

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER 1888

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 11 September, 1888.

Petitions—Bowen Railway—Influx of Rabbits.—Message from His Excellency the Governor—Estimates. Question.—Motion for Adjournment.—Mr. Justice Cooper and the Offenders Probation Act.—The Resignation of the Government—Ministerial Statement.—Petition—Bowen Railway.—Motion for Adjournment.—Benjamin Kitt's Case.—Public Works Lands Resumption Bill—third reading.—Formal Motions.—Order of Business.—Suspension of Standing Orders.—Supply.—Ways and Means—resumption of committee.—Financial Statement.—Railways Bill—committee.—Adjournment.

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

PETITIONS.

BOWEN RAILWAY.

Mr. SMITH presented a petition from the residents of Bowen, praying that the Bowen railway might be made to junction with the Northern line at the 37-mile peg from Townsville; and moved that the petition be read.

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

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

INFUX OF RABBITS.

Mr. MURPHY presented a petition from certain stockowners and landowners in the Kar-goolnah Marsupial Board's district, expressing alarm at the spread of rabbits in the colony, and praying that further measures be adopted for the repression of the nuisance. He moved that the petition be received.

Question put and passed.

The HON. P. PERKINS presented a petition of similar purport and prayer from the Rosalie Divisional Board, and moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

Mr. PAUL presented a petition of similar purport and prayer from the Nogoa Marsupial Board, and moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL (Hon. J. Donaldson) presented a petition of similar purport and prayer from the residents of the Bulloo district, and moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

Mr. O'CONNELL presented a petition of similar purport and prayer from the residents of the Woongarra district, and moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

Mr. SMYTH presented a petition of similar purport and prayer from the Widgee Divisional Board, and moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

Mr. CASEY presented a petition of similar purport and prayer from the residents of the Augathella district, and moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

Mr. FOXTON presented a petition of similar purport and prayer from stockowners and others in the district of Goondiwindi, and moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR.

ESTIMATES.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor, transmitting the Estimates-in-Chief for the year ending 30th June, 1889.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER (Hon. Sir T. McIlwraith), the Estimates were ordered to be printed and referred to Committee of Supply.

QUESTION.

Mr. PALMER asked the Colonial Secretary—

Will the Government take into favourable consideration the necessity for the establishment of a laboratory for the cultivation of virus for inoculation for pleuropneumonia?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. B. D. Morehead) replied—

The matter is under the serious consideration of the Government at the present time.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

MR. JUSTICE COOPER AND THE OFFENDERS
PROBATION ACT.

Mr. SAYERS said: Mr. Speaker,—I intend to move the adjournment of the House in order to call the attention of the House, and of the Ministry in particular, to a case which occurred at Charters Towers the other day in the court over which Mr. Justice Cooper presides. A prisoner was tried there, who was found guilty of forging a cheque for the sum of £2. From what I understand this was the first charge against the prisoner—I speak under correction—and he was sentenced to the very heavy penalty of three years' penal servitude. The jury recommended him to mercy under the provisions of the Offenders Probation Act, but Mr. Justice Cooper refused to take it into consideration. I think this is a matter that should be brought under the notice of the House, because if judges in their wisdom, inflict

such a heavy penalty as that, it must exercise considerable influence upon the verdicts of juries. The judge said he did not understand the Offenders Probation Act passed by this House, and that he did not know any person who did. That is a very peculiar remark to fall from a judge on the bench, and I am certain that if persons found guilty of a first offence like that I have mentioned receive a sentence of that kind, the effect on juries will very likely be to render them liable to bring in a verdict of not guilty instead of guilty. It seems to be all a chance what the length of punishment inflicted may be; one prisoner may be sentenced to ten years' imprisonment, while another for a similar offence may only get six months. I think this case is of sufficient importance to bring under the notice of hon. members, and especially of the Ministers. I move the adjournment of the House.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—This is rather a curious motion, to come especially from the hon. member for Charters Towers. We have been for the last fortnight fighting over a matter which arose out of the Offenders Probation Act, and that hon. member was remarkably silent; and now he gets up, moves a motion for the adjournment of the House, and coolly asks the House, and the Ministry especially, to consider the case of a judge who has given a decision in a certain case in a certain way. This is not a court of revision on the conduct of the judges, and I am not going to discuss the matter at all. Whenever the conduct of Judge Cooper, or any other judge, comes properly before us, the Ministry will be perfectly prepared to state their opinion; but they will not express their opinion on a judge's conduct on the motion of any hon. member.

Question put and negatived.

THE RESIGNATION OF THE GOVERNMENT.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I laid on the table this afternoon a copy of further correspondence that has taken place between the Governor and his Ministers, with reference to the case of Benjamin Kitt. I need not read the whole of the correspondence, but only so much as brings the business down to the present time. The following is the last paragraph of the letter which His Excellency wrote in reply to mine of the previous day, and which was read by me last Thursday:—

"The Governor has now this morning received a telegram from the Secretary of State, conveying authority for the release of the prisoner Benjamin Kitt, leaving for consideration when the despatches reach him the points involved in the case which have been under discussion.

"Benjamin Kitt will be discharged accordingly."

To that I replied—

"Chief Secretary's Office,
Brisbane, 5th September, 1888.

"SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Your Excellency's minute of to-day's date, in which you intimate that you have this morning received a telegram from the Secretary of State for the Colonies authorising the release of the prisoner Benjamin Kitt, and to inform you that the necessary ministerial recommendation in connection with this prisoner's case will be re-submitted to Your Excellency in the usual manner on Monday next.

"I have, &c.,

"(Signed) THOMAS McILWRAITH."

At the Cabinet meeting the usual minute was prepared recommending the release of the prisoner, of which His Excellency in Council approved, and the prisoner has been released accordingly. I ought to add that, on the receipt

of that letter, I wrote to His Excellency intimating that on account of what had taken place Ministers had withdrawn their resignation.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I stated when this matter was last under discussion that as soon as I obtained His Excellency the Governor's permission I should be prepared to state the communication I made to His Excellency. I am prepared to do so now, but am precluded from doing so because a motion for the adjournment of the House has just been put and negatived. As what I have to say may give rise to some discussion, it is only fair that I should conclude with a motion. I shall, therefore, wait until some formal business has been disposed of.

PETITION.

BOWEN RAILWAY.

Mr. DALRYMPLE presented a petition from residents of Bowen, praying that the junction of the railway between Bowen and Townsville should be at the 37-mile peg, on the Charters Towers line, and moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

BENJAMIN KITT'S CASE.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said: Mr. Speaker,—I mentioned last week that I would take the earliest possible opportunity, after receiving His Excellency the Governor's permission, of communicating to the House the communication I made to His Excellency when asked by him to undertake the formation of a new Government last week. I then asked for time to make myself acquainted with the facts of the case, a request which I thought was only fair to His Excellency and to myself. After reading the correspondence, which His Excellency was good enough to supply me with, I handed to him the following memorandum, which I have obtained his permission to communicate to the House:—

"Sir Samuel Griffith presents his duty to Your Excellency.

"Since his interview with Your Excellency yesterday morning, when Your Excellency informed him that Sir Thomas McIlwraith had tendered the resignation of himself and his colleagues on the ground that Your Excellency had declined to accept their advice with respect to the conditional pardon of Benjamin Kitt under the Offenders Probation Act, Sir Samuel Griffith has carefully considered the facts of the case as disclosed in the correspondence between Your Excellency and Sir Thomas McIlwraith, and now desires respectfully to offer the following observations with respect to what he understands to be the relative powers and duties of the Governor and his advisers in cases in which the exercise of the Royal prerogative of mercy is involved.

"Sir Samuel Griffith conceives that no difference in principle exists between cases arising under the Offenders Probation Act and other cases. In either case the prerogative is exercised by the Governor, as the representative of Her Majesty, and the word 'Governor' is therefore used instead of 'Governor in Council.' This does not, however, appear to be material in determining the principles by which the Governor should be guided in the exercise of the prerogative.

"There can be no doubt, in Sir Samuel Griffith's opinion, that the Governor has, under his instructions, the legal or formal right, not only in cases in which the function in question is to be exercised by the Governor, but also in cases in which it is to be exercised by the Governor in Council, to refuse to act on the advice of his Ministers. Originally a clearer line was drawn and accepted between these two classes of cases than has, of late years, been adopted in practice. For instance, in all matters relating to the summoning and dissolution of Parliament, and the appointment of members of the Legislative Council, the authority, though formally vested in the Governor, is, in practice, only exercised with the advice of his Executive Council, with the simple exception of questions of dissolution of Parliament in cases where the Governor is called upon to act as arbiter between political parties.

"But latterly this distinction has, with the exception above stated, been in course of becoming obliterated, and practically the Governor has acted in all matters on the advice of his Council, unless otherwise expressly instructed by Her Majesty.

"Sir Samuel Griffith does not remember any instance, in his experience of nine years as a Minister, in which the Governor declined to follow the advice of his Ministers on a question of pardon in a non-capital case when deliberately given and persisted in. At the same time he conceives that it is clearly the Governor's right and duty under his instructions to satisfy himself that the advice ought to be followed before acting upon it.

"It is with respect to the rules of action to be applied in the exercise of this duty that differences of opinion may arise. The instructions in Canada (as was pointed out in the discussion at the Colonial Conference last year) differ from those in force in the Australian Colonies, but in these colonies, so far as Sir Samuel Griffith's experience goes, the accepted rule of practice has been for several years that laid down in Sir Hercules Robinson's memorandum in answer to Sir H. Parkes's memorandum of 31st May, 1894 (Todd's Parl. Govt. in the Colonies, p. 261).—That under a constitutional form of Government the Crown is supposed to accept or reject the advice of responsible Ministers—that the Governor has an undoubted right to reject such advice if he is prepared to accept the consequences, but that, practically, he would never do so except in cases which he considered to involve such a gross abuse of the prerogative that both the Secretary of State and local public opinion would be likely to support him in the exercise of extreme measures—that in all ordinary cases, therefore, in which neither Imperial interests or policy were involved, the Governor, whatever his own private opinions might be, would be prepared to accept the advice of his Ministers."

"In the despatch forwarding a copy of this correspondence to the Secretary of State, Sir H. Robinson observed, 'This is simply the mode in which all the ordinary business of government is conducted, and I could see no sufficient reason for making any distinction in these cases.' (*Id.* p. 262.) The rules as so laid down were approved by Lord Carnarvon. (*Id.* p. 263.)

"In Sir Samuel Griffith's opinion this rule has been found convenient in practice, and is entirely in accordance with the now accepted theory of constitutional or responsible government as applied in the Australian colonies, which may be described as a system of government by which the people of the colony are entrusted with the full right of managing their own affairs, subject only to the condition that the general interests of the whole Empire are not so seriously prejudiced that the Imperial Government thinks it necessary to intervene for their protection. The special instructions relating to capital cases are also another exception which, at the Colonial Conference, Sir Samuel Griffith characterised as an anomaly—in his judgment justifiable at the present time. It has often been pointed out that the system of party or constitutional government is in a constant state of development. The rule, as stated by Sir H. Robinson, appears to Sir Samuel Griffith to correctly express the presently received rule of practice as applicable to such cases as that now in question.

"Applying this rule, it appears to Sir Samuel Griffith that in practice the Governor should not, even although his own opinion may differ from that of his Ministers, refuse to follow their advice, unless—

- (1) Imperial interests or policy are involved; or
- (2) The offence is one against the laws of the Empire, which may chance to have been tried in a local Court; or
- (3) He is of opinion that the proposed action is an abuse of the prerogative which he ought not to allow.

"In any of these cases it might become necessary for the Governor to have recourse to new Ministers who would be prepared to defend his action in Parliament, which, of course, they could not do if they did not concur in its propriety. Kitt's case does not, however, appear to Sir Samuel Griffith to be one of such a character in any respect that it was the Governor's plain duty to depart from the ordinary practice of accepting his Ministers' advice; and he would not, therefore, be able to undertake to justify the Governor's action in doing so.

"The Governor appears, however, to have been clearly within his legal and formal rights in declining to accept that advice, and if it is desired by his Ministers that the present rules should be made more definite, there can, as it appears to Sir Samuel Griffith, be no possible objection to their taking the necessary

action to bring about that result in the ordinary and convenient way followed in all previous cases of a similar kind—namely, by addressing the Secretary of State on the subject.

"Sir Samuel Griffith is unable to see that under the circumstances there is any justification for the resignation of Sir T. Mellwraith—a resignation which, if accepted, must bring about great delay in the transaction of public business, and possibly serious difficulties in the administration of the government of the colony. Upon a review of the whole matter, Sir Samuel Griffith does not feel himself able to undertake the duty of forming a new administration.

"S. W. GRIFFITH.

"5th September, 1898.

"His Excellency the Governor."

I may be permitted to say a few words more on the subject, because it is not desirable that it should be cropping up continually during the session. Whatever is to be said had better be said now and disposed of. A good deal has been said in the course of the discussion with respect to constitutional law and constitutional government. I should like to observe that, in my opinion, a good many people who used those phrases did not appear to know quite what they mean. A great number of persons used the expression "constitutional government" as if it meant simply government by majority, or by the Ministry representing the majority—as if that was the only element in constitutional government. Of course, those who know more about the subject are aware that constitutional government—which, by the way, is quite a modern invention—is an elaborate system of checks, by which different persons or parts of the State are entrusted with different duties, each being to a certain extent a check upon the others. In England the Queen, who has been described as a "perpetual President," represents the whole community, as distinguished from that part of the community which is specially represented by the majority in Parliament. She represents the minority as well as the majority; and in the colonies the Governor, as the representative of the Queen, is in the position of representing, not only one part of the community, but the whole. He also acts in the capacity of representing Imperial interests where they may conflict with local interests. So that the position of the Governor is a very important one in the State. He is not the mere dummy that some people seem to think. The importance of that is quite plain, otherwise, instead of having constitutional government, we should practically have an oligarchy—that is to say, that the Ministry for the time being would be invested with absolute power. It has often been pointed out that constitutional government is in a state of development. One change, of which there are signs in many colonies, is that the position of the Premier among his colleagues is gradually becoming changed—his power among them is becoming greater and greater.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: More of an autocrat.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: That is one change of which there are signs, though the signs may be erroneous. Of course it is necessary that there should be some functionary who will represent the whole community and impose a check when a check is necessary, always remembering this—that the ultimate authority is the Parliament.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. B. D. Morehead): The people!

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: The people as represented in Parliament. In England that check is imposed by the Queen, and here by the Governor. The check, however, must be only temporary, because the matter must be ultimately

decided by Parliament—by the people speaking through the voice of their chosen representatives. That is the true theory of responsible government, or constitutional government, as it exists at the present time. Some people may think that it is a bad method of government, or that there might be a better one, but that is not the question now. I will just say a word with respect to the reasons why I did not think it necessary that the Government should have resigned. I did not think any new question was raised whatever. The rule has been settled now for a good while. It is perfectly clear that the advice of Ministers must prevail in all matters of internal administration; that is, in all local affairs. And that rule I insisted upon a very short time ago, as many hon. members may recollect, when first the Administrator of the Government, and then the Governor, claimed to exercise a personal right with respect to granting leave of absence to members of the Legislative Council. That right had been claimed by previous Governors and exercised; but I protested against it, with the result that the Secretary of State gave his opinion that the same rule should be applied in that as in all other matters of local concern. The reason why I thought the Government should not have resigned was that, this being a clear right, they knew perfectly well that there could be only one possible end to a controversy of this sort—namely, that the will of Parliament must prevail. Therefore, there was no necessity for bringing public affairs into confusion, even for a short time, by the Premier tendering the resignation of the Ministry. The question has frequently arisen in other colonies, and has always been settled in the same way. The Governor is responsible to the Queen, who appoints him; and when he conscientiously holds a view as to his own duties opposed to that of his Ministers—and he is entitled to hold his own view—Ministers cannot expect to coerce him into changing his conscientious convictions except through the authority that appointed him.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: What becomes of his conscientious convictions then?

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I say the Governor cannot be compelled to change the opinion he deliberately forms as to his duties except on instructions from the authority who appointed him. Therefore, it is a misfortune that an attempt should have been made to coerce him into doing that, when the desired end could have been attained just as well by referring the question to the Queen. Last week I asked: "Why not wait till the instructions come to the Governor from the Secretary of State? Why leap before you come to the stile?" If instructions had come to the effect that the Governor was to exercise an absolute discretion in these matters, I should have considered it a very serious derogation from the privileges which we have enjoyed for a long time, and I should have been prepared to support the Government in tendering their resignation if that was the only way out of the difficulty. Then the contest would have been distinctly between the people of the colony—who would be asserting a right which they had enjoyed for many years—and the Imperial Government, who would be attempting to deprive them of that right. If the difficulty did arise I should not be found wanting in guarding the privileges which we have so long enjoyed. I had decided, in the event of the matter being to-day where it was last week, to give notice of an address to the Governor requesting him to give effect to the advice of his Ministers. That would at once have put an end to the difficulty. I think it desirable that hon. members should have an opportunity of saying anything they wish to say about the matter now, and I therefore conclude by moving the adjournment of the House.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—The hon. member asks why should I not have waited till the Governor heard from the Secretary of State? There is one very palpable reason why I should not have waited, and that is this: After that correspondence which has been published had got among hon. members, long before there was any chance of hearing the opinion of the Secretary of State, the leader of the Opposition would have tabled a motion of want of confidence in the present Government, and would have got a large amount of support from this side. I congratulate the hon. member on having written the memorandum he has read to the House. It is a clear memorandum; in fact I may say that had he not read the signature to it—Samuel Walker Griffith—it might have been taken for part of the correspondence I have laid on the table. As a rule he makes the quotations I made, he uses all the precedents, and comes exactly to the same conclusion; but not to the conclusion that we were right in resigning. His reason for this is very curious. He says we ought not to have resigned, because it has been thoroughly established that the Government have the right of carrying their own way in all cases such as that on which we quarrelled with the Governor. He says it is so firmly established that we need not have come into collision with the Governor—that is, our case was so strong that we ought to have given it up.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: No.

