we had that to go on; but for this proposed line to Croydon we have not one single penny voted. If we take any of the money that has been voted for the line from Normanton to Cloncurry, I consider that will be repudiation, and dishonest. I trust that that will not be done. If it is done in this case it may be done in any other, and, as I have had occasion to say previously, we should have no finality in any vote in this House. The hon. member for Burke says it has been done before, but that does not make it any more correct. But there is one thing in this Bill that I think is without precedent—that is, giving the Government power to construct the railway without laying the plans before Parliament. I think that would be going a very great deal too far. I admit that very possibly in the very near future this would be a remarkably good line, but so far practically this is an untried diggings, and there is no instance on record that we know of where a

line has been pushed out to an untried diggings, or to any diggings at all, in the short space of time that has elapsed since the field was first found. I would very much like to see this field go ahead, but I do not think we would be justified in pushing legislation forward so rapidly as is proposed in this particular case. Even in very good times, such as we had many years ago, it would have been questionable, and at this time, with a heavy deficit and a moribund Parliament, I think it is simply reprehensible. I, sir, shall vote against this line, and I think, with others who have spoken, that the only business we have any right to go on with now is Supply. Let us close this session as soon as we can, only taking proper time to give due consideration to the Estimates.

Mr. SMYTH said: Mr. Speaker,—I do not wish to give a silent vote on this question. I intend to vote for the construction of the Croydon line. Being the representative of a mining constituency, my sympathy is naturally with a mining community. The miners of this colony, all told, must now number nearly 50,000 persons, and the mining industry at the present time must be said to be the chief industry in Queensland. The pastoral industry and the agricultural industry have been in a backward state for some time; and if it were not for the mining industry the colony would be in a very much worse state than it is. We can all do better together—the pastoralist, the agriculturist, and the miner—than we can do separately. We know very well that in a place like Croydon, where there is a population of about 7,000 persons, it is far better for the pastoralists in the district to sell their cattle and sheep on the spot than to take them overland to Melbourne or Sydney. Croydon is part of the way on the road to the Etheridge, which has proved to be one of the best goldfields in Queensland, and when this railway is constructed it will be no great distance from Croydon to the Etheridge. Even if it does not go to the Etheridge, it will save the people there a great deal of expense in carrying their machinery and supplies. When the members who are opposing this line come to look into it, and see the benefit that this goldfield will be to the pastoral and agricultural interests of this colony, I am sure they will withdraw their opposition to it. I supported the Thane's Creek line, more with the object of seeing Thane's Creek and Canal Creek opened up as a goldfield—as I believe they eventually will be—than as an agricultural district. That line no doubt would hold its own with the traffic from the agricultural industry, but there would also have been an impetus given to persons to go and test those mines which are lying idle at the present time, where, from all accounts, they could get good pay. I am told that there are about 250 teams somewhere on the road between Normanton and Croydon. It must cost the miners a lot of money to get machinery and supplies into Croydon. Now, supposing the machines were hung up for want of water, there would be perfect stagnation on the goldfield; but, if the railway were constructed, the Croydon quartz could be brought into Normanton—a distance of say 100 miles, at the charge which is now made for bringing coal from the Burrum to Gympie—1d. per ton per mile. If there were no water at Croydon, and the nearest water were at Normanton, the miners would sooner pay 8s. 4d. a ton to take the stone to Normanton than to have the mines standing idle. I do not say that that would be the nearest point where they could get water. But we have a case in point at Charters Towers. The proprietors of the Day Dawn Block and Wyndham claim have decided, on account of the trouble which the municipality has given them in connection with

their tailings, and also on account of the scarcity of water, to ask the Government to allow them to carry quartz over the Government line, and to put up a 68-stamper battery on the Burdekin River. By doing that they will not leave the tailings at Charters Towers, and they will have plenty of fresh water. If this line is agreed to there will be an immense quantity of quartz machines put up upon permanent fresh-water sites, and the quartz will be taken to those machines even if they are 50 or 100 miles away. If hon. members look into this question properly they will see that it will be one of the greatest benefits to the country. The gold-mining is the industry which must be looked to for the future; but all our industries must work together. The miners are large consumers of beef, and of sugar and other things, and if there is a home market for those articles, it is much better than to have to go abroad to look for one.