The PREMIER: With whom ought we to have fought the quarrel except with the Governor? He is the representative of Her Majesty. I do not care one straw what the Secretary of State says. What the Secretary of State says affects the Governor; it does not affect me. If he sends instructions as to what is to be done in this colony I do not take the slightest notice of them any more than if any private individual in England sent out word what was to be done here; but as soon as the Governor acts on his instructions, then I have something to do with the Governor. I have nothing to do with the Secretary of State. Why, then, should I have waited to hear what the Secretary of State had to say in the matter? There is not the slightest doubt that the Government were perfectly right also from another point of view—a point of view from which the hon. gentleman said our action was not justifiable. He said the Government were not justified in stopping public business by tendering our resignations; but the very action the Government took—the firm action we took—had the effect of bringing the business satisfactorily to a conclusion much sooner than any other course that could have been suggested. Had the Ministry not taken that course, we should have been a Ministry not at all in the confidence of the Governor; and we knew that the Governor, having asserted his power to do certain things independent of the Ministry, might make that a precedent to be followed afterwards; therefore we were bound on the first occasion on which he acted unconstitutionally to let him know, and act accordingly. There is nothing so plain in constitutional law as that the Governor must take the advice of his Ministers in such cases as this. I am not going to say much about constitutional law; and I think the hon. gentleman opposite might have said all he did say in a very few sentences. I can give it in one sentence, and that is this: Constitutional law is government by the Constitution. We need not go further than that. The Governor was acting unconstitutionally. We saw that; and we were determined to assert the principle that the Governor can do nothing—no public act—by himself, for the plain reason that his Ministry are, and ought to be,

responsible for what he does. If that were not so, how could the Ministry defend his actions? The Queen cannot, by law, do any wrong. If wrong is done, who does it? Why, her Ministers, who are responsible for what is done. And what is there different in the position here? None; and the Governor must act entirely through his Ministers. I have never quarrelled with the position the Governor takes up—that he has full power to do what he likes in the way of rejecting any advice. I never quarrelled about that. In fact, I wrote a letter about a month ago to His Excellency, saying that I thought he ought to have that power, because we do not know when an extravagant Minister might give some extravagant advice that it would be the Governor's duty to reject. But if he rejects advice he must take the consequences. He ought to have the power, and I have never disputed that; but what I do quarrel with is that His Excellency should exercise that power himself and still retain his Ministry. He has no right to the advice of Ministers whose advice he rejects. The hon. leader of the Opposition says the position of Premier in the colonies has altered very much. I think he is wrong, and he need not go far in this colony to prove it. He may remember Premiers of this colony who were not Premiers at all. He may remember a Secretary of Public Works who was Premier when there was another Premier in the Cabinet. The only difference is in the quality of the men. The hon. member himself used to be Premier when he was Acting Attorney-General. That was wrong and unconstitutional. When he became Premier he was fitted for the office, because he had the ability to assert his position. I do not know anything that has taken place in the position of the Premier that affects the constitution of the Government in the slightest way. This particular business has been no personal work of my own. We have acted as a Ministry. Every Minister has given his opinion, and we have been unanimous throughout. I am quite sure that we have the unanimous support of this side of the House, and after hearing the leader of the Opposition read his very able minute, I am perfectly satisfied that he approves fully of our conduct throughout.

Question put and negatived.

PUBLIC WORKS LANDS RESUMPTION BILL.

THIRD READING.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS (Hon. J. M. Macrossan) said: Mr. Speaker,—In moving that this Bill be read a third time I wish to point out that we made a mistake the other evening in inserting the words "Drill or parade grounds." They are already provided for in the Defence Act. If the hon. gentleman who moved the insertion of the words will look at the Defence Act he will find they are there. I point that out now so that the error may be rectified before the Bill finally passes.

Question put, and Bill read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

FORMAL MOTIONS.

The following formal motions were agreed to:—

By the HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH—

That this House will, on Thursday next, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to declare and define the law with respect to natural water.

By Mr. ALAND—

That there be laid upon the table of the House a Return showing—
1888—P

1. The amount paid for the conveyance (coastwise) of mails to the southern colonies from 1st July to 31st December, 1887, and from 1st January to 30th June, 1888.

2. The cost of running the mail train from Brisbane to Wallangarra from 1st January to 30th June, 1888.

3. The earnings of the said train during the same period.

By Mr. GROOM—

That there be laid upon the table of this House, copies of all correspondence between the Government of Queensland and the Government of the United States of America relative to the selection and appointment of a Professor of Agriculture.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

On the Order of the Day being read for the consideration of the Railways Bill in committee,

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that this and the two following Orders of the Day be postponed until after the consideration of No. 6.

Question put and passed.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

The PREMIER moved—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as will admit of receiving resolutions from the Committee of Supply on the same day as that on which they are passed.

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: Mr. Speaker,—I move that you do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Question put and passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said: Mr. Jessop,—I beg to move—

That there be granted to Her Majesty, for the service of the year 1888-9, a sum not exceeding £300, to defray the salary of the Aide-de-Camp to His Excellency the Governor.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the CHAIRMAN left the chair, and reported the resolution to the House. The report was adopted, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

WAYS AND MEANS.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the COLONIAL TREASURER, the Speaker left the chair, and the House resolved itself into a Committee of the Whole, to further consider the Ways and Means for raising the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said:
MR. JESSOP,—

In developing to the Committee the Financial Statement for the current year, I shall endeavour, without going too much into mere statistical detail, to place before you, as briefly as possible, a general view of the present position of the colony. I will trace the causes of the present deficiency in the Treasury and will then disclose the measures which the Government

propose to introduce, and which they consider desirable for the purpose of equalising revenue and expenditure, and establishing on a firmer basis the credit of the colony.

In the Budget estimate for 1887-8, submitted in August last, the late Colonial Treasurer estimated his ways and means at £3,121,500, an estimate subsequently raised to £3,206,500, when delivering his Supplementary Financial Statement in November. By referring to Table A it will be seen that the actual receipts for the year were £3,177,518, an amount in excess of the first estimate by £56,018, but less than the amended estimate by £28,982. Under the head of "Taxation" — which comprises Customs and Excise, export duties, stamp duties and licenses—the receipts exceeded the estimate by nearly £90,000, whilst the land revenue, receipts from public works and services, and miscellaneous receipts fell short by upwards of £33,000.

Although the actual receipts for the year do not agree with the Budget estimate, still comparing the revenue, £3,177,518, with that of the previous year, £2,807,698, there is a large increase of £369,819. Towards this Customs and Excise contributed £216,303; Stamp Duties and Licenses, £21,236; Land Revenue, £31,578; and Railways, £100,911. On the other hand, Miscellaneous Receipts and interest on the Public Balances exhibit a decrease of £35,328.

Taking now the expenditure for 1887-8, which was estimated in August last at £3,180,302, and later on, in November, at £3,294,014, we find that the result has considerably exceeded both estimates, the actual expenditure having been £3,368,883, an amount in excess of the original estimate by £188,581. This increased expenditure has taken place under the following headings:—

Schedules	£33,190
Colonial Secretary	46,205
Public Instruction	16,300
Colonial Treasurer	6,646
Lands	33,123
Mines and Works	18,542
Railways	1,777
Auditor General	230

The following departments show a small saving on the votes—namely, Executive and Legislative, £328; Administration of Justice, £1,508; Postmaster General, £8,366. The difference between the increases and the savings added to the expenditure—£42,770—on Surplus Revenue Account, makes the expenditure in excess of the Estimates for 1887-8 £188,581 as above.

A comparison of the 1887-8 expenditure, £3,368,883, with that of 1886-7, £3,263,584, shows an increase of £105,299, which has taken place almost entirely in the schedules—moneys paid by Act of Parliament—and outside the control of the Ministers of the day. The interest on the public debt shows an increase of £78,750; and endowment to municipalities and divisional boards, an increase of £19,466; these two items making between them the great bulk of the increased expenditure. If you will turn to Table B you will there see a short statement of the Revenue and Expenditure Account for the year ending the 30th June, 1888. This shows a debit balance of £602,011, and a balance of expenditure over revenue on the year's transactions of £191,365. It will give you, however, a more comprehensive idea of the present financial position of the colony if, instead of confining your attention to the one year's transactions, I combine with them the

transactions of the two preceding years. By referring, therefore, to Table K you will find the following particulars of revenue and expenditure:—

REVENUE.				
1885-6	£2,868,205			
1886-7	2,807,699			
1887-8	3,177,518			
Total	£8,853,512			
EXPENDITURE.				
1885-6	£3,090,160			
1886-7	3,263,584			
1887-8	3,368,883			
Total	£9,722,627			

Excess of expenditure over revenue, £869,115.

This total deficiency in the three years is made up as follows:—

Deficit in 1885-6	£221,865
" " 1886-7	455,885
" " 1887-8	191,365

—making the above total.

As, however, there was a balance of £267,104 at the credit of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, on the 1st July, 1885, the deficit on the 30th June 1888, stands as shown in Table B, and which I have before quoted at £602,011.

There is also what is termed a Surplus Revenue Account—Table C—which originally consisted of a special appropriation of £240,000 in 1874, and a further sum of £245,040 in 1882, made from accumulated surplus revenues in previous years. The balance of this account has, as you will see by reference to Table C, been reduced to £8,189. In 1884, Parliament decided to appropriate a further sum of £310,000 of surplus revenue to certain special works and services; but, instead of dealing with the account in the same way as in previous years the Government allowed the votes to remain at the credit of the Consolidated Revenue until the expenditure was actually incurred. This has been a source of difficulty to hon. members understanding the Surplus Revenue Account. I think that, as in previous years, the amount appropriated ought to have been taken bodily from the Consolidated Revenue. As it is now, most of the money has been expended, but the revenue is still liable for an expenditure under this heading of £16,267.

I will now refer to the Loan Fund, and you will find particulars of this in Table D. It will be seen that the total authorised debt of the colony now amounts to £27,023,684, of which £25,820,850 is in the hands of the public, leaving a balance of £1,202,834 not yet issued. The annual charge for interest on the debt amounts to £1,059,065—a sum representing nearly one-third of the entire revenue. During the past year the expenditure from the Loan Fund has been £1,735,529, which shows a falling-off, as compared with 1886-7, of £208,056. The expenditure under the various headings has been as follows:—

Immigration	£121,880
Electric Telegraphs	39,547
Railways	1,196,375
Harbours and Rivers	119,965
Loans to Local Authorities	86,871
Roads and Bridges	30,432
Buildings	79,225
Water Storage	29,406
Defences, etc.	31,828

The most important, or at all events the largest, portion of the Loan Expenditure has been incurred upon railways, of which 242 miles have been opened during the year, namely :—

	Miles.
Nundah to North Pine and Caboolture	26
Logan Village to Beaudesert...	20
Harrisville to Dugandan ...	17
Beuaraba Junction to Pittsworth ...	16
Morven to Charleville...	56
Howard to Gregory and South Bundaberg ...	36
Isis Junction to Childers ...	12
Fernlees to Springsure ...	19
Deviation, Northern Railway ...	4
Prairie to Hughenden ...	28
Cairns to Redlynch ...	8

The total number of miles of railway now open in Queensland is 1879.

Referring to Table Q, which contains a carefully prepared synopsis of the expenditure on our railways to the 30th June last, showing the receipts and working expenses, the net revenue and other particulars, it will be seen that the total expenditure to that date has been £13,752,280. The receipts for 1887-8 were £752,834, and the working expenses £544,661, leaving a net revenue of £208,172, equivalent to a return on the capital invested of £1 10s. 3d. per cent. In 1886-7 the actual charge on the revenue for interest not covered by receipts was £398,813. This year that amount has been reduced to £364,599, a saving in the right direction to the extent of £34,214. On the Southern and Western lines the capital invested amounts to £7,483,600, which gives a return at the rate of £1 10s. 5d. per cent. The Wide Bay and Burnett lines have cost £1,334,181, and yields a return of £1 9s. 8d. per cent. The Central Railway has cost £2,863,411, and yields a return at the rate of 17s. 2d. per cent. The Northern Railway has cost £1,203,364, and gives a return at the rate of £5 4s. 4d. per cent. The Mackay, Cooktown, and Cairns railways have not, up to the present, paid working expenses. I may say here that the Wide Bay and Burnett lines include the Maryborough to Gympie line and the Bundaberg to Mount Perry line. As the Bundaberg to Mount Perry line does not pay so well as the Maryborough to Gympie line, the figures, as put before you, show unfavourably towards the Maryborough and Gympie line. But hon. members will see that at once on referring to the figures as given in detail in the table I have referred to.

You will find our account for Immigration in Table N, from which it will be seen that there has been expended in 1887-8, from revenue £11,453, from loan £121,879, and from trust funds (contributions by immigrants) £65,549. Towards this expenditure the amount contributed by immigrants during the year has been £19,057, leaving a net expenditure of £179,824. To find out the work done for this amount hon. members will turn to Table O, which gives the arrivals and departures from the United Kingdom. The arrivals have been 11,435, and the departures 584, showing a net addition to the population from that source of 10,851. Of these arrivals 2,400 have paid their own passage money, and 5,086 have had assisted passages. The passages of the remainder, 3,949, have been paid by the colony.

From the Australian colonies the arrivals have been 18,335, and the departures 13,289—a gain of 5,046. From Hongkong the arrivals have been 241, and the departures 802; and from the South Sea Islands the arrivals have been 1,946, and the departures 1,621. The total excess of arrivals over departures by sea for 1887-8 has been 15,501. The arrivals from New South

Wales by train, particulars of which have only been forwarded to the Registrar-General from the 1st May, 1888, have been 1,160, and the departures 1,029—an excess of arrivals for the two months of 131.

I take now the Department of Harbours and Rivers, which, from a financial point of view, possesses a peculiar character. It is all expenditure, having no revenue, and that expenditure is almost entirely from loan. It ought to be an effort for us in the future to change this state of things, and, in the interests of colonial trade, to see that interest is paid on this money; while from the fact of its being a purely spending department, the careful scrutiny of members of the House should constantly be given to its accounts. The chief work during the year has been dredging in the Brisbane, Mary, and Fitzroy Rivers, in Sandy Island Strait, and in the ports of Townsville and Cairns.

The dredging of the channel of the Brisbane River has been completed to a width of 300 feet between Brisbane and Moreton Bay, giving at low water a depth of 14 feet, which depth, recent examinations show to have been satisfactorily maintained throughout. The result is that steamers of the largest class now come up regularly to the town wharves. When I remember, Mr. Jessop, the surprise with which my prediction in 1879—that in a few years steamers of 2,800 tons burden would be able to come up to town—was received, it cannot be otherwise than gratifying to find that at the present time—with the river at the same capacity for the last twelve months—foreign-going steamers of twice that capacity are lying at the foot of one of our streets.

The channel dredged in the Mary River, four years ago, has also maintained its depth satisfactorily, there being not less than 10 feet at low water, except at one spot round Horseshoe Bend, where there is 9 feet. The dredging of the channel through Sandy Island Strait will improve the facilities for coasting vessels passing up and down by that route.

In the Fitzroy River the dredge is now working at the upper flats, having worked up from Central Island. The dredging has been accompanied by the construction of training walls for directing the scour so as to assist in the maintenance of the dredge channel. Although greater difficulties have been encountered in this river than in the Brisbane in maintaining the depth dredged, still the work has been fairly satisfactory; and the scheme of training walls and dredging promises to be ultimately successful.

At Mackay the training wall is in progress on the lines laid down by Sir John Coode, the portion most urgently required—that at the east point—being first proceeded with.

The eastern breakwater at Townsville has been pushed on vigorously, and is expected to be completed by the end of the year, to the extent and on the lines laid down by Sir John Coode.

At Cairns the channel is being dredged, and is expected to be completed in from six to nine months after the dredge returns to Cairns. This will be the means of opening up one of the finest harbours on our eastern coast.

The recommendations of Sir John Coode for the improvement of the harbour at Normanton were adopted by the Government. These recommendations were to dredge a cutting across the bar in the line of the present channel, about three miles in length, to a depth of 12 feet below low-water mark and to a width of 300 feet. The cost of this dredging was estimated by him at £88,000—I think it is a very low estimate—and Mr. Nisbet, our engineer, calculates that

it will take from four to five years to complete the work with one dredge. The additional work required, according to Sir John Coode's scheme, to give a 12-foot channel as far as Red Bluff, will bring the total cost up to £158,000. Red Bluff, I may mention, lies on the left bank of the Norman River, about 12 miles above Kimberley and 38 miles (by water) from Normanton, and is considered both by Mr. Nisbet and Sir John Coode as the best position for a permanent landing place, with wharfage accommodation within the river, where shipping may readily berth and discharge and embark passengers and cargo. The attention of Parliament has never been directed to this work; no specific sanction has ever been given by Parliament for it, nor has any direct sanction been given by Parliament to the adoption of Sir John Coode's scheme. The work already commenced has been authorised to be paid for out of the general vote "Working Expenses of Dredges" in the loan of 1884. This loan, however, is nearly exhausted, and it is the only source from which payment can be made for dredging in every other part of the colony. Funds, therefore, have to be provided for this work. I desire especially to draw the attention of Parliament to the inadvisability of any Government initiating such extensive works without their distinct approval. As the work with one dredge would take so long, if the cutting was commenced at the proposed depth, and no additional accommodation for shipping can be given until the whole dredging is completed, it was considered desirable to work at the present for a depth of 9 feet at low water, by a width of 200 feet. By carrying out the scheme in this way, besides giving considerable relief to traffic, it will enable the dredge to turn round and work seawards, which will reduce the exposure and risk of dredging in bad weather. The length of the cutting 9 feet below low-water mark is $2\frac{3}{4}$ miles, and with favourable weather the engineer anticipates that it should be cut through in about eighteen months.

The new Public Offices in Treasury Square, the contract for which was signed in July, 1886, are making good progress, and will, it is expected, be completed within two or three months of the contract time. The new Customs House, for which the contract time is two and a-half years, is progressing rather slowly owing to difficulties experienced in procuring stone, but the work will probably be finished within six months from the contract time. The new Lunatic Asylum at Toowoomba and the new Post Office at Townsville are approaching completion.

In the Hydraulic Engineer's Department a number of tanks and dams have been completed on the main roads and stock routes of the colony. The prospecting bores to find artesian water at Barcaldine, Blackall, and Saltern have been successful beyond our most sanguine hopes. The result is that a new future seems to be opened up for our western country, giving confidence of being able to battle with greater chance of success against the great droughts from which we have hitherto suffered. The Government have been encouraged from the success met with to prosecute the search for artesian water in all parts of the colony, and accordingly tenders have been called and accepted for numerous wells in various localities, particulars of which will be put before the House in due course. I may here mention that a communication has been received to the effect that the artesian bore at Tambo has been equally successful, having struck a very fine supply of water.

I have now dealt at some length on the operations carried on by the Government from Loan; but before leaving this part of my subject I

may inform you, sir, that some time after taking office we decided to place a further instalment of £2,500,000 of the loan of 1884 on the London money market. The interest was fixed at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. The loan was offered by the Bank of England, on the 3rd of July, at the minimum rate of £94. The applications received amounted to £6,152,500, at prices ranging from £100 to £94—the minimum. Tenders at £94 16s. 6d. received about 47 per cent. of the amount applied for, and all above that amount were allowed in full. The average price realised was £95 2s. 9d., which, taking into account that the loan was issued at the commencement of the half-year and carried no accrued interest, is equal to the highest figure yet obtained for any Queensland loan. The price, £95 2s. 9d., is nearly equivalent to £105 for 4 per cent. stock of like currency, a rate which the loan would doubtless have realised in that shape. Although, therefore, there may be no immediate advantage in the reduction of the rate of interest, I anticipate that the indirect advantages will be great; that we may consider the reduction of interest permanent, and look forward to an increased price for our debentures. A further reduction might reasonably be expected if the colonies were to unite and borrow one consolidated stock, payable at the same time, either irredeemable or redeemable at the same date, and with interest payable on the same day of the year. The Colony of Queensland is in the weakest position to propose a scheme under which the colonies would mutually guarantee one another's loans inasmuch as, per head of population, she is a long way the largest borrower; but I propose it because none of the colonies, I am satisfied, consider for one moment that there would be the slightest risk in adopting such a course. This is one of the bases of federation that ought to lead to practical results, and I am sanguine that if my idea is carried out the debentures of those colonies which have the best credit in London—I mean those whose debentures fetch the largest price—would benefit to the extent of 4 or 5 per cent., while the colonies, like ourselves, whose debentures are lower would benefit to a proportionately greater extent. The average rate of interest on the Canadian Loans, when the Dominion was established in 1867, was $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. In 1885 the average rate was $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and in June of the present year a £4,000,000 loan was successfully floated at £95, bearing interest at the rate of 3 per cent.; for this loan over £12,000,000 was applied for. This affords complete demonstration of the advantage to be derived from the consolidation of Australasian Loans.

I will now direct your attention to Table E, which shows the business for the year in the Government Savings Bank. For the last two years the business of the bank had remained stationary. It now, however, shows signs of improvement, and, since January, the increase in the deposits has been at the rate of £17,360 monthly. The total amount of deposits now exceeds £1,500,000, upon nearly the whole of which interest at the rate of 5 per cent. has to be paid by the Government. As the Government can easily obtain money at less than this, and as it cannot lend its surplus cash at more than 4 per cent., the loss accruing to the Treasury is a matter which will receive the grave consideration of the Government. At the same time, as Treasurer, I have decided for the present, for several sufficient reasons, not to alter the present rate. I may mention that none of the other Australian Governments pay more than 4 per cent. on Savings Bank deposits.

Tables G and H show the cash balance of the Treasury on the 30th June. The cash balance to credit on the 1st July, 1887, was £2,870,937.

The receipts from all sources during the year amounted to £5,097,437, and the disbursements to £6,302,551, leaving the balance at the end of the year £1,665,823, the disposal of which is as follows:—

Queensland National Bank—				
Brisbane	...	...	...	£620,079
London	...	...	...	581,708
Agent-General	...	...	...	64,036
Commercial Bank of Australia...	...	...	...	50,000
Union Bank	...	...	...	150,000
Bank of New South Wales	...	...	...	50,000
Royal Bank of Queensland	...	...	...	150,000
				£1,665,823

This balance has, of course, now been increased by the proceeds of the £2,500,000 Loan floated in July.

I will now direct your attention, sir, to Table R, showing the imports and exports of the colony. You will see from it that the pastoral interest still maintains the leading position. The value of the wool exported in 1887 amounted to £2,368,711, as against £1,413,908 in 1886. Gold comes next, with a value of £1,432,376, as against £1,232,330 in 1886. The production of silver, however, does not seem to be making headway, the value of ore exported having fallen from £56,242 in 1886 to £31,160 in 1887. The sugar industry shows most unfavourably, the export having fallen from £855,510 in 1886 to £758,215 in 1887; and the prospects for the present year are still more gloomy. On the whole, the imports of the colony decreased in 1887 by upwards of £250,000, while the exports in the aggregate have increased by £1,277,296. The stock returns so far are satisfactory. The cattle, which amounted to 4,324,907 in 1882, and which gradually decreased during the continuance of the drought until they were reduced to 4,071,563 in 1886, have now recovered their number, the return for 1887 showing 4,473,716. The sheep in the colony, which numbered 11,183,491 in 1883, and were reduced to 8,227,985 in 1885, have also taken an extraordinary start, having increased in 1886 to 9,503,168, and in 1887 to 12,321,754.

The Border Customs duties have increased from £26,148 in 1886-7 to £30,425 in 1887-8. Live stock imported borderwise (see Table X) which represented a value of £271,666 in 1886, has fallen off in 1887 to £244,024. The live stock exported, on the other hand, shows an increased value from £672,705 in 1886 to £915,384 in 1887. The Inspector of Stock reports that, although the winter has been very severe, grass and water are sufficiently plentiful to maintain stock in fair condition, and that, if the expected spring thunderstorms occur at the usual season, there will be little, if any, mortality among stock from the effects of drought. I think this, however, is taking a rather sanguine view of the matter. At the present time the season is undoubtedly bad, and losses in several parts of the colony have occurred already.

The clip generally is reported to be unusually heavy. The marsupial boards adjacent to the border are fully alive to the danger of the rabbit invasion, and have taken active steps to guard against their encroachment. The Paroo and Bulloo Boards have been employed tracking and destroying any rabbits that may have found their way into the colony; and the Diamantina Board, hitherto inoperative, has been, by notice in the *Gazette*, compelled to levy assessments and to take action in guarding the south-western

portion of the colony. It is expected that these measures will be sufficient to keep the plague in check until more decided action is adopted.

Having now sketched, as accurately as I can in this case, the financial and business position of the colony up to the present time, I will now direct you to the Ways and Means of the coming year, particulars of which will be found on the first page of the Estimates. On one side is given the probable ways and means, and on another side the probable expenditure. The former is based on anticipated revenue under the present laws. The latter shows the lowest point to which I could bring the expenditure for the current year; and hon. members will see that there is a deficiency between the expenditure and the revenue, that requires to be made up by additional taxation, of £135,475. The sources from which I expect to get additional revenue will form the last part of my subject. I expect to receive under present laws a total revenue of £3,429,000 for 1888-9, being an increase of £251,482 as compared with 1887-8. From Customs I expect £1,267,000, or at the rate of 7½ per cent. increase on the receipts of the previous year; and as the receipts for the months of July and August amounted to £227,062, I am satisfied that my anticipations under this head will be more than realised. From Excise and Export Duties I expect to receive £80,000; which is only a slight increase on the previous year's receipts; from Stamp Duties, £140,000; and from Licenses £54,000. In connection with stamp duties, I may here mention that, owing to the death of several wealthy colonists, a considerable sum has accrued to the Treasury during July and August under the Succession Duties Act of 1886. The estate of the late Hon. James Gibbon, an hon. member of the other House, which was valued in the colony at £196,941, contributed £9,184, and other estates have raised the payments under this head to £12,970. The total receipts from stamp duties for the two months have been raised by the payments referred to, to £40,492; but, of course, such an exceptional rate of increase cannot be reckoned upon as likely to accrue every year.

The total receipts under these four heads—Customs and Excise, Stamp Duty and Licenses, which it should be understood comprise the whole of the taxation proper paid by the people of the colony, all other contributions being either in return for services performed or for actual value received—I expect to produce £1,541,000, an increase of £96,883. Under the head of land revenue I expect to receive £644,000, as against £585,237 in the previous year. Sales by auction and selection I expect to yield £100,000; homestead and conditional purchases, £128,000—a decrease of £23,346. Rents under the Act of 1884 are expected to yield £23,000; survey fees, licenses, etc., £28,000; pastoral occupation, £328,500—an increase of £29,017; and mining occupation, £36,500. Whatever merits the Land Act of 1884 may possess, as a financial measure it has proved a disastrous failure. The total amount of rents on homesteads payable yearly at the present time is £6,152; on agricultural farms, over 160 acres, £4,655; and on grazing farms £8,339, making the total rental accruing from the lands of the colony held under that Act of £19,146. The annual cost of administering the Act under the Lands Department is £30,876, without including anything for the cost of survey, leaving a balance of loss amounting to £11,730—in other words, the operations of the Act, after having been in force for over four years, show that the cost of management, without taking into consideration the amount of money advanced for surveys, is £12,000 a year more than the annual income. This result, of course, will slowly improve, but at the present time the position is

ridiculous, when we are forced to the admission that it would be a profitable thing to abolish the Land Office, and let every man, woman, and child in the colony help themselves to whatever land they pleased.

Public Works and Services are estimated to yield £1,061,000, an increase of £69,095 as compared with the receipts for 1887-8. Railways are estimated to yield £819,000; the Post Office, £125,000; Telegraphs, £95,000; Harbours Dues, £20,000; escort fees, £2,000. Miscellaneous Services, which realised £156,239 in 1887-8, are expected to produce £183,000 in 1888-9; the estimated increase arising from the interest accruing on the recent loan and from the gradual increase in the receipts of interest on loans to local authorities.

The probable expenditure for 1888-9, after economising in all departments in a way that I considered the financial position of the colony forced me to do, I estimate at £2,505,410, and with interest on the public debt—£1,059,065 added—at £3,564,475, an increase over the actual expenditure of last year of £195,592. In the schedules an additional sum of £4,166 has been provided to meet the proportion of subsidy to be paid by Queensland under the British New Guinea Act of 1887. You are aware that under that Act the colony is responsible for the period of ten years, jointly with New South Wales and Victoria, for the payment of £15,000 per annum towards the British Government of New Guinea, each colony contributing equally towards the expense the sum of £5,000. The sum required for the payment of members has also been increased from £7,000 to £11,000.

The sum required for Endowment to Local Authorities, which last year amounted to the considerable sum of £264,318, has now been limited under the Local Government Acts of last session to a fixed contribution of £85,000 to Municipalities and £165,000 to Divisional Boards, total £250,000; but as the Government intend to propose to revert to the previous system of £2 to £1 subsidy, the amount will require to be increased.

The departments under the Chief Secretary, it will be observed, are shown separately on this year's Estimates. Last year the amount spent was £86,372, and the amount required for 1888-9 is £77,239. In the Colonial Secretary's Department the actual expenditure last year was £400,142, and the amount now asked for is £404,099.

For Public Instruction £230,771 is required, and for the Colonial Treasurer's Department £179,665, the amount in each case being slightly in excess of the previous year's expenditure.

The Estimate for the Lands Department, £90,348, shows a considerable reduction on the expenditure for 1887-8, which amounted to £124,222; the decrease being on survey of land, to the extent of £10,000, and £20,000 in the expenditure on rabbit-proof fencing.

In the Department of Mines and Works provision is asked to the extent of £166,750 for the year 1888-9. Of this sum £121,670 is appropriated to buildings, £6,000 to exempted roads under the Divisional Boards Act, and £26,335 to goldfields.

For Railways £618,631 is asked, an increase on last year's expenditure of £73,970, which is rendered necessary by the large number of extensions and branches recently opened and others approaching completion. The Estimate for the Postmaster-General's Department is £348,886, an increase of £25,599 on the expenditure of the previous year. For the Auditor-General's Department £6,965 is required.

Hon. members will find that, except in the case of junior clerks and one or two others in the higher ranks of the service, no increases have been allowed, and the increase in the Estimates as compared with the actual expenditure for 1887-8 is owing to the increased interest charge of £37,500, of £80,000 additional for public buildings, and of £70,000 additional for working expenses on new railways and extensions.

Having gone through the Public Works' Ways and Means for 1888-9, which I estimate at £3,429,000, and the probable expenditure, which I estimate at £3,564,475, there remains an estimated excess of expenditure over revenue of £135,475, which I now proceed to deal with.

Before approaching the general question of Ways and Means to supply the deficiency, I should refer to a subject on which the Government propose to take action that will have the effect of further decreasing the revenue. I refer to the abolition of the royalties now payable on timber. Last year there was received under this heading £9,554 8s. 7d. While abolishing the royalty, the Government propose to submit regulations for the issue of special licenses and fees for cutting and removing timber, which will, to some extent, make good the deficiency caused by such abolition. Under these regulations it is estimated by the Lands Department that £7,600 will accrue to the Government—I think that estimate is rather too much—and the difference between this and the revenue from the royalties last year will be made up to the Treasury by an increase in the import duty on timber to the extent of 6d. per 100 superficial feet, and the decreased cost of working the Lands Department.

We propose to abolish the excise duty on beer. This, during the last year, yielded £30,757. To balance this, we propose to raise the import duty on malt from 6d. to 3s. per bushel; hops from 2d. to 6d. per pound; and glucose, which is supposed to be used in the manufacture of beer, and has hitherto come into the colony on a duty of 7½ per cent., we propose to subject to a customs duty of £5 per ton, the same as other sugar. It is expected that these duties, until they come into operation as protective duties, will yield over £20,000 a year. This is an apparent loss to the revenue, but it is only apparently so, because the cost of collecting the excise duty, and the risk of its not being collected properly, and the encouragement given to the farmers of the colony to introduce new pursuits, amply compensate for the slight deficiency, which I have every prospect of making good elsewhere.

In considering the probable Ways and Means, the Government were bound to look at the proposals made by the last Government, and weigh carefully the possibility or fairness of a tax on land; and after giving the subject every consideration they could come to but one conclusion, and that was that it was neither a practical nor a possible tax at the present time. A tax on land has the immediate effect of reducing the capital value. The capital value is the property of the landlord or owner, and the landlord or owner of the great part of the colony is the Crown. Of the 428,000,000 acres of which Queensland consists, only 9,000,000 acres have been alienated, leaving in the possession of the Crown 419,000,000 acres, or 98 per cent. That portion of the tax which falls on the Crown lands is inoperative. As far as finding money for the Treasury, the Treasury is no richer. We have, therefore, a tax imposed on land which can be operative for producing money only to the extent of 2 per cent. of its full force. The weakness of a tax of this

sort is plain, and a land-tax, therefore, will never be practicable until the holdings of the Crown are reduced to a very considerable extent.

But if the unfairness of a tax of this sort required demonstration, no further evidence need be asked than the operations of the Government under the Act of 1884. Under that Act the Government have had at their disposal, for rental or sale, land to the extent of 40,000,000 acres. Up to the present time the annual income from that source is, as I have pointed out before, only £19,146; while the cost of administration, without survey, is £30,876. Government, therefore, confess that in dealing with lands comprising nearly one-sixth of the colony, they are utterly unable to raise any revenue whatever. In fact, the revenue is less than the cost of working what is called in Scotland the factor's office. How absurd, then, must it be to propose that the small area actually alienated, and the proprietors of which have paid the Government for their land an amount the interest on which far exceeds the rental under which lands under the Act of 1884 are let now, should be taxed in order to carry on the work of the Government. The demonstration is complete that the lands of the colony alienated cannot stand taxation, and it is equally plain that the lands of the colony should be so managed as to yield a revenue. Hon. members should never forget the different position we occupy in this new country from that occupied by the people at home. There, in every county, there are millions invested in public works of every conceivable description, and accumulated capital in every shape and form, handed down to them by previous generations. Here we possess the land, but we possess no old accumulated capital in addition to the land; and it is our plain duty, instead of putting taxation on to the people of the colony, to save them from taxation by making the best use of the value of our public lands. Unfortunately, that source is not immediately available this year; but I look to it as the source from which all other taxation will be much alleviated in future years, when the Government have had a chance of carrying through the House their ideas of an amended Land Act.

An income tax at the present time would be most unequal in its pressure. In a new country, with such vast resources as Queensland, the incomes are too fluctuating. An income tax would tell heavily against people whose incomes were generally steady and fairly well known, in a still greater degree against men who lose fortunes in risks of pioneering, and not at all against men who make rapid fortunes in land, mining, and other pursuits, whose modes of life give little indication of their prosperity.

You will see by the arguments I have used that I have narrowed down the question of additional taxation at the present time to the operations of the Custom House, and I shall now proceed to explain what I have done in the various alterations I have made in the tariff. The old stock argument against a high Customs tariff, or in fact, against a Customs tariff at all, has been that it gives a premium to dishonesty—handicaps the honest merchant as against the dishonest. I used to think much of that argument myself but from the experience of countries where high tariffs prevail, I now believe that the difficulty has been to a considerable extent overcome. The neighbouring colony of New South Wales has, on most articles, free trade. As a rule the tariff is low; entries on importations, therefore, go through without there being any gain to the merchant by understating values. We may assume, therefore, that the true values are stated. I have

taken out of the importations into New South Wales all the various articles which are admitted free there, and which pay a duty on admission here, and I find that the consumption per head in New South Wales is £3 6s. 3d., against £3 6s. here. As the source of supply of these goods is the same, and as we may assume that they are landed at about the same cost to the merchant in Sydney and the merchant in Brisbane, the figures I have quoted furnish fair evidence that not only in the case where there was no inducement to make a false declaration of value has the declaration been right, but also where the merchant would gain by making a false declaration the declaration made has been also right. I think the evidence furnished plainly shows that the duties on articles imported here are collected upon fair invoices submitted by the merchants, with, of course, the additional check which the Government have by means of their valuers. Although *ad valorem* duties are a necessity in many cases, still it ought to be the object of a Treasurer in arranging a good tariff to establish fixed duties wherever practicable. In the present revision of the tariff, therefore, I have given scope to that principle as much as I possibly could.

It has been the practice of the House in amending the tariff at various times to base the amendment on the original tariff passed in 1870. That tariff is the foundation upon which the others are erected; all the subsequent alterations are amendments of that or subsequent amendments. This has led to considerable inconvenience—at all events, to this inconvenience, that no one can find what is the tariff of the colony without first examining the Act of 1870, and reading with it the amended Acts passed in 1874, 1876, 1880, 1885, 1886.

Although it will possibly give the Committee a little more work, I have thought it advisable to include every item in the tariff—to repeal all the previous Acts, and re-enact in one a complete tariff, which is now submitted to the House. In order that hon. members may see in a comparative form the tariffs of the various Australian colonies, I have had printed a table showing in alphabetical arrangement all the various articles and the duties—whether fixed or *ad valorem*—to which they are subject. In the first column I have put the tariff now proposed. This table, by arrangement with the leader of the Opposition, I have made to take the place of the return he moved for on the 29th ultimo.

I have changed from the *ad valorem* list to the fixed duty list items yielding an increased revenue of £19,448. I have proposed to raise the fixed rate of duties to yield an increase of £109,250. I have increased the *ad valorem* list so as to yield an improved revenue to the extent of £184,384, making a total increase from the proposed alterations of £313,082. These calculations are based on the actual imports of the year 1887. Since making them, however, I have had an opportunity of finding the total amount collected by Customs duties for the financial year 1887-8, and I find that in that year there has been an increase over the year on which my calculations were based—that is, from January to December of 1887—of 9 per cent. To the increased duties, therefore, which I reckoned above at £313,082, I have to add 9 per cent. as the probable additional increase for the year 1888-9. It must be evident that 9 per cent. increase during the first six months of the year [1888] is an abnormally large one, and I do not feel myself justified in adding a further increase for this year. The expected increase, therefore, with 9 per cent. added for the year, will be £341,259. The increased duty, and the stimulus thereby given to trade within the

colony, are bound, however, to have an effect on the amount collected, and I have, therefore, made a deduction on the above amount of 15 per cent., which brings down the probable increase to £290,070. Were the duties to be levied for the whole of the financial year that would be the correct amount; but as two months and a third of a month have passed during which the duties will not be collected, that sum requires to be reduced by £56,403, leaving an increase for the year of £233,667. From this amount has to be deducted the loss from the beer duty, and the royalties on timber for the nine months and two-thirds, which I estimate at £26,351; and this operation leaves the nett gain to the revenue from the alteration in the Tariff of Customs and Excise, £207,316. Deducting now from that amount the £135,475 deficiency of revenue over expenditure, as shown in the first page of the Estimates, a balance is left of revenue over expenditure for the year of £71,841.

In examining the imports of produce into the various colonies nothing strikes one so much as the dependence of Queensland on her neighbours and on foreign countries when she has such immense resources within herself.

Queensland imports food and other farm produce, not including live animals, to the value of £1,119,721, or £3·05 per head of her population. New South Wales imports £2,422,446 worth of the same articles, or £2·32 per head of population. Victoria imports to the value of £1,940,793, or £1·87 per head of her population. The meaning of these figures is that Queensland imports of her food and farm produce 24 per cent. more than New South Wales, and 39 per cent. more than Victoria, while New South Wales imports 20 per cent. more than Victoria. These figures show that some effort should be made, in a country whose prosperity should come in great part from her land, to increase the production of farm products; and in the alteration of the tariff that idea has been borne steadily in mind.

In framing the new Tariff I have endeavoured to bear in mind all the varied industries and probable industries of the colony. The farming interest has been recognised by the increased duties on malt, hops, barley, oats, maize, bran, pollard, cheese, bacon, hams, butter, pork, lard, onions, potatoes, and garden produce. It is after very mature consideration that I have proposed an increased duty on machinery, with various exceptions, principally of machinery that cannot be manufactured in this colony, as shown on the free list. There is no lesson that has been better taught to us by Victoria than the one, that encouragement to the manufacture of machinery in a colony immensely lowers the cost of its production. No better example of this could be given than a case which happened a few months ago, when one of our principal collieries in West Moreton got, by tender, the whole of the plant for working their mines from a firm of Victorian engineers at Sandhurst. With the disadvantage of having to import coal into an inland town in Victoria, and to import all the raw material from home, they were the lowest competitors. Had the production of machinery been as much encouraged in Queensland as it has been in Victoria, an anomaly of this sort could scarcely have occurred. Machinery and boilers fixed on board and used in propelling any vessel into Queensland, such vessel being used afterwards in trading in Queensland waters, has hitherto come in duty free. It is proposed now to subject all such material to the *ad valorem* duty.

Printing paper, paper for making up stationery, ink, printing machines and materials, have been

made duty free. The effect of the duties on these articles, although not heavy, has been to divert a large amount of legitimate trade from Queensland to the other colonies, where those articles are admitted free, and from which stationery can consequently be made up and imported into Queensland.

Boots and shoes have been taken out of the *ad valorem* list and put in with fixed duties, according to the various descriptions; while materials necessary in their manufacture have been, when possible, put on the free list.

The general *ad valorem* duty of 7½ per cent. has been doubled, with the exception of what are technically known as piece goods, which are put on a lower list of *ad valorem* at 10 per cent. In addition to this, there is a free list of articles used in various trades here which should encourage the development of a great number of industries well adapted to the country.

There was a temptation to increase the duty on opium from 20s. to 30s. per lb. Apparently this would have yielded an increase to the Treasury of over £12,000, but in dealing with an article of this kind it is essential that the duties in the adjoining colonies should be the same, because, had we increased the duty here, the probability is that the article would be smuggled wholesale overland from the neighbouring colonies.

Without specifying at greater detail the increases that have been made, and which is rendered to a great extent unnecessary by the comparative statement furnished to hon. members—in the first column is the proposed tariff, in the next the present Queensland tariff, then the tariffs of the other colonies—it is sufficient to state that in making these alterations I have had as much regard as I possibly could to giving encouragement to trade inside the colony, without bearing oppressively on any portion of the community.

To recapitulate shortly:—The Government have done everything they possibly could to reduce the expenditure. They found that under the ordinary rate of taxation a large deficit had accrued which must be provided for. That deficit they propose to provide for by increasing the Customs duties of the colony, and, in one item, abolishing the excise. The duties proposed are, as a rule—as hon. members will see by studying the tables before them—lower than in any other colony in the group, with the exception of New South Wales. They are not calculated, from their weight, to depress trade, but they are sufficient to encourage industries in many directions. Of course the encouragement of those industries means loss of revenue, but that loss will be amply compensated in other financial ways to the Government. The revenue, which I have calculated with the best assistance I could receive from the departments, is, I believe, a fair one. The estimate under the new tariff is, I believe, sound, and will result in changing the balance from the debtor to the credit side. I think the House should strive to wipe out, by savings from revenue in the next two years, the Treasury bonds, authority to issue which was given by the House last year; and I am sure that under a tariff such as proposed here that most desirable result will be accomplished.

On the management of our finances here depends our power of borrowing. The colony is increasing so fast in population that it will be a difficult matter to decrease to any great extent our expenditure on public works; and that will be rendered unnecessary if we put the finances into a sound condition. I believe that we will soon be in that position; and I look forward

with great hope to the prospect of the public works not being delayed to the extent of injuring the demand for labour in the colony.

All the duties enumerated in the resolution which I am about to submit will be collected to-morrow morning at the various ports of the colony. The excise duty on beer will be collected on all beer, the making of which by any process has been already commenced. Beer commenced to be made after to-day will go free, although the excise duty will be paid as usual until the tariff has generally become law.

I beg to move—

That towards raising the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty in lieu of the existing Customs duties there shall be raised, levied, collected, and paid upon the several articles, goods, wares, and merchandise, under-mentioned, when imported into the colony, whether by sea or land, the duties following, and such duties shall be payable upon the goods named now in bond:—

Articles.	Quantities.	Rate.
Arrowroot, gunpowder, pearl barley, rice, sago, split peas, starch, shot, tapioca, vermicelli	per reputed pound	1d.
Twine, tallow, and stearine ...	per reputed pound	1½d.
Biscuits, blue, dried fruits, dynamite, gelatine dynamite, glue, honey, macaroni, maizena, corn flour, maize meal, peel (dry and drained), pork (not including mess pork), writing paper (cut), and cakes	per reputed pound	2d.
Candles	per reputed pound	3d.
Cheese, bacon, hams, mustard, pepper, spices, nuts (all sorts except cocoanuts), and butter	per pound ...	3d.
Confectionery and succades, ginger (preserved and dried)	per pound ...	4d.
Leather (except otherwise enumerated)	per pound ...	6d.
Hops	per dozen reputed pints, and in the same proportion for larger contents	1s. 6d.
Fruits, bottled or in tins or jars	per dozen reputed pints, and in the same proportion for larger contents	1s. 6d.
Pickles and sauces	per dozen reputed pints, and in the same proportion for larger contents	1s. 6d.
Castor oil (in bottle), cod-liver oil (in bottle), and salad oil (in bottle)	per dozen reputed pints, and in the same proportion for larger contents	2s.
Preserved meat (not salted), and extract of meat	per dozen reputed pounds, and in the same proportion for larger contents	4s.
Fish—preserved (not salted), and jams and jellies	per dozen reputed pounds, and in the same proportion for larger contents	2s.
Soda crystals, galvanised or corrugated iron, and iron wire	per cwt. ...	2s.
Acid, sulphuric	per cwt. ...	2s. 6d.
Iron castings for building purposes, and malleable iron castings, nails, paints (wet and dry), lead (white and red)	per cwt. ...	3s.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT—continued.

Articles.	Quantities.	Rate.
Saltpetre and oatmeal ...	per cwt. ...	4s.
Fish (pickled or salted in casks), and dried fish	per cwt. ...	5s.
Cordage and rope	per cwt. ...	8s.
Soap	per cwt. ...	10s.
Coal	per ton ...	2s.
Potatoes, hay, and chaff ...	per ton ...	15s.
Onions	per ton ...	20s.
Cement	per barrel ...	2s.
Doors (wood)	each ...	4s.
Sashes	per pair ...	4s.
Iron tanks	each ...	8s.
Castor oil, Chinese oil, cod-liver oil, and colza oil (in bulk)	per gallon ...	1s.
Mineral oils and all other oils not otherwise enumerated (except perfumed oils), and turpentine	per gallon ...	6d.
Sarsaparilla and bitters, if containing not more than 25 per cent. of proof spirit	per gallon ...	6s.
Sarsaparilla and bitters, if containing more than 25 per cent. of proof spirit	per gallon ...	12s.
Wheat	per bushel ...	6d.
Barley	per bushel ...	9d.
Maize and oats	per bushel ...	8d.
Malt	per bushel ...	3s.
Bran and pollard	per bushel ...	4d.
Beans and peas	per bushel ...	1s.
Ale, beer, porter, cider, perry, and vinegar (in wood)	per gallon ...	9d.
Ale, beer, porter, cider, perry, and vinegar (in bottle)	for six reputed quart bottles for twelve reputed pint bottles	1s.
Tobacco, manufactured ...	per pound ...	3s.
Tobacco, unmanufactured ...	per pound ...	1s. 6d.
Snuff	per pound ...	5s.
Cigars	per pound ...	6s.
Cigarettes (including wrappers)	per pound ...	6s.
Opium	per pound ...	20s.
Coffee (roasted), tea, and chicory	per pound ...	6d.
Coffee (raw), cocoa, and chocolate, and chocolate confectionery	per pound ...	4d.
Sugar, refined	per cwt. ...	6s. 8d.
Sugar (raw), molasses, and glucose	per cwt. ...	5s.
Spirits or strong waters, excepting perfumed spirits, of any strength not exceeding the strength of proof by Sykes's hydrometer, and so in proportion for any greater strength than the strength of proof	per gallon ...	12s.
Spirits, cordials, or strong waters sweetened or mixed with any article so that the strength thereof cannot be exactly ascertained by Sykes's hydrometer	per gallon ...	12s.
Case Spirits— Reputed contents of two, three, or four gallons, shall be charged on and after the first day of March, 1889. Two gallons, and under, as two gallons; and not exceeding three, as three gallons; over three, and not exceeding four, as four gallons.		
Perfumed spirits	per liquid gal.	20s.
Methylated spirits	per liquid gal.	5s.
Wine— Sparkling	per gallon ...	10s.
Other kinds	per gallon ...	6s.
Wine containing more than 25 per cent. of alcohol of a specific gravity of .825 at the temperature of 60 degrees Fahrenheit's thermometer	per gallon ...	12s.
Timber, logs	per 100 sup. ft.	1s. 6d.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT—continued.

Articles.	Quantities.	Rate.
Timber, undressed	per 100 sup. ft.	1s. 6d.
Timber, dressed	per 100 sup. ft.	2s.
The duty on timber to be estimated as of a thickness of one inch, and to be in proportion for any greater thickness. Any thickness under one inch to be reckoned as one inch.		
Boots and shoes, except india-rubber shoes (present English sizes to be the standard), viz.:—		
Men's No. 6 and upwards	per dozen pairs	22s.
Youths' Nos. 2-5	per dozen pairs	14s.
Boys' Nos. 7-1	per dozen pairs	12s.
Women's No. 3 and upwards, except lasting and stuff boots, including goloshed boots	per dozen pairs	13s.
Girls' Nos. 11-2, except lasting and stuff boots, including goloshed boots	per dozen pairs	11s.
Girls' Nos. 7-10, except lasting and stuff boots, including goloshed boots	per dozen pairs	8s.
Jewellery, plate (gold and silver)	for every £100 of the value thereof	£25
Cotton Piece Goods—Shirts, and all calicoes, prints, muslins, sheetings, and cotton ticks	for every £100 of the value thereof	£10
Fannel, in the piece		
Linen Piece Goods—Ducks, diapers, rough brown, and dressed holland, tabling, sheeting, and damask ticks	for every £100 of the value thereof	£15
Moleskin, in the piece		
Paper (for paper-bag making)	for every £100 of the value thereof	£15
Sewing-machines		
Machinery and boilers being fixed on board and used in propelling any vessel into Queensland, such vessel to be used for trading, or carrying passengers within the limits of any port in Queensland now or as may hereafter be defined by section 108 of the Navigation Act of 1876, shall be deemed to be goods imported into Queensland and shall be liable to duty	for every £100 of the value thereof	£15
Upon all goods imported into the colony notherinbefore enumerated or hereinafter exempted from duty		

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES SHALL BE EXEMPTED FROM DUTY.

Animals, alive.
 Boiler plates.
 Books (printed), maps, charts, and globes.
 Bookbinders' leather cloth.
 Buckles of every description.
 Buttons, braids, tapes, waddings, pins, needles, and such minor articles required in the making up of apparel; boots, shoes, hats, caps, saddlery, umbrellas, parasols, and sunshades, as may be enumerated in any order of the Treasurer and published in the *Government Gazette*.
 Carriage and cart makers' materials, namely:—Springs, mountings, trimmings, brass hinges, bolts and nuts, tacks, tire-bolts, shackleholders, and other iron fittings; rubber cloth and American cloth.
 Coin—gold, silver, and copper.
 Copper—sheet, plain.
 Cocoanuts.
 Curiosities (antique).
 Fibre, coconut.
 Flax.

Fire engines.
 Flour mills, patent porcelain or steel roller.
 Gold, unmanufactured.
 Garden seeds.
 Garden bulbs.
 Garden trees.
 Garden shrubs.
 Flour.
 Hatmakers' materials, namely:—Silk, plush, felt hoods, shellac, galloons, calicoes, spale-boards for hat boxes.
 Hemp.
 Ink, printing.
 Iron, ore.
 Iron, plain sheet (not including galvanised).
 Iron, pig.
 Iron, bar.
 Iron, rod—from $\frac{3}{8}$ ths to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch; channel iron, angle and tee iron, rolled iron joists up to 10 inches by 5 inches.
 Iron, scrap.
 Iron, hoop.
 Leather—patent, enamelled, kid, hogskins, levant, morocco, and imitations thereof.
 Lithographic stones.
 Lithographic ink and colours.
 Manure.
 Metal fittings for portmanteaus, travelling bags, and leggings.
 Metal frames for bags and satchels.
 Muntz metal.
 Newspapers, printed.
 Naval and military stores imported for the service of the Colonial Governments, or for the use of Her Majesty's land or sea forces; and wines and spirits for the use of His Excellency the Governor, or for naval and military officers employed on actual naval or military service and on full pay.
 Outside packages, in which goods are ordinarily imported and which are of no commercial value except as covering for goods.
 Passengers' cabin furniture and baggage, and passengers' personal effects (not including vehicles, musical instruments, glassware, chinaware, silver and gold plate and plated goods, and furniture other than cabin furniture), which are imported with and by passengers *bond fide* for their own personal use and not imported for the purpose of sale.
 Paper, for printing purposes only.
 Paper, hand-made or machine-made, book or writing, of sizes not less than the size known as "demy" when in original wrappers, and with uncut edges as it leaves the mill.
 Quicksilver.
 Salt.
 Soda, ash.
 Saddlers' ironmongery, hames, and mounts for harness, straining, surcingle, brace, girth, and roller webs; collar check, legging-buckles.
 Saddle-trees.
 Straw, mill, and paste boards.
 Staymakers' binding, eyelet-holes, corset fasteners, jean, ticks, lasting, sateen, and cotell.
 Specimens of natural history.
 Silver, unmanufactured.
 Steel, unwrought.
 Tailors' trimmings, namely:—Verona and Italian cloth, black and brown canvas, buckram, wadding, padding; silk, worsted, and cotton bindings and braids; stay-binding, hessians, brown linen, silesias, union body linings, jeans, striped and checked drills, pocketings.
 Tin plates.
 Tin, block.
 Type.
 Umbrella-makers' materials, namely:—Reversible and levantine silk mixtures, of not less than 44 inches in width; alpaca cloth with border, zanella cloth with border, sticks, runners, notches, caps, ferrules, cups, ribs, stretchers, tips, and rings, for use in the making of umbrellas, parasols, and sunshades.
 Tools—
 Grindery tools, edge-planes, kit, peg, shaves, and welt-trimmers.
 Adzes, anvils, augers, screw and shell and auger bits.
 Awns, awl pads, and hafts.

Axes and tomahawks.
 Beavils—blowpipes.
 Braces and bits, and brestdrills.
 Bruzzes for wheelwrights.
 Bung-borers.
 Brushes—patent roller for blockmaking.
 Chisels and gouges.
 Choppers and cleavers—butchers'.
 Clamps—single, double, extension.
 Compasses—dividers and calipers.
 „ carpenters' and coopers'.
 Cramps.
 Dentists' tools.
 Diamonds—glaziers'.
 Files and rasps.
 Forks—digging, hay, and stable.
 Hammers (hand), of all sorts.
 Handles (wooden), for tools.
 Hoes, garden.
 Knives—butchers', hay, pruning, putty, saddlers', and shoemakers'.
 Needles of all sorts.
 Palms, leather.
 Planes and plane-irons.
 Pliers, pinchers, and nippers.
 Punches.
 Rules, tapes, and chains—measuring.
 Saws of all kinds, but not the machinery (if any) connected therewith.
 Scissors, scrapers (ship).
 Screws—bench, brass, coach, galvanised, hand table, wood.
 Scythes and scythe-handles.
 Shears—garden, hedge, sheep, tailors', tinmens'.
 Shovels—iron or wood.
 Sickles, spades.
 Spokeshaves, shaves, and spoke trimmers.
 Squares.
 Squeezers, cork.
 Strainers for fencing.
 Steels—butchers'.
 Stocks and dies, and taps for same.
 Saddlers' tools, namely:—Rein rounders, claw, carving, French edge, patent leather tools, wheels, rosette cutters.
 Tongs—blacksmiths', gas.
 Trowels, tryers, tweezers.
 Vices, and patent saw-vices.
 Wedges, wrenches.
 Machinery for carding, spinning, weaving, and finishing the manufacture of fibrous material, and cards for such machinery.
 Machinery—Dry air, for refrigerating, without engine.
 Machinery used in the manufacture of paper and felting.
 Machines, namely,—
 Hydraulic hat-moulds, knitting machines, printing machines and presses, but not the motive power (if any) for same.
 Zinc for telegraphic purposes.

Articles and materials (as may from time to time be specified by the Treasurer) which are suited only for, and are to be used and applied solely in, the fabrication of goods within the colony. All decisions of the Treasurer in reference to articles so admitted free to be published from time to time in the *Government Gazette*.

Mr. Jessop,—Having now read the Financial Statement, I may remark that it is not the usual practice in cases of this sort that a discussion should be immediately entered upon. At the same time it is very important that the discussion on the tariff should come to an end as quickly as possible. I think hon. members will be prepared to discuss the question at an early date. I do not propose that we should have any discussion to-day, but I think we should be prepared to go on with it to-morrow. Hon. members know that while the tariff is being discussed business is unsettled, and we ought to work very hard to get the tariff through, and I think we might get

it through very quickly. Of course it is to be understood that the duties which are put in this list in the resolution I have just read will be collected to-morrow, and indemnity will be asked for the act at a future stage.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he thought it would not be convenient for hon. members to discuss the Treasurer's Statement that evening. They were not, of course, in a position to discuss the tariff proposals, apart from which the Statement was rather short and did not contain many matters of contention. Hon. members ought certainly to have an opportunity of looking over the tables, and until they had that they would not be able to approach the question properly. He would call attention to the fact that many items in the first column of the Comparative Statement of Tariffs—which contained the proposals for the new tariff for Queensland—were left blank.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Is there anything wrong in it?

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the first two items that struck him were "rice" and "wheat." However, he understood that in those items there were to be no changes.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is so.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said it would be very convenient to have a little more information in detail; the Treasurer should give his reasons for proposing a particular rate of taxation on particular items. Of course the hon. gentleman had reasons for every one of them, and it would assist hon. members if, when they resumed the discussion, some further information were given them on those points. Some of the proposed increases were very small—some people might say they were hardly worth making; in other cases they were considerable. He agreed that the question of the tariff should be disposed of as soon as possible, but he doubted whether hon. members would be in a position to discuss it to-morrow. Of course the debate could not be finished in one day, and he was disposed to think that the more time that was given to hon. members—the more thoroughly they understood the question—the less likely would they be to lengthen the debate upon it. The tables themselves would take some time to go through in detail. He was very anxious, and so, no doubt, were other hon. members, to avoid unnecessary discussion.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he wanted the Committee to know as much about the question as he did himself. The main thing was to get through the tariff debate as quickly as possible. The usual discussion on the Financial Statement could come afterwards, and could be raised at any time on going into Committee of Supply, if hon. members chose. At all events, a long discussion on the Statement itself, outside of the tariff, might be deferred for the present. He was perfectly willing to adjourn the debate until Thursday, and it might be finished on Friday. It was a matter of considerable importance that they should get through it quickly.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Why? The duty is collected all the time.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Simply because business is always hindered while a tariff is being discussed. I therefore propose to go on with the tariff debate on Thursday.

Mr. HODGKINSON said there were certain principles on which the Treasurer seemed to have constructed his tariff—in the first place, to raise revenue; and in the next place, foster protection. Certain sections of the community, such as the pastoral community and the mining community, would be greatly concerned about it unless they

had some information from the hon. Treasurer as to the principles which had guided him in making the alterations—some quite insignificant, and others of considerable extent. They knew perfectly well that any approach to a protective system would involve sacrifices on the part of the people of the colony. Those sacrifices he was perfectly willing to make himself, but it was important to know the principle on which they were demanded, and that was what the mining community and the pastoral community in particular would like to know. They would want to know whether the hon. gentleman could hold out to them any hope of alleviation. The hon. gentleman had referred to a duty on machinery, and it was well known that such a duty would meet with considerable opposition from a certain class of the community unless the hon. gentleman was prepared to point out to the Committee that there would be something to compensate them. So far as he understood the statement just read, it seemed to be for the advantage of the agricultural community, and of town residents almost entirely; and the pastoral and mining interests would want to know what was to compensate them for the sacrifice entailed. If there was none, the iron of the new duties would enter into the souls of the country districts. He hoped the hon. gentleman would be in a position to give them that information.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said the hon. member did not seem to care to wait for the discussion till Thursday; he was anxious to go on with it at once. As to what the hon. member said about the principle on which the tariff was framed, he was not going to read his speech over again. He thought he had fully explained it there. The speech would be subjected to criticism, and he would give the hon. member all the information he could desire.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he did not think the discussion of the Financial Statement would take long. It might, indeed, be advisable to discuss it first, and devote the whole of the following week to the tariff proposals. He did not think it would make much difference whether they took the matter up on Tuesday or on Friday. He quite agreed that it was desirable that the question should be disposed of as soon as possible, but it was a very important matter, and hon. members who had not the same opportunities of getting information as the hon. gentleman had, should be allowed time to inquire into it and get what information they could. In fact at present, although they had certain information before them, they did not know exactly what the proposed changes were, and they should have at least two or three days to look round and see what the probable effect of those changes would be. Under those circumstances, and considering the importance of the subject, he thought that the hon. gentleman should agree to wait until next week before going into the details of the tariff. There was no desire on the Opposition side to protract business; on the contrary, they were anxious to push it on, but they should have an opportunity of making themselves familiar with the subject, of which most of them were comparatively ignorant at the present time.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said there was a great deal in the contention of the hon. the leader of the Opposition, but there would have been a good deal more if he had pointed out some radical change that was proposed in the new tariff. There did not seem to be any crucial question between the two sides of the Committee in respect to it, and that being so—he assumed that it was so—

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I really do not know at present.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Surely after what he had heard, and with the information he had before him, the hon. gentleman must know—

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I have not read all the information.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: That he admitted, but at the same time he must know from the Financial Statement of the Premier.

Mr. UNMACK: We could not hear a word of it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that of course the Government side could not find ears for hon. members opposite. There might be various reasons why they should not be able to hear. While he thought it was only right and proper that every member should read and follow carefully what had fallen from the hon. the Premier, it could hardly be said that any member who had listened attentively to the Financial Statement had not been able to grasp the general tenor of the scheme, and it was, therefore, unnecessary that consideration of the details of the proposed tariff should be deferred for any unusually long period.

Mr. GROOM said he should like to have time to go through the proposed alterations very carefully. With some of them he entirely concurred, but at the same time, comparing the tariff with others, it seemed to indicate an indiscriminate increase in certain articles of production without considering whether the colony was in a position to produce those articles or not. That was how it struck him at first glance. There were also many articles that had escaped the hon. gentleman's attention altogether, that he had not touched at all, and he (Mr. Groom) should like to submit certain amendments in respect to them. But before doing so he should like to have an opportunity to go into the matter carefully. It appeared to him that some things were not sufficiently taxed, while others, which the colony was not in a position to produce, were taxed too highly; so that one would balance the other, and in that way would not interfere with the hon. gentleman's calculations so far as revenue was concerned. Another reason he would suggest why further time for consideration should be allowed was that, at the present time, a considerable number of farmers were holding meetings in reference to the tariff proposals. Probably the hon. gentleman had seen some of the resolutions they had passed. He (Mr. Groom) did not mean to say that he agreed with all the proposals made at those meetings, but at the same time it would be well to know the views of the farming community in considering the tariff proposals; and if they were to proceed with the matter to-morrow, as the hon. gentleman proposed, and the Bill were passed through all its stages next week, they would have no opportunity of knowing those views. He was quite prepared to admit that the hon. gentleman had taken a step in the right direction, in trying to assist the agricultural interest. In regard to some articles he should like to go a little further than the hon. gentleman had gone, and if they had time to consider the question in all its bearings, they might be able to approach it in such a manner as to assist the Premier in making the scheme more comprehensive and satisfactory than it was at the present time.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he knew pretty well the amendments that would be proposed by the hon. gentleman.

Mr. GROOM: No, the hon. gentleman does not.

The COLONIAL TREASURER said he knew very well what the hon. member's constituents wished, and the hon. member had always been

consistent in advocating their views. As to the suggestion of the hon. member in reference to the meetings that were being held, he did not believe in setting up the doctrine that they should stop still and relegate everything to the constituencies and take the tariff from them. If they carried out the proposition made by the hon. member they might have to wait two or three months; and he wanted to get the session through in a month, or six weeks at all events. As he had pointed out, it was of the utmost importance that the tariff proposals should be decided upon as soon as possible. He would therefore place the resumption of the Committee of Ways and Means at the head of the business-paper for Thursday, and they could then discuss the Financial Statement. He now moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Mr. STEVENS said he quite agreed with what had fallen from the hon. member for Toowoomba, Mr. Groom—that the Premier had taken a long stride in the right direction in the proposed tariff alterations. He did not intend to enter into a discussion of the general question now, but simply rose to say that it was impossible for a few persons to study such a large question as the revision of the whole of the tariff so thoroughly as they could if dealing with only a few isolated articles. He therefore trusted that the Government would be prepared to receive amendments, if they were not contrary to the spirit of the changes they proposed to introduce.

Question put and passed.

The resumption of the Committee was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

RAILWAYS BILL.

COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. M. Nelson), the House went into Committee to consider this Bill in detail.

Preamble postponed.

Clause 1—"Division of Act"—passed as printed.

Clause 2—"Incorporation and short title"—passed with a verbal amendment.

On clause 3, as follows:—

"This Act, except when otherwise expressly declared, shall come into force on and after a day, not earlier than the sixtieth and not later than the one hundred and twentieth day, after the passing thereof, to be proclaimed by the Governor in Council, and published in the *Gazette*, which day is hereinafter referred to as the commencement of this Act."

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he was aware that the clause was taken from an Act in the neighbouring colony, but that was an extremely inconvenient way of providing for the Act to come into operation. In New South Wales they had to pass an Act during the same session altering the time at which their Act should come into force. The only clause of the Bill which took effect before the period provided in that clause was clause 7, which said—

"This section shall come into force on the passing of this Act."

If the clause passed in its present form the result would be that there would be four months, and no more, within which the commissioners could be appointed. If the clause stood as printed the communications about the appointment of chief commissioner would have to be by telegram, and in order that the Act should come into operation it would be necessary to have the commissioners here. Therefore, as the clause stood, within four months it would be necessary that the Government should have

worked out all their arrangements with respect to the appointment of the commissioners, and that they should have arrived—a matter which was by no means to be done in a day—unless indeed they had the names in their pockets. The form of expressing when the Act should come into operation was most inconvenient, because if after 120 days of the passing of the Act the commissioners were not here, the whole scheme would come to grief. The Act would lapse, in fact, until next session. It would be very much more convenient if the Act were made to take effect upon the appointment of the commissioners. The difficulty arose in New South Wales, and it was more likely to arise here, especially as they did not know what the scheme of the Government with respect to salaries was, and also what would be the respective functions of the commissioners. Those officers would want to know what their functions were to be before they were appointed, and he presumed the Government would tell the Committee what their functions were to be.

Mr. MURPHY said he supported the contention of the leader of the Opposition, because in one of the other colonies they had had great difficulty in getting a man suitable for the position of chief commissioner, and if they laid down any arbitrary time for the commencement of the Act they might find themselves in the same position as the colony he referred to, where they were not able to get a suitable man. Men such as they required to work the railways were not to be found every day; they required to be exceptional men. If the Act was to be a success, they would require to get an exceptionally good man as chairman of the commissioners. He quite agreed with the leader of the Opposition, that no arbitrary time should be fixed for the commencement of the Act.

The PREMIER said the objection made by the leader of the Opposition was quite a tangible objection, and had occurred to him previously. No doubt the same thing had proved a difficulty in New South Wales. The way to get over the difficulty would be to leave out the limit as to time, so that it might be left to the Governor in Council to publish in the *Gazette* the day on which the Act should come into operation; he did not see why the maximum time should be left in at all.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said it would be convenient to say that the Act should come into force upon the notification of the appointment of the commissioners. The operation of the Bill should depend upon the appointment of the commissioners. If the words following the word "day" in the 2nd line were omitted, down to the word "*Gazette*," and others inserted, that would meet the case. He thought it would be convenient if the Government could give the Committee some idea respecting the functions and the salaries of the commissioners. Before the blanks could be filled up in clause 10 there must be a recommendation from the Governor, which had not yet been received by them.

The PREMIER said the Bill had been brought down by a message from the Governor which was very broad in its terms and covered everything.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I do not think so.

The PREMIER: I do.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said he would simplify matters by explaining fully the position of the commissioners. He thought he had fully explained it already in moving the second reading of the Bill; but he would be most happy to explain anything again. The Bill provided

that there should be a chief commissioner and two other commissioners, who would all be public servants with extensive powers attached to their offices. With regard to their connection with the Government, the Bill provided that they should be very independent in position. They would be able to control the whole of the details of the management of the railway system of the colony, and they would relieve the Minister from a vast amount of work which at present fell upon him, but which did not properly come under the designation of ministerial duties. For instance, they would deal with all kinds of tenders. Instead of tenders being sent up to the Minister for approval, the commissioners themselves would deal with them. At present the system was, that if the department required 20, or 30, or 50 waggons, tenders were called for; those tenders were opened and scheduled. The officers of the department made certain recommendations to the Minister, but the Minister had full and arbitrary power, if he chose, to reject any such recommendation. If he had a personal or political friend among the tenderers he could reject the recommendation of the officers of the department, and arbitrarily say that a certain tenderer was to have the contract. That would be done away with completely under the Bill, because the commissioners, by clause 20, which provided as follows—

"All moneys appropriated by Parliament for the construction, maintenance, or management of the railways by this Act vested in the commissioners, and for all purposes in connection therewith, shall be expended under the direction and control of the commissioners"—had full power to deal with all contracts. They had the same power with reference to tenders for the construction of railways, and with all the various works connected with the management of the railways. They would also deal with all the employes of the railways. The Minister would have no control over them, nor would he hear any appeals from them. All appeals from employes would be decided finally by the commissioners, and not by the Minister, and in all other respects it was provided that they would have the entire management of the railways. In order to secure the best possible men for the position of commissioners, who must be men who had been educated up to what he might call the "science" of railway management—men who were acquainted with all the latest improvements—because the science of railway management was a progressive one—he proposed to effect that by filling up the blank with regard to the salary of the chief commissioner in clause 10 with the sum of £3,000, and insert the sum of £1,500 as the salaries of the other two. He had gone through the Bill carefully since the second reading. He had been very pleased with the speeches made by hon. members on the second reading, and he thought they had all been made in a good spirit, and showed the intention of hon. members to make the Bill as perfect as possible. He accepted them as such, and would be willing to receive any suggestions that might be made with the object of improving the Bill. If any further information were required as to the work of the commissioners he would be pleased to furnish it.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he thought what the hon. member had said differed considerably from what he had said in moving the second reading of the Bill. The chief commissioner was to have a salary equal to that of the two others together, while he had understood, from what had been said previously, that the scheme was to give the three commissioners co-ordinate jurisdiction, a majority to decide. In Victoria, where the Chief Commissioner had double the salary of the others, he had power to overrule them, and it appeared as if that were now the intention in this colony, by proposing to give

the chief commissioner twice the salary of the others, as that indicated a great disparity in the status of the commissioners. As the Bill stood, the chief commissioner would not have the power to overrule the others. He had understood, from what was said on the second reading of the Bill, that the idea was that each of the commissioners should act in different parts of the colony, but not that one should have higher authority than the subordinate commissioners as in the neighbouring colonies.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said that as to the hon. gentleman's last remarks, he could only say that matters connected with railway management would be left to the commissioners. Although they hoped that all three commissioners would be men of the best accomplishments for their duties, it was absolutely necessary that there should be a head. As far as the question of denoting their position by the salaries given them was concerned, the position of officials did not always depend upon the salaries they were paid.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: The men you will get will depend a great deal upon it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said that under the Bill they would be given co-ordinate powers to a great extent, because they allowed the majority to rule. Finality in decision must be provided for in some way, as it would not do to have the commissioners disagreeing upon some question without providing some method of arriving at a final decision.

Mr. ANNEAR said that the Minister for Railways, in speaking just now, referred, amongst other things, to the construction of railways as being dealt with by the commissioners. He had taken no part in the discussion upon the second reading of the Bill, but, like many other hon. members, he had something to say while the Bill was going through committee. He hailed the Bill as a very good one, and one for a long time urgently needed in the interest of railway management in this colony. He was glad to hear the Minister for Railways say he desired to get a man of the character of Mr. Speight, the Chief Commissioner in Victoria, if it was possible to get such a man for the salary proposed to be inserted in the Bill, £3,000 a year. He considered Mr. Speight earned his salary in the first month after he landed in the colony, and the earnings of the Victorian lines had shown that was so. But all Ministers, whoever they might be, were supposed to have a railway policy which they put before the country, and the chief engineer was generally considered the confidential and responsible adviser of the Government.

The PREMIER: For what?

Mr. ANNEAR: In the matter of the construction of railways in different localities throughout the country. He hoped that duty was not going to be left to the commissioners.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: You would have a poor chance if it was.

Mr. ANNEAR said that an hon. member said he would have a poor chance if it was, but that was fully answered that day by the Premier when he was speaking about the paying capabilities of their railways; and if hon. members looked at the Auditor-General's Report they would see how badly the district he represented had been treated in the matter of railway construction. He looked upon the Chief Engineer of the colony as the responsible adviser of the Government in the matter of railway construction, and not a non-professional board of commissioners. He supposed none of the commissioners would be engineers.

Mr. MURPHY: They ought to be.

The PREMIER: In Victoria Mr. Speight has been a railway manager, and Mr. Green, one of the commissioners, is an engineer.

Mr. ANNEAR said he hoped they would have men of nerve at least as commissioners. When the Windsor accident took place in Victoria Mr. Speight was on the train and took charge of the work of clearing the line for the traffic, but his colleagues took very little part in clearing the line of the debris caused by the accident. He hoped they would have here as commissioners men capable of undertaking what Mr. Speight had done on that occasion. He hoped the Chief Engineer would be responsible only to the Minister for Railways and not to a non-professional board—as the board of commissioners would be in his opinion. He believed the Bill was one of the best measures ever introduced in that House, and he had always advocated and supported the principle it contained of removing the management of their railways from political influence. He was sure every member in the Committee was chiefly interested in the construction of railways, which was an important feature in the policy of any Government. The Chief Engineer was the official with whom the Government should consult in such a matter, and he hoped it would be provided by the Bill that he should be amenable to the Government, and to the Government only.

Mr. HODGKINSON said he earnestly trusted the Chief Engineer would be put entirely under the control of the commissioners. Nearly every great mistake they had made in connection with their railways had occurred, not through any want of engineering skill, but through circumstances which appeared to have influenced their engineers in their opinions. The Premier had made use of a very forcible example of that in referring to the Cooktown and Maytown railway. It was by mere accident that that railway was not carried to a spot to which Parliament never intended it should be carried, and where it would have been perfectly useless. He had no hesitation in saying at the present moment that that line was being constructed altogether upon a wrong principle, and through country probably the most difficult for construction that could be found in the district. The Premier would know from his own experience if he went over the route of that line that not only would the original cost of construction be enormous, but the cost of maintenance would be something astonishing; that was well known to all men familiar with the country. It was quite possible that many men might be better fitted by local knowledge to indicate the route which a railway should traverse than many of their engineers, who in some instances visited the district and went over the proposed route in a most perfunctory manner. They sometimes did not traverse the ground at all, but left that important duty to subordinates, and made their ultimate decision, involving hundreds of thousands of pounds, upon the opinions of men young in the profession, of little or no experience, and of no great professional qualities. So far as he could see, the 29th clause of the Bill almost settled that question. It provided that the commissioners should transmit certain details for the information of Parliament, and those details would involve professional assistance, as he did not suppose it was intended that the commissioners should do that work personally. They must have an engineer to give an estimate of the cost of a proposed line. He sincerely trusted no attempt would be made to set up an *imperium in imperio*, and if the Chief Engineer was to be put in a position of independence with regard to the commissioners, they would find as the inevitable result, there would be a great deal of jealousy, and

as a consequence, injury to the State would follow. The Bill, he thought, must commend itself to hon. members on both sides of the Committee. There was only one point in regard to which he had some apprehension, and that was the lever it might turn out to be for still further concentration of railway expenditure in the southern portion of the colony. In the North and West, where there were such large areas of country to traverse, railways were a vital necessity, and he did not think there was a member of the Committee competent to pass an opinion, who would discuss the desirability of the construction of a Northern or Western line upon the basis of the actual and reliable profit which it would return. Railway construction was a vital necessity in those remote districts owing to the hardships inflicted upon them through the Divisional Boards Act—that was to say, that it was in those districts where there was the smallest amount of taxable property and the smallest population that the greatest amount of maintenance was necessary for the roads, and railways in such districts were an absolute necessity. It was not clear to him how those railways were to be initiated, but it was clear that, under the clause he had referred to, it would be possible for the commissioners to give good sound business reasons for condemning any line that was suggested in remote districts simply on the ground that the population and the existing traffic showed no hope of returns. In connection with the fiscal changes that the colony would undoubtedly have to make in a short time, it was very important that if the people in the outside districts were to be largely taxed in certain directions they must have something to compensate them for it. The Bill appeared to him to be a further concentration in the southern parts of the colony of all influence over the Northern mining and pastoral districts. No doubt the Minister for Railways would be able to give them a satisfactory assurance with regard to the matter to which he had drawn attention, and it was important that he should do so, because those were the exact points which would be regarded with interest in the districts to which he alluded. Any measure of any Government which tended, as that did, to concentrate one of the most important functions of the State into the extreme southern part of the colony was simply another spur to the aspirants after separation.

Mr. BARLOW said the hon. member for Maryborough had just stated that Mr. Speight was in the railway accident at Windsor, and worked personally in removing the wreckage. Mr. Speight could hardly help being there, because he happened to be travelling by that train, and was very nearly killed himself. A friend of his (Mr. Barlow's) was killed in the accident. The evidence taken before the coroner clearly showed that the cause of the accident was the placing of a lad of no experience in charge of the signals. That was an instance of the wonderful railway management in Victoria.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said he would be prepared, at the proper time, to explain the position the Chief Engineer would occupy, in a manner which, he thought, would be satisfactory to every member of the Committee; but it was rather premature to discuss a subject of that sort just then. Perhaps it would be better to raise the discussion on that point when they reached clause 48. He rose now to state that he accepted the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition, and was prepared either to move the amendment himself, or to let the hon. gentleman move it.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH moved, by way of amendment, that all the words between "after" in the 11th line, and "is" in the 14th line, be omitted, with the view of inserting the

following words:—"The date of the notification by the Governor in Council in the *Gazette* of the appointment of the first commissioners under this Act, which date."

Mr. DRAKE said he could not understand the words in the clause, "except when otherwise expressly declared." He presumed there was nothing in the Act that was otherwise expressly declared.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said that if the hon. member would refer to clause 7 he would find the words, "This section shall come into force on the passing of this Act."

Amendment put and agreed to; and clause, as amended, passed.

On clause 4—"Interpretation"—

Mr. PALMER asked whether the commissioners appointed under the Act would be like the Land Board, part of whose duty it was to visit various portions of the colony, to Hughenden in the North, and away to the West? Would the commissioners, who had to report on the various lines under their supervision, make a personal inspection of those lines? If one of them were appointed to the North, he would have as much to do as if he were inspecting the Southern lines. He did not see why one of them should not reside in the North altogether. At all events their duties should take them there frequently to inspect those lines. From the Railway Report they found that the Northern Railway was the only one in the colony that was paying more than the interest on the cost of construction.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: The Sandgate line.

Mr. PALMER: The Northern Railway paid over $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., while there was hardly another that paid more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. He should like to know if the duties of the commissioners would take them into the northern parts of the colony?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said they were not now discussing the duties of the commissioners, but the Interpretation clause. If the hon. member would take the trouble to read clause 14, he would see that that was fully provided for. The clause was as follows:—

"The commissioners shall sit at such times and in such places and conduct their proceedings in such manner as may seem to them most convenient for the speedy despatch of business, and shall keep minutes of their proceedings in such manner and form as the Governor in Council shall direct."

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: That speaks of the commissioners collectively. It refers to their sitting, not to their moving.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: After they sit they can move, surely.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5, as follows:—

"From and after the commencement of this Act, so much of the several Acts specified in the second section of this Act, and of any other Act, and of any regulations made thereunder respectively, as are inconsistent with this Act, shall be repealed except as to anything done and any rights, claims, penalties, forfeitures, and liabilities already accrued or incurred and in existence thereunder."

—was passed with a verbal amendment.

On clause 6, as follows:—

"On the commencement of this Act the office of Commissioner for Railways, and the corporation sole, as constituted by that name, pursuant to the Railway Act of 1864, shall be respectively abolished and dissolved."

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he thought that was a convenient time to ask the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill whether he had any intentions with regard to the disposition of the present Commissioner for Railways. Was it intended that he should be one of the commissioners under the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said he could not gratify the hon. gentleman's curiosity in that respect. He did not think it was a fair question to ask. He had already informed hon. members as to the feelings of the Government with regard to the present Commissioner, and the views they held as to his capabilities. The commissioners would be appointed by the Government, who would be responsible for the appointments. Of course they would have to justify the appointments to the House.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that was not the question. What his hon. friend Mr. Rutledge had asked was, what was proposed to be done with the present Commissioner for Railways? It was not the practice in any English legislature to abolish the office of any man without doing something for him. In the New South Wales Act special provision was made on the subject. A well-known instance of the kind was where responsible government was established in a colony. In that case something was always done with respect to the officers holding permanent offices in the colony whose services were dispensed with through the change of system. That was a regularly recognised principle, and was invariably acted upon. Of course he did not mean to say that Parliament could not do what it liked—abolish an office and give the officer nothing, or anything else—but the practice was always to do something in such cases, and he thought it would be just as well to know if the Government intended to make any provision for the present Commissioner similar to that which was made in New South Wales, or by giving him an appointment at an equivalent salary. There was no question of incompetency or fault on the part of that officer; whatever fault there was in the system under which he was working.

The PREMIER said he did not think it would be very creditable to import into the discussion on that Bill, which applied generally to the whole colony, the personalities that were introduced into the discussion that took place on the merits of Mr. Goodchap in New South Wales. If there was any justification for it, it was that gentleman's very long service, but the real cause of it was that he possessed such vast personal influence. It was not a proper thing to bring before the House at all. What the hon. gentleman asked was another thing—did they mean to abolish the office and do nothing for the present Commissioner?

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: That is it.

The PREMIER said he thought the Government would be doing a very improper thing if they contemplated anything of the sort. They were not in a position to disclose who the commissioners were to be. He did not think it was a fair question to ask; and without saying whether Mr. Curnow was to be appointed one of the commissioners or not, he would repeat that if the Government contemplated abolishing his office and simply wiping him out of the service, they would be doing a very culpable thing. The present Commissioner had not earned any such treatment. He had a very high opinion of that gentleman's ability; he had been a very efficient officer; in fact, he did not think there was a more clever man in the Government service than Mr. Curnow.

Mr. FOXTON said when the Land Bill was going through, hon. members who at that time occupied the Opposition benches made a strong point of desiring to know who were the commissioners to be appointed under it. They were to be appointed in a very similar manner to the commissioners under the Bill now under discussion, and at that time the question was recognised as being a very fair one.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he could remember that debate, and, although the question was asked, there was no answer to it. He hoped the present Government would adopt the same principle in dealing with the present Bill.

The PREMIER said there was nothing in the argument of the hon. member opposite, because if the Government were in a position to state who the commissioners were to be they would do so.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: We did. We stated the only one we knew.

The PREMIER: The Government did not know even one; therefore they could not say who they would be.

Mr. FOXTON said he thought the case he had mentioned was applicable to the discussion, because Mr. Deshon then occupied the position of Under Secretary for Lands. He was the only member of the Board the then Government could name, and they did name him forthwith. Under the circumstances, he thought the question of the hon. member for Charters Towers was a very fair one.

Mr. SALKELD said that the late Government not only named the Under Secretary for Lands as one of the members of the Land Board, but stated that they contemplated appointing a certain gentleman in New South Wales. That gentleman, however, declined the appointment. If the Government intended to get one or two commissioners from Great Britain or anywhere else out of the colony they could not say who they would be; but if they intended to appoint the present Commissioner for Railways as one of the commissioners, they might as well give the information to the Committee. They surely knew whether they intended to make the Commissioner a member of the board; and he thought it was a fair question to ask.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said it would tend to increase the confidence of the public generally in the working of the Act when the Bill became law if the Government took care not to appoint anyone who was now or ever had been a politician in the colony. By "politician" he meant a member of Parliament.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he did not know that because a man had been a politician he was not fit to hold even the highest office in the land. On his own side he saw many hon. members who were fully competent to discharge the duty; and he could conceive of no better commissioner than the leader of the Opposition if that hon. gentleman chose to accept the position. He said so in all sincerity.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: He does not agree with you.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said he did not think any man should be barred from occupying any office under the Bill when it became law because he had been a politician.

Mr. HODGKINSON said he trusted that the Government would extend their search for commissioners to a wider sphere than Great Britain. They might try the United States, where there were railways, like those of Queensland, running through vast areas of thinly populated country.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Hear, hear!

Mr. MURPHY said the American railway authorities went to England for their managers, as a rule. The management of the English railways was very much superior to that of the American. Nothing could be learned from the American railways except a few little tricks of management, such as dealing with luggage or matters of that kind. So far as proper and efficient management of railways was concerned,

there were no railways in the world to compare with those of England. They ran at a greater speed, had more traffic, and had developed more capable men than those of any other country, so far as his experience went.

Mr. HODGKINSON said he did not look on the hon. member for Barcoo as an authority on railways any more than he was on constitutional points. The hon. member was a great authority on esculents and rabbits, and the two cooked together would make a better dish than his constitutional points and his railway experience. Nearly all the improvements with regard to railways had been devised in America. Pullman's cars were introduced into Great Britain from America. In fact, he would be treating hon. members as very small children by reminding them that the adoption of a protective tariff in America had so encouraged mechanical ingenuity there that it was famous throughout the world, and the Americans could undersell Great Britain in her own market.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he wished to know what the idea of the Government was with respect to the department of railways? Would the Minister have an under secretary and officers and conduct the business of the department, or would it be merely a nominal office administered by the Minister at the head of another department?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said there would be a Minister to administer the Act, of course, but by the provisions of the Bill he would be free from the details, with which he should have nothing to do. He would then be free to perform the proper functions of a Minister—namely, to carry out the railway policy of the Government, for which at present there was no time whatever. The commissioners would have the management of the railways, and the Minister would be charged with carrying out the railway policy of the colony.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Will he have an under secretary and a staff?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: He naturally will. The Minister cannot do all the work himself.

Mr. SALKELD said he was rather surprised to hear the hon. member for Barcoo say that the American railways were managed by managers from England. That might be true in a few cases where English capitalists were largely interested and had great control, but it was not generally the case. He was surprised to hear such a great nationalist say that they could not learn anything from America. That would upset the great republic altogether. He was not surprised, however, to hear the Colonial Secretary call out "Hear, hear," when reference was made to the American railways. The hon. member for Barcoo ought to be hauled over the coals by the National committee.

Question put and passed.

On clause 7, as follows:—

"1. For the effective administration of this Act, there shall be three commissioners, appointed by the Governor in Council by commission under his hand and the great seal of the colony, to be called 'The Queensland Railway Commissioners.'

"2. The commissioners shall not be capable of being members of the Executive Council, or of either House of Parliament, and shall not be allowed to act as directors, or auditors, or in any other capacity take part in the management of any bank, joint-stock company, or other financial institution, or of any trade or business, or to acquire or hold any interest in any land which may be required to be resumed for the construction of any railway.

"3. Subject to the provisions hereinafter contained, each commissioner shall hold office for a term of seven years.

"4. One of such three commissioners shall be appointed by the Governor in Council to be chief commissioner.

"This section shall come into force on the passing of this Act."

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he thought the Committee ought to be informed what were the intentions of the Government with respect to the duties of the commissioners, and what would be the relative position of the chief to the others. Was it intended that they should be all located in Brisbane and visit the various parts of the colony periodically, or that one should have charge of the Southern, another of the Northern, and another of the Central district, meeting periodically for consultation? It was quite possible that the Bill might mean more dangerous centralisation than they had at the present time. Amongst the measures introduced by the late Government was a Bill to provide for decentralisation by having officers located in the two Northern capitals, Townsville and Rockhampton, who should be charged practically with all administration, subject to the instructions of the Minister. So far as he could see, the present measure was a centralisation measure, if the commissioners were to be located in Brisbane. The Minister gave very little information on that point upon the second reading, and it was a matter of great importance. The railways, of course, must be worked as a whole. The commissioners ought to be familiar with the whole of them, but was it practicable for three men to do here the work that was being done in Victoria? Was it practicable that they could make themselves acquainted with all the railways of the colony and also attend to the details of management, as was done in Victoria? If the hon. gentleman had as distinct an idea on the subject as he ought to have, he should communicate it to the Committee. Upon the administration of the commissioners depended the advantage or otherwise of the scheme.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said, if he were to lay down all the little things the commissioners were to do, and describe what they were given to do every hour of the day, every week in the month, and every month in the year, they would not require commissioners. The commissioners would be experts, and to them would be left the management of all details. It was because they did not know those things themselves that a change in the system was necessary. He knew that the leader of the Opposition found pleasure in drafting Bills and entering into minute details, and no doubt he would be glad to enact the days on which the commissioners were to sit, and tie them down in every possible way; but he (Mr. Nelson) believed in leaving that part of the Bill as elastic as possible, and trusting to get the men they expected to get—that was, the very best men procurable. As to the relative positions of the commissioners and the Ministry, he had explained that. The difficulty that appeared to exist with the leader of the Opposition was one which he confessed he was unable to see. He was under the impression that full provision was made for the various officers who would be required under the railway system of the colony, and where the measure was defective in that particular he was not at present aware.

Mr. PAUL said that had it not been for the deadlock which unfortunately occurred, although fortunately the side on which he was sitting came out triumphant, he had intended to move for the papers connected with certain proceedings on the Central line of railway, which he should do on a future occasion, and which proved beyond doubt the necessity for commissioners to manage the railways. However, he was not going into

that now. The only thing he regretted was the absence of those papers, which would have been of very great assistance to hon. members on both sides of the Committee in considering the question before them. Those papers, if produced, would have shown how disgracefully ministerial influence was brought to bear in connection with the railways. He would point out that the commissioners, by clause 14, would do their duty in the same way as the Land Board did; and he thought the appointment of that board was one of the most creditable things in connection with the Land Act of 1884—an Act the details of which he could not agree with. The appointment of the Land Board was the redeeming feature of that Act, and he thought hon. members would agree with him that the board had carried out their duties in a most efficient manner. They visited all parts of the country, and made themselves acquainted with the requirements of every district, and he was perfectly certain that, if they could get a similar board of railway commissioners, the Act would prove a great success. The Minister for Railways—who would either hold a separate office or be connected with another department—would guide the policy of the department, whilst the three commissioners would be like the Land Board, and would visit all parts of the colony acquiring information which would enable them to carry out the details of their work in an efficient manner. When the Bill was introduced the question was raised as to the conditions of Victoria and Queensland being entirely different—that in Victoria the railway system was compact, and that that was the cause of their success; but it was incontestable that Queensland had a greater necessity for commissioners to manage the railways, on account of the great extent of the lines and their being so much scattered. They had so many railways scattered throughout the colony that they could not be managed by a Minister as efficiently as the Victorian railways could be. If the management of the lines was brought under commissioners free from all political influence, who would hold the Ministry in check as it were, the scheme ought to prove most effective. As a humble member of that Committee he would express a hope that the Government would not overlook the efficient members of the present staff, although he thought it would be a wise thing to introduce new blood into the Commission by appointing as chairman a gentleman who had had practical experience of the working of railways in the old country.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he thought the Minister for Railways had not properly answered the question raised by the leader of the Opposition. The leader of the Opposition desired to know what were the intentions of the Government with regard to the relative positions of the chief commissioner and those who were to be appointed to assist him. What were to be his powers? Was he to have greater powers than the others? Surely the hon. gentleman must have some ideas upon that point. He must know what was to be expected from the commissioners, and what the desire of the Government was in the matter, whether the commissioners were to be centralised in Brisbane, or whether one or more of them was to be located in the other parts of the colony.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Read clause 14.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said he did not understand clause 14, to which his attention had been directed, to imply what the commissioners' duties were, and their positions. Did they propose to throw the Bill into the hands of the commissioners and tell them that they could just go to work as they liked, conduct their

operations as they pleased, from any centre they chose, and make their own arrangements as to who should have the chief power? Surely there must be some way in which the commissioners would be responsible to the Minister for the way in which they discharged their duties. In a new measure like that, the country was anxiously looking out to see what the intentions of the Government were, and they expected that the Minister in charge of the Bill would indicate the lines upon which the power of the commissioners was to be exercised, and he did not think it an unreasonable question. He thought the people in the Central and Northern districts had a right to know whether the system of centralisation that had been carried on in the past with—as it had been alleged—such detrimental results to the general interests of the colony—so much so that the Government had a great difficulty to meet in connection with the agitation for separation founded upon that mode of governing—was going to be continued. He thought at a time such as the present, when they were making a new departure, they had a right to be informed whether it was the intention of the Government that the commissioners were to be permanently located in Brisbane like the Land Board.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: The Land Board is not.

Mr. RUTLEDGE said they were located in Brisbane, but it was a part of their duty to visit certain parts of the colony as occasion might require. He did not understand that the system as worked by the Land Board was a system of decentralisation in that way. In fact, when the Land Act was under discussion, one of the points most keenly contended for by the then Opposition was that there should be local land boards, and not a central board exercising judicial functions in respect of the lands of the colony. The Government of the day distinctly gave its decision against local land boards. The question was, whether the proposed commission was to be a central commission operating in Brisbane, and only exercising its functions in the different parts of the colony, as occasion might arise from time to time. Another very important question which deserved an answer was—what was to be the relative status of the chief commissioner and the assistant commissioners, and, as in Victoria, was the chief commissioner to have the power to override the opinions of his assistants?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said that, with regard to what the hon. member had said, he could only tell him to read the Bill through.

Mr. RUTLEDGE: I can see what is in the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said the relative position of the chief commissioner and the two others had been already referred to, and was dealt with in clause 14. It was not necessary to go over the same ground again. The hon. gentleman seemed to think that there was some great evil going to come—that the railways were going to be handed over to the unrestricted control of the commissioners. There was no such provision in the Bill. The hon. member had talked of their handing the railways over to the commissioners to do what they liked with them; but they were not going to do anything of the sort. The Bill simply provided that the Government should appoint a chief commissioner, and define what his duties were to be.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: It does not say anything whatever about it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said the Bill provided that the chief commissioner

should preside over the meetings of the commission, and where only two were present the senior of them should occupy the chair, and have a casting vote.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: What does that prove? He sits in the middle.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: No; he cannot if there are only two of them.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said the meaning was that the majority of them should decide all matters. If there were any disagreement amongst them they would decide by a majority. In clause 20 the expenditure of money was given to them, and that was a most important thing. It would be utterly impossible for three men to manage their large railway system and remain in Brisbane the whole time. He would draw the hon. member's attention to clause 22, which was a very important one, and was as follows:—

"The duties and powers respectively imposed and conferred by this Act are in addition to, and not in substitution for, the duties and powers respectively imposed or conferred by the Acts mentioned in the second section of this Act."

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: That is purely formal.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said it meant that all the duties now performed by the Commissioner were to be performed by the new commissioners, and in addition they would have to perform the other duties prescribed in the Bill.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he could read the Bill. The hon. gentleman had referred to a purely formal clause. The hon. gentleman had conclusively shown by the speech he had made that he had not the remotest glimmer of an idea what was the intention of the Government in bringing in the Bill. He was quite sure that the chief commissioner would want to know before he was appointed what his position was, and if the hon. gentleman could tell him nothing more than he knew at present, he could tell him nothing. The hon. gentleman did not know what he meant himself, and of course he could not tell the Committee what he meant. Was it intended to centralise permanently the business in the hands of the commissioners in Brisbane, or was it intended that the commissioners should be localised? It did not follow that because a system worked well in Melbourne it would work well in Queensland. Although the system worked well in Victoria it did not follow that if it were adopted in Queensland it would also work well. The Government might inform them on the question he had asked. The Minister for Railways might have a satisfactory solution of it. How was it proposed to be done? Was everything to be managed from an office in Brisbane; or were there to be deputy commissioners; or were there to be commissioners specially charged with the different systems—Southern, Central, and Northern? Those were objections and difficulties which must be considered. He was not asking for details, but for a general outline as to how the scheme would be worked, bearing in mind the great distances existing between the different parts of the colony. How about the Gulf district? How was that district to be managed? Was it to be managed from Brisbane? If so, it might just as well be managed from the present Ministerial office as from an office of three commissioners in Brisbane. Was it proposed to have local commissioners, or were the commissioners themselves to sit locally, meeting from time to time for general business? Those were matters upon which the Committee were entitled to some information from Ministers. He did not believe the hon. member knew anything at all about the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said the Bill was a Bill to provide for the management of the railways by commissioners, and the hon. gentleman asked how those commissioners were going to manage them. They would manage them under the Bill, and with the knowledge they would possess of railway management. As to whether there were to be deputy commissioners appointed, they would decide that themselves. They would appoint a manager at Normanton if they thought a manager was required there. The Bill gave them full power to do that. They would appoint a manager at Maryborough, one at Townsville, and another anywhere else where, in their opinion, a manager was required. The Bill was for the management of their railways by commissioners.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: There is nothing to suggest all that in the Bill.

The PREMIER said there was a great deal of that in the Bill; and the hon. member had answered himself. The hon. member conceded that a Bill upon the same lines had proved a great success in Victoria. But that was because the railways there came to one centre.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: I said that a system which worked well under those circumstances might not work well under different circumstances.

The PREMIER said that he did not think he was misconstruing the hon. member at all when he said that the hon. gentleman admitted that the system had been a success. The hon. member went on further to say that the fact of its being a success there, where the railways were centred in one place, was no reason why it should be a success here, where the railways came to different centres. If there was any additional reason why it should be a success in Queensland that was the additional reason. He agreed with the hon. member that the railways must be managed as a whole; they must have the three commissioners managing all the railways, the Northern Railway as well as the Sandgate Railway. But to ask them to put down in detail the petty details of the management—how they were to carry out the work upon the different railways—was to assume that they were possessed of knowledge by which they could dispense with the Bill altogether. The commissioners would see clearly what was expected of them under the Act; they would appoint good traffic managers, or locomotive managers, in different parts of the colony, and they would be thoroughly responsible to Parliament for what they did. The Government were not going to destroy the position the commissioners would be placed in by dictating to them as to how their work was to be done. They were getting men to undertake the management of their railways who knew better how to do it than themselves, and they would be men in whom they could trust.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the hon. member had given them some information, and he evidently had some idea of what the Bill was about.

The PREMIER said he wished he knew half as much about it as his hon. friend the Minister for Railways.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the Minister for Railways did not seem to know anything about it. He had asked the question whether the commissioners were to sit in Brisbane and manage the railways from there. It was stated during the second reading of the Bill that the commissioners were to have co-ordinate authority, but now they were told that one of them was to have twice as much salary as the other two. They required information as to

whether the commissioners were to manage the railways from one part of the colony. They were entitled to know what the scheme really was before they gave their adherence to it, and the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill should give them all the information in his power as to how the scheme was going to work. Let them know what it was they were going to do before they did it. The Bill before them was not one which, if found to be wrong this year, could be made right next year. Most Bills were of that nature, but the one before them could not be dealt with in that way. He was anxious that the Bill, when passed, should be as useful as possible, and he was particularly anxious that there should be no unnecessary centralisation. The hon. member said it was all provided for in the Bill, and that, if a certain number of officers were required in different places, the commissioners would appoint them. That was not provided for under the Bill. Parliament would have to provide the officers, or rather the money to pay them, and they would not get men to accept offices without salaries. It would then be for Parliament to say what officers they would appoint. They were certainly entitled to ask now, was it intended that there should be for each railway under those commissioners what he might call a "local manager"? He supposed there would have to be one. It would be an interesting question then to know what their functions would be. At present, it should be remembered, the Minister was responsible for everything, and they were proposing to make an entire change, and under the circumstances the Committee was clearly entitled to know the real nature of the change proposed to be made. He did not ask for the information with a desire to obstruct the progress of the Bill, but that the Committee might thoroughly understand what it was they were doing, so that if they found any alterations were necessary they might be able to make them as they went along.

The PREMIER said it could not have struck the hon. gentleman that it had ever crossed the minds of Ministers that one of those commissioners should sit in Normanton, another at Cairns, and another at Brisbane. They sat as a board together. They had chosen a different course from that adopted in Melbourne. They had decided to have three commissioners, and one of them a chief commissioner. The chief commissioner would, no doubt, be the best man and the highest paid, and he would have the natural ascendancy which his position would give him as chief commissioner; but there was no doubt that, under the Bill, he was liable to be outvoted by the other two. If the Committee thought that was a wrong position in which to place him let them give him additional power. As a matter of fact, how they would work their business would be exactly the same as in Victoria. There the idea first started was that all the men should be business men, traffic managers, or men thoroughly acquainted with bookkeeping; but they changed that idea after a while and put an engineer on the commission, and when any engineering matter had to be decided before the board they would, of course, have confidence in one another, and the engineer on the commission would be the man appointed to act on behalf of the commission and to give the commission the information upon which they acted as a board. They acted as a board of experts. If it was a case, again, in which the management had got behind, or the bookkeeping was wrong, or some men in the department were defrauding the Government, another commissioner would be chosen. But that was a business they settled among themselves; it was not put into an Act of Parliament. They wished to make the Act as workable as possible, and had defined the duties of

the commissioners in the same way as in the other colonies where the system worked well. But the fact that in Queensland the railways converged at different points did not make the necessity for a board of commissioners less, but a great deal more. All the work done at the present time was done by the Commissioner, Mr. Curnow, who was perfectly overworked. There was really no management; the work did itself simply, and would continue to do so until they had those men of experience whom they were trying to get. The hon. member for Charters Towers asked if they were going to get a commissioner at £3,000 a year, turn him loose into the station, and tell him to go to work. It would not be done in that way. They were getting commissioners to extend the work, and their knowledge would make them work efficiently. Things would be changed afterwards. The House would have a larger grip on the management of the business. At present they were told there were so many engine-drivers, so many stokers, so many porters, and so on; and Parliament was asked to vote thousands of pounds, about which they knew nothing, and which they could not check. But when the commissioners put their estimates before Ministers, so much per cent. on the earnings of the railway, and could see year by year whether they were making the amount they asked for, and whether the railways could be managed for the amount they asked for, Parliament would be relieved of a vast amount of detail work which they were bound at present to leave to the Commissioner. All the information would be laid before Parliament. The Minister for Railways was not going to be abolished because there were commissioners. He would have his work still, and would have a great deal to do. What the Bill proposed to do was to hand over the railways, when they had made up their minds that certain railways should be constructed, to those men as experts. Hitherto they had often been lamentably led astray. The commissioners would be asked, before commencing, their candid opinion as to how much the railway would cost. That was a great thing in itself. As he had said before, the fact that the system had worked well in Victoria proved *a fortiori* that it would work a great deal better in Queensland, where the centres of railways were at such great distances apart.

Mr. PALMER said he was particularly interested in the decentralisation of the management of the railways, and thought there was a great deal in the contention of the leader of the Opposition with regard to the position of the commissioners. With all due deference to the Minister for Railways, their position was not defined in the 14th clause, and the 29th clause merely provided that they were to prepare estimates of traffic and cost, and other matters of information. But unless the commissioners were compelled personally to visit the lines, he did not see how very much weight could attach to their reports. Judges of the Supreme and District Courts were compelled to reside in the North, and he did not see why one of the railway commissioners should not reside in the North. The North ought to have that much consideration at all events. He did not wish to say anything acrimonious; he was discussing the matter from a Northern point of view, and some consideration should be extended to the North. It seemed necessary that one of the commissioners should reside in the North.

The PREMIER said there was nothing to prevent any of them from living in the North, but the fact was that the commissioners would go where their business took them. But they must go together as a board, and clause 14 gave them full power to do that.

Mr. HODGKINSON said he was glad to hear the hon. member for Carpentaria speak to that point, for it was a very important point indeed in the eyes of Northern and Western residents. The area of Victoria was only one-eighth that of Queensland, and the commissioners there, from one central point, had only one-eighth of the area to travel over that the Queensland commissioners would have. It took two commissioners to make a board. Assuming that one commissioner was spending a portion of his time in whatever portion of the colony might be the subject of the board's consideration at the time, virtually his evidence and opinion on that particular portion of the colony must be accepted without question by his colleagues, and the board was thus practically reduced to the position of one man—the man who had been inspecting that particular portion of the colony under consideration. He was certain that unless some provision was made for the appointment of a commissioner for the Northern and Eastern seaboard there would be a good deal of discontent throughout the colony; and he was rather surprised that the leader of the National party had lost such a grand opportunity of expressing his decentralisation views as that Bill afforded him. He did not see any difficulty in the matter. The 14th clause threw no light on the subject whatever; it simply provided that the commissioners should sit at such times as they might select. It must be remembered that the majority of the railway business was naturally attached to the South, which had a greater population and a greater amount of railway construction; and so long as Brisbane remained the capital of the colony it would remain the great centre of railway management. The great want in the North was want of railway communication. In Victoria the commissioners could go from their own centre—Melbourne—to the remotest portion of the colony and be back again within forty-eight hours, whereas in Queensland there were several detached systems starting from various points on the east coast, while another very important system was being started from the Gulf of Carpentaria. If they would compute the time it would take any one of those commissioners to go from Brisbane, say, to Normanton, and investigate that country, where there was but one solitary line—in a great colony that was crying out for railways in all directions—they would see that it was quite insufficient. He would say "insufficient," because there was no system laid down for the commissioners to act upon. They could do just as they liked. They need not leave Brisbane, and once they were appointed they would be appointed for seven years, except under circumstances which were very unlikely to occur—namely, that their appointments were cancelled by that House. He did not think the opportunities offered of making the Bill a decentralising scheme were being made use of. If their lines were to be managed as they had been, simply by managers, the probability was that those managers would be the present servants of the State; and what improvement could they expect under the circumstances when the eyes of the commissioners would very rarely be upon them? It might be by accident or it might not, but it had been his experience during the last twenty-five years that whenever any great dignitary travelled in the North, he invariably took the season when the climate was agreeable, and it was a species of pleasant picnic. They wanted officials in the position in question who would make themselves acquainted with railway construction in the North. For instance, the country between Normanton and Croydon, if visited at the present time, would appear to have been created by nature

to offer facilities for railway construction. He did not know the gradients, but he did not think Croydon was more than eighty feet above the level of the sea; and there was not the slightest doubt that, with labour and money available, that railway could have been constructed as a portion of the Pacific line was, at the rate of one mile a day. There was nothing to stop it except the want of cash. But let those gentlemen go there in January, or at any time between December and May, and they would have an opportunity of seeing what it was during that portion of the year, and would come away with a very different idea from what they would if they went up now. The present proposal was simply treating the North as it had been served for the last twenty years—officers going there and performing their duties in the most perfunctory manner, and looking upon it as a species of martyrdom to have to do anything in that portion of the colony. He thought the Government were losing a grand opportunity of gratifying not only the rights, but also the necessities, of the North by not clearly pointing out the duties which those commissioners, or any one of them, would have to perform in the Northern districts of the colony.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said it was quite interesting to hear the hon. member for Burke get up and address the Committee in the way he had done about the rights of the North; but what had he himself done for that portion of the colony? He had just come down from there, and now posed as the apostle who was to remedy all the wrongs under which the North was suffering; and the hon. member for Carpentaria, Mr. Palmer, had also adopted that rôle. But the North was not the whole colony.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: The bigger part of it.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that all depended on where they drew the line, and that could only be decided in the way he had indicated. Surely the hon. member must admit that the railways of the colony would be better managed by three commissioners than by one. If their railways could be managed by one commissioner sitting in the South, surely they could be better managed by three commissioners who could go about and see what the requirements of the colony were. He thought it must be admitted that the Bill had been brought in with the idea of improving as far as possible the railway management of the colony, which it was admitted by both sides was not as efficient as it should be; and he thought the hon. the leader of the Opposition, instead of cavilling at the clauses of the Bill—which was not in any sense a party measure, having been brought in by the Government for the benefit of the whole colony—should devote his abilities to assisting to make it as complete a measure as possible. They knew that the hon. gentleman himself had not been averse to appointing commissioners, for he had appointed commissioners to find out the faults which he could not discover himself in departments directly under his own control. They had seen the progress report of the commissioners appointed by that hon. gentleman, and which—he did not say it out of flattery to the hon. member for Toowong, Mr. Unmack—had been so ably conducted by that hon. member. They knew that in that case the hon. gentleman thought it advisable to appoint commissioners to inquire into the mismanagement of the Civil Service of the colony. The action of the Government in proposing the appointment of railway commissioners was a new departure so far as Queensland was concerned, but it was no new discovery, or pretended discovery, on the part of the Government. They were simply following what had been

proved to be a success in other colonies, and he was glad to know that the Premier was not so wrapped up in self-conceit as not to follow the good example of the sister colonies. He did not see that any great difficulty surrounded the question. As to the fact that the railway system of Queensland was not centred in Brisbane as that of New South Wales was in Sydney, and that of Victoria was in Melbourne, he thought, with the Premier, that that was an argument in favour of the Bill, and not against it. He was satisfied that with three commissioners—as good men as they could obtain—they would vastly improve upon their present railway management. And with regard to the claim of the hon. member for Carpentaria, that one of the commissioners should be resident in the North, that was a very small argument. Why did they not want an Engineer of Harbours and Rivers stationed at Normanton, where an inordinate sum of money was being spent upon harbour improvements? If the North was to have a commissioner, why should not the West have one stationed there?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: There are no railways there.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said they had a railway as far as Charleville, and he hoped to see one to St. George before long. They had one to Barcaldine, which was likely to go further; and he thought the claims put forward on behalf of the North in the way they had been by the hon. member for Carpentaria were ill-advised. He thought that if hon. members calmly considered the great benefits the colony as a whole would derive from the Bill, they would put on one side small local claims, and work for the advancement of the whole community.

Mr. HUNTER said if that was the way in which the reasonable demands of the North were treated, the cry for separation would develop into something very great. It was remarkable that the party which called themselves the Northern Union party were very dumb on that question. The only member of that party who had spoken was the hon. member for Carpentaria, and Northern representatives had every right to ask whether it was the intention of the Government to have one of the proposed commissioners resident in the North. The Minister for Railways had said he should be very glad to have suggestions from hon. members and answer any question put to him; but he had not directly answered one question that had been asked. They wanted to know whether it was the intention of the Government to compel at least one of the commissioners to reside in the North; and they had a perfect right to ask the question. The state of the country changed with the time of the year, and in order to get a knowledge of the state of the country in the North a man must live there all the year round. They had every right to ask the question, otherwise they might as well not be present. He hoped that members on the other side who came forward at the general election as prominent Northern unionists would say what they thought about the matter.

The POSTMASTER-GENERAL said the hon. gentleman was trying to air his grievances about the North, but had not made a single sensible remark or suggestion with the object of improving the Bill. A board of commissioners, composed of two or three persons, would not have the same pressure brought to bear on them as would be brought on an individual; and that was one of the reasons for the proposed change. If it were decided that one commissioner should reside in Brisbane, one in Rockhampton, and another in the North, that would be no

improvement on the present system, and the railways might just as well be administered by the Minister and the present Commissioner. The great object of the Bill was to place the management of the railways in the hands of a board of experienced men. They might go to the North when railways were projected there, and they might send in their reports from Brisbane. They might visit the North for the purpose of making themselves acquainted with railway matters there, and they might give their directions in Brisbane as to their management. At the present time the Minister for Railways might have an honest desire to work the railways profitably in the interests of the public, but he failed to do so because he had not the necessary experience. As regarded a man residing in the North—what was there in it? Was it that he should spend his salary there? The members of the board would be able to meet in Brisbane, Rockhampton, or Croydon, if necessary. He had no hesitation in saying that a great number of the appointments to the Railway Department would never have been made by a board—the experience of the other colonies proved that—because the board could resist the pressure which one individual was not strong enough to resist.

Mr. SAYERS said he took it from the remarks of the Postmaster-General that all the commissioners would reside in Brisbane. All Government officials, especially the highly paid ones, did not care to live in the North if they could live in the South; and he thought the same provision should be made with regard to one of the commissioners as was in force with regard to one of the Supreme Court judges—Mr. Justice Cooper: that he should reside in the North. He had nothing to say against the Bill, but the thing should be decided so that the people of the North would know the position they were in. The great cry with regard to the North was “decentralisation.” If the railways were to be managed by three commissioners residing in Brisbane—they would visit the North as seldom as possible—there would simply be the traffic manager the same as at present, and every question would still have to be referred to Brisbane. When any little grievance occurred with respect to the Northern Railway, in nearly all cases a deputation or a wire had to be sent to Brisbane; and if the commissioners resided in Brisbane the sole control would remain in Brisbane, and that was what the Northern people objected to. He was not a separationist, and never had been one; but he was very much surprised at gentlemen, who were such rabid separationists, sitting now behind the Government and on the cross-benches, and holding their tongues. They were told now that they would have to trust the commissioners, but they were told not long ago, by the hon. member for Barcoo, that an Act of Parliament should specifically declare what it meant, and that nothing should be taken on trust. They had to take everything on trust that night, however. They had to trust to the ability of the commissioners, though they might be either good or bad, and might live either in or out of Brisbane. It ought to be distinctly laid down that the Northern railways should be managed in the North. The North had been jeered at; but he would not ask for anything for the North but what was fair. He thought that the Ministry would see that there should be at least one commissioner living in the North, who should be able to settle questions without reference to Brisbane. The Colonial Treasurer referred to there being an officer of the Harbours and Rivers Department in the North, and he believed that was a highly proper thing, because it was by such means only that the North would be satisfied. It would be most satisfactory to the North to have one

commissioner resident there, and if necessary he could visit Brisbane occasionally to consult with his colleagues.

Mr. GLASSEY said the Postmaster-General seemed to be one of those hard-headed political economists who saw nothing in sentiment. He seemed to imply that it was mere sentiment on the part of the North to ask that one commissioner should reside there. Now, he (Mr. Glassey) saw a very great deal in sentiment, and it was impossible to govern any community without it. In addition to that, there was a great deal in referring everything concerning the North to Brisbane. He would like to ask whether the Government had considered the question of appointing more than three commissioners, and he would suggest that they might, with considerable convenience, and in the interests of the people generally, increase the number to five by appointing two practical working men as well. In an institution such as the railways, where so many working men were concerned, it would be of the greatest use to have two men as commissioners who could give practical advice when questions of appeal had to be decided. If it would not be considered improper, he would move that the word “three” be struck out, with the view of inserting the word “five.”

The PREMIER said he must say that the hon. member for Bundamba was logical. They had heard a great deal of the North, and they had heard a great deal against the Bill, but they had not heard one single practical suggestion as to what was the remedy for the Northern grievances. Of course, to follow out hon. members' arguments they must conclude that they wanted more commissioners, and the hon. member for Bundamba had asked for more for them. That which Northern members had not the courage to do he had done for them. But he would ask the hon. member was it practicable? Had he given any reason for increasing the number? He said two good working men should be appointed. There would be a great many working men appointed under the commissioners, and their advice would be taken if it was worth taking; but he would like to hear arguments in favour of increasing the number. The hon. members for Burke and Charters Towers had come down with their Northern grievances. What did they mean? What was the alternative? It was, more commissioners. They did not propose an amendment, but let the hon. member for Bundamba do it honestly and straightforwardly. But was it not absurd? Hon. members wanted a board of commissioners at every centre. He did not think that plan could possibly be followed out. There were seven different points on the seaboard that the railways came down to, and surely they were not going to have a board to manage each line by itself. The question was not worth while arguing, and the leader of the Opposition had admitted that. Then came the other alternative—more commissioners. If hon. members wanted more commissioners they must show some reason for it. He thought that three would be quite enough for the work, but if three were not enough for the work when they had commenced to work, and the effect of the Act had been seen, they would be able to amend it and appoint more commissioners. Then, again, if it was shown that there was necessity for working men being appointed as commissioners, the Act could be amended in that direction. He hoped the hon. member would withdraw his amendment, because it would only serve to waste time. They had thrashed out the subject thoroughly, and the Committee having aired the Northern grievance might well allow some further progress to be made.

Mr. GLASSEY said he was not by any means wedded to the amendment, but he thought there were many reasons that might be adduced to show that practical working men might be appointed as commissioners. He would draw hon. members' attention to one very important point brought out by the Commission that inquired into the working of the Education Department, and that was the arbitrary manner in which men were sent from place to place regardless of their homes, their comfort, and the ties by which they were surrounded. The same thing took place in other departments. Men were sent from friends and relatives, and the strongest ties of humanity were severed; and yet they were told that no really practical argument had been adduced to show why working men should be appointed as commissioners. He supposed they were considered incapable of working with gentlemen who received £3,000 a year. There were few hon. members who had experienced the difficulties and hardships which working men had to contend against, and he supposed for that reason they did not sympathise with them. He said that in consequence of his mixing with the people, feeling as they felt, and knowing exactly the ins and outs and their desires of everyday life.

Mr. MURPHY: Mr. Speight is a working man.

Mr. GLASSEY said that he knew that; but he ventured to say that Mr. Speight had never taken off his coat and worked with a pick and shovel on the various lines. Neither had he acted as a railway porter, nor as a guard, nor as an engine-driver, nor fireman. He felt perfectly convinced that if they considered the question they would see that men of the class he had mentioned should be appointed as commissioners. He did not say they should be appointed with big salaries; not at all. Working men did not expect big salaries; but from his experience of working men he was satisfied that they would be a success. It would give undoubted satisfaction to the working classes. Besides, the commissioners in the removal of individuals could act in the most arbitrary manner, while a working man would not act so arbitrarily. Then with regard to the loading of trains considerable difficulty arose. In the distant parts of the colony there was no stipulation as to what load an engine should carry. An order might come that an engine-driver was to take a certain load. If he refused—the probability was that he declined—of course he was treated for insubordination; while if he took that load, and was late in consequence, he was hauled up before the traffic manager for being late. He thought if the Government would give the matter a little consideration, and if they appointed a working man as a commissioner, matters of that sort might be remedied. Such an appointment would inspire with confidence workers generally, and it would tend considerably in making the commission much more efficient than otherwise it would be.

Mr. BARLOW said it had been admitted that Mr. Curnow had carried on his superhuman work for about £800 a year, and if the suggestion of the hon. member for Bundamba were carried out, and four commissioners were appointed at £1,000 a year, and another at £1,500, that would bring the thing within the limits of the Bill.

Mr. SALKELD said the Minister for Railways had not shown how the appointment of three commissioners was going to affect or do away with centralisation, any more than at present under a Minister and one commissioner. He found that by clause 14 the commissioners were allowed to sit wherever and whenever they thought fit, and provided that

two commissioners should form a quorum, so that the three commissioners could not form two courts at the same time. He failed to see that if the three commissioners were to sit as a court they would get through any more work than one commissioner. They would all require to be cognisant of the cases they were required to decide, and they would not decide on the investigations of only one of them. One member would not be allowed to arrange one matter, and the others have to give their sanction to it without knowing the merits of the case. They could not expect that they would do that; so that the three commissioners would not do any more work than one would. He maintained that the Government had not shown how the Bill would do away with the system of centralisation that had prevailed in the past. They had not shown that the Bill was going to be a relief in any way. If the Government would candidly say that, then hon. members would understand it, but they wished to imply that it would do away with the evil of centralisation. There was no provision in the Bill for it. He admitted that it was a difficult matter, and he thought the Government should acknowledge that it was a difficult matter to manage railways at great distances from Brisbane. The railways of Queensland presented a problem different from any other system in the Australian colonies. Bills had been brought in in New South Wales and South Australia on the strength of the success of the scheme in Victoria, and a general impression had got abroad that the system in Victoria was a wonderful success. He had very grave doubts about that. There had not been anything like the opening up of new territory in Victoria since the commissioners had taken charge, as for some years previously; and he would point out that they had not been more free from accidents since the commissioners had been appointed.

Mr. MURPHY: They have only had one.

Mr. SALKELD said there had been at least one serious accident—that at Prahran. The inquiry disclosed the fact, which was acknowledged by the officials, that the traffic department was in a most disorganised state. He maintained that was one of the most important things in the working of the railways. If the traffic department was disorganised there was no security to life; and travelling, which was more important than any other matter in connection with railways, depended upon the efficiency of the traffic department. He would like to allude to another matter. The Postmaster-General had given them as one reason why they should have a board of three that they would be more able to resist pressure than one. That was not the case. How were three commissioners going to be able to resist any pressure? There was nothing in the Bill to enable the commissioners to resist pressure any more than the present Minister or Commissioner for Railways, except that they were to a certain extent rendered independent of action in that House unless it was directed almost by the whole House. One man in an independent position might as easily resist pressure as a hundred men, and if the hon. gentleman's argument was a correct one, the present Ministry, numbering seven members, should be able to resist pressure twice as much as a board of three commissioners. He did not know whether a commission of two would not have been a better plan. He had some doubts about the advantage of a commission of two when they were considering the question of the Land Board, but after thinking the matter over he came to the conclusion that there was as little danger of a deadlock with two in such a

position as with three, especially where there was a reference provided to the Minister. If they were to make the measure useful for decentralisation they must have commissioners in different parts of the colony. He should be glad to hear if the Ministry could show how the Bill was going to meet the cry raised by some of the Northern members against centralisation in Brisbane.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he had a point to submit, and in the exhausted state of the debate he would not detain the Committee long. They were informed that the commissioners would be beyond political influence and control, and no doubt in that respect the Minister would be relieved to a great extent. But the idea struck him that there were other things as dangerous as political influence. His own idea was that the three commissioners, whoever they might be, would not be infallible, and he saw nothing in the Bill to prevent them from becoming partisans, and influenced as much as three or four Ministers. The assertion was positively made that they would be beyond political influence, but he asserted that there were other things as dangerous as political influence; for instance, prejudice and many other things he could mention might be dangerous. The debate had provided an opportunity for three or four members from the North to talk about the grievances of the North, though some of them had stated that the demand for separation had died out. He was one of those who believed the North ought to get separation, and was big enough to make a fine colony in itself. There were fourteen or fifteen gentlemen coming from the North, and if they only worked together for the separation of the North, there was no reason why they should not obtain it, and it would be better than the everlasting cry for moneys to be spent in the North. When he saw so highly educated and able a man as the hon. member for Burke adopt that cry, he considered the hon. gentleman "narrowed his mind and to party gave up what was meant for mankind." He hoped the hon. member would become a leader of the Northern members, and let them go in for separation. They had really a smaller beginning when they went in for separation from New South Wales. They had really one man—the late Dr. Lang—but he was a host in himself. The North had fifteen members representing them in Parliament, and there was nothing to prevent them from going in for separation at once. Some hon. members said the separation movement in the North was dead, but he could tell them they were mistaken.

Mr. HUNTER: No.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN said he represented the North before the hon. gentleman did, and it was quite on the cards that he would do so again. If it was to be made a cry by every member from the North, it was quite possible that the South might go in for separation. He wanted to ask the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill, what would happen if any of the commissioners became susceptible to any of the influences he had mentioned, and did something by which any of their subordinate officials felt aggrieved? Was there any appeal from them to the Minister?

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: No.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Why not? He was one of those who thought there should be an appeal to the Minister. So far as he could see, the commissioners in that matter were entirely independent of the Minister, and had in fact the whole of the management in their hands. Supposing he became an employé under the commissioners and felt aggrieved by them, to whom should he appeal?

THE PREMIER: To the commissioners.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: But they would have already decided against him. He thought that was a point worth investigating. He would, of course, support the Bill, and would do what he could with other members to amend it; but he was not a strong lover of the Bill.

Mr. UNMACK said the hon. member for Stanley had raised a very good point; although, if the Act was properly administered, there was very little danger of the commissioners being subjected to any improper influences. There were good clauses in the Bill for the appointment and control of the staff and officers of the department, and for their promotion and so forth. He must say there was a great deal of justice in the contention of the hon. member that the final decision should not be allowed to rest with the commissioners, and he trusted the matter would be further referred to. He believed there was not a member of the Committee who doubted for a moment the honesty of purpose in which the Bill was introduced, and it was for each member to make such suggestions for the improvement of the Bill as would make it an effectual law for administering the railways to the best advantage of the colony. He wished to be enlightened upon one practical point in reference to the administration of the Act by commissioners. If he understood the statement made by the Minister for Railways correctly, it was that it was the intention of the Government to appoint three of the best experts in railway management that could be procured either in Great Britain or America. Now there were interests involved in the railways of the colony to the extent of £13,000,000, and that sum would be increased every year by a million or two more. He, therefore, thought that with interests so large and so varied it would be a great mistake indeed to introduce three men entirely unacquainted with the habits, customs, and ways of Australia. It would be most inadvisable to introduce men who were strangers to the colony, and who were all possessed of the same qualifications and abilities. His idea was that the chairman should be specially skilled in the construction and management of railways; that the second commissioner should be a business man of very large and varied experience, who would place himself in full accord with the public and study their requirements, and give his fellow-commissioners proper advice in calling for and accepting tenders, and in other matters; and that the third commissioner should be a man of large and varied experience in the management of the Civil Service of the colony, as about 2,000 Civil servants would be under their control. He believed that three men possessing the different qualifications he had described, and working together, would form a good, substantial board, and manage the railways in a manner that would give general satisfaction to the public.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said the ideas expressed by the hon. member who had last spoken coincided to a very large extent with those of the Government. It was not intended that the three commissioners should be all professional engineers. Neither would their functions be confined to the construction of railways; they would have to take the management of all existing lines as well. The intention of the Government was that they should get three of the best men they could for the salaries that would be provided by that Bill. One of them would be a specialist in railway management; and he would, as had been observed, require to be a man of great tact and accustomed to govern men, as the staff now employed on the railways consisted of somewhere about 3,600 men, all of whom would be under the control of the commissioners. Another member of the board

should be a man skilled in the construction of railways, and probably the third would be an ordinary business man, possessed of the abilities described by the hon. member for Toowong. Of course at the present time it could not be said who the commissioners would be. With regard to the observations of the hon. member for Stanley, he (Mr. Nelson) was sure the hon. member would take his word when he assured him that ample provision had been made for preserving all rights the workmen employed on the railways had hitherto enjoyed, and further that they had rights and privileges conferred on them that they had never possessed up to the present moment. The question had been asked as to what remedy an employé had who felt himself aggrieved. If his grievance were against a superior officer, as for instance the locomotive superintendent, the traffic manager, or a station-master, he would appeal to the commissioners, and they would be bound to hear and investigate his complaint. If it was a matter affecting any existing right to compensation or retiring allowance that was specifically provided for in clause 68, and if it was a question of promotion that was dealt with in clause 58 of the Bill. A station-master might suspend any employé under him, but he could not dismiss him, that power being vested in the commissioners. Of course, if dissatisfied with the decision of the commissioners, he had the right, which every other citizen enjoyed, of appeal to Parliament. The Bill did not take away that right.

Mr. SMITH said that, as a Northern member, he wished to express his views on that matter as concisely as possible. He thought the Bill would be a great boon not only to the North, but also to all the outside districts which required the practical knowledge of an able man to decide where railways should start from and where they should go to. Heretofore, as hon. members knew, they had had railways starting from the wrong place and going to the wrong place. He trusted that the railway commissioners would remedy that. He confessed that at first he was enamoured of the idea of a commissioner residing in each of the three large divisions of the colony, one in the Southern district, one in the Central district, and one in the Northern district, but when he came to consider the functions which the commissioners would probably be called upon to exercise, he came to the conclusion that that would be out of the question, especially if, as the hon. member for Toowong suggested, they were to be men possessing different qualifications. Suppose the engineer, for instance, resided in one district, and the gentleman who had the traffic management under his control resided in another, and the commissioner having the financial part of the work resided still further out, how could those commissioners benefit the construction of railways in the colony? The very essence of the board was that the members should consult together, that they should reside together, and that they should be at all times come-at-able. It was quite refreshing to him, as a Northern member, to hear hon. members on the other side expressing such a love for the North, and speaking up for the North, as they did. But he should like to have seen them, when they were in power, carry out the intentions which they seemed so anxious to carry out now. In the North, generally, they were called the "Queen-street Ministry." However, he hoped they would now exercise a great deal of liberality towards the North, and that more justice would be done to that part of the colony than had been done heretofore.

Mr. MORGAN said the Minister for Railways had frequently stated, with regard to the com-

missioners, that it would be to the interest of the Government to obtain the best men they could. Was it intended to go outside the colony for more than one of the commissioners? Had the Government made up their minds on that point?

The PREMIER: That question has been answered over and over again.

Mr. MORGAN said he had heard the question asked several times, but not answered.

The Hon. Sir S. W. GRIFFITH said he asked at an earlier period of the debate what were the intentions of the Government with respect to the functions of the commissioners. That had now been answered, and he did not see how it would be practicable to have resident commissioners in the different districts. A good deal of time would have been saved if the hon. gentleman in charge of the Bill had explained himself at the beginning, instead of having it dragged out of him as it had been. The Premier was wrong in saying that the question had been answered over and over again as to the intention of the Government about going out of the colony for commissioners. The only intimation he had heard on the subject was that the Government did not know where they would go.

The PREMIER said the information given by the Minister for Railways was that they had the whole world to choose from. They might go to England or to America, or they might even take a man from Warwick, if the best man was to be found there. They did not know where they were going yet.

Mr. BARLOW said there was a good deal of force in the contention of the hon. member for Stanley. Under the 48th clause all the railway employes would be under the exclusive jurisdiction of the commissioners, and would be deprived of those rights of appeal which were given to every other branch of the Civil Service. In fact, they had no rights whatever, except what the commissioners chose to give them. That was a matter for very serious consideration.

The PREMIER: We will discuss that when we come to the 48th clause.

The CHAIRMAN: Do I understand that the hon. member for Bundamba wishes to withdraw his amendment?

Mr. GLASSEY said he thought his amendment would infuse new life and blood into the National party, but under the circumstances he would withdraw it.

Amendment withdrawn accordingly.

Mr. MORGAN said the discussion thus far had been mainly confined to the duties of the commissioners, but there were some paragraphs in the clause which had not yet received attention. In paragraph 2 it was provided that the commissioners should not, amongst other things, "acquire or hold any interest in any land which may be required to be resumed for the construction of any railway." He was inclined to think that it would be better to prevent the commissioners from holding any land at all. Who was to know what land was likely at some future time to be required for railway purposes? The likelihood of any particular land being required might arise after the commissioners had acquired the fee-simple. However, that was a matter which he would leave others to follow up. The discussion had shown that the proposed change in the management of the railways would be a good deal of the nature of an experiment. Even the Minister for Railways had not so clear an idea of the lines on which the working of the railways would be conducted by the commissioners as the Committee could wish. But if they were simply going to make an experiment, the term of seven years, for which the

commissioners should hold office, was rather too long. It might well be limited to five years. That was a matter which might fairly be discussed. He did not agree with the contention of some hon. members that one or more of the commissioners should be compelled to reside out of Brisbane. It would be extremely unwise, and might lead to the early breakdown