Mr. MURPHY said: Mr. Speaker,—I quite agree with the hon. member who has just sat down, that the mining industry is, if not the foremost industry in the colony, at all events, amongst the foremost industries, and it is one from which both the pastoral and agricultural industries have received great benefits. We know that mining attracts population to a country very much quicker than any other industry. Miners are, as a rule, intelligent, able-bodied men, and when once they are in a country, even if the mining industry fails, they stay there and are capable of taking up any labour, whether agricultural or any other. We have seen examples of that here and in other colonies, and it has been conclusively proved in Victoria. It was through the mining that such a large population was attracted to that colony, and the miners have settled down on the land and have become permanent colonists. Therefore, anything affecting the mining community should always have the best attention here from this House. But in this instance I think we are going just a little too fast, even for the benefit of the miners. I do not think the Croydon has yet been thoroughly proved to be a permanent field, and I think a delay of twelve months will not do any injury. The miners may suffer a little inconvenience in the meantime; but it is better that that should happen than that we should go to an expense of some £300,000 or £400,000 in building a line of railway, and then find afterwards, as we have found in the cases of many other fields in this and other colonies, that the field is not a permanent one. There are even now rumours about that some large reefs that looked permanent there have now become pinched up. That is one reason that weighs with me in opposing this line. I have opposed it consistently from the very first. In the first vote that was taken upon it in this House I was one of the four or five members who opposed it, and I still maintain my opposition, because my first reason has not yet been removed. There is one thing that astonished me as regards this line, and to some extent justifies the position taken up by the Opposition in regard to other lines proposed by the Government, and that was the very firm and eloquent manner in which the Minister for Works introduced it into the House; I do not remember his making such a fervent speech as he made to-night in favour of the other lines he introduced. We remember the milk-and-water way in which he introduced the Warwick to Thane's Creek railway. He was a little warmer in his advocacy of the South Brisbane extension, because, perhaps, it affected one of his colleagues to some extent. But his manner showed that his heart was not in either of those two lines, while it was in this; his language showed that. Now,

I also consider that we should be establishing or perpetuating a dangerous precedent in taking money that has already been appropriated by this House for a line which has been called over and over again a national line. The line from Normanton to Cloncurry was passed by this House without a dissentient voice. Every member thought that it was a line which ought to be made, and I do not see why we should change our opinions now. If it is absolutely necessary and essential that a line should be made at once to Croydon, the Government should find the money from some other source to do so. I do not think we should "rob Peter to pay Paul." It is manifestly unfair and unjust to the people of Cloncurry that the money should be diverted from the purpose for which it was voted; and not only is it unfair to the Cloncurry people, but also to the people of the colony generally. We have all been looking forward to the transcontinental railway. We know that the late Government proposed a scheme which was indignantly rejected by the country; but if it had been the transcontinental, pure and simple, upon the principle upon which this part of it, to Cloncurry, is to be made, it would have met with the approval of the whole community. They were not against the transcontinental railway; they were solidly in favour of it; but it was the system upon which it was to be made that the people, and very justly too, were against. Therefore, I argue that in diverting this money we are doing a gross injustice, not only to the people more immediately affected by the line, but to the general community, and that is the reason why I shall continue to oppose the Bill. Another reason I have for opposing it is that the 2nd clause of the Bill contains a very dangerous precedent, delegating the powers of this House to the Governor in Council; in fact, overriding the power and authority of Parliament by delegating such extensive powers to the Governor in Council. It is all very well to argue that even if we had the plans and sections before us we should not know any more about them than we do now, because there are no engineering difficulties in the way, and no people to be injured by the line being moved from place to place. We are quite willing to trust the Government not to do any injustice of that kind, and I do not argue upon such small narrow grounds; but I do not like to absolutely delegate the powers of this House to the Governor in Council. Those are my principal reasons for objecting to the Bill, and as I voted before against the proposition, so I shall vote now. I am only astonished that those gentlemen who, on this side of the House as well as on the other, argued that a moribund Parliament was not competent to deal with any large question of this kind—the Government side itself being utterly disorganised and demoralised—I am only astonished that after opposing the two previous propositions on those very grounds they should now decide to vote in favour of this one. I consider that I am taking up a thoroughly consistent position, and that those gentlemen who assisted to stonewall the Thane's Creek line and the South Brisbane line, but who vote in favour of this line, are not consistent. I shall vote against the second reading of the Bill.

Question—That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the question—put, and the House divided :—

AYES, 22.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Jordan, Dutton, Rutledge, Moreton, Pattison, Mellor, Macrossan, Nelson, Norton, White, Stevenson, Smyth, Palmer, Wakefield, Morehead, Lissner, Adams, Hamilton, Campbell, Donaldson, and Sheridan

NOES, 15.

Messrs. Dickson, W. Brookes, Foote, Buckland, Kates, Isambert, Morgan, Fraser, Bailey, McMaster, Murphy, Bulcock, Foxton, S. W. Brooks, and Macfarlane.

Pair :—For the second reading : Mr. Jessop.  
Against : Mr. Allan.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed, and committal of the Bill made an Order of the Day for Thursday next.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said : Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn. Committee of Supply will stand at the head of the paper on Thursday.

Question put and passed.

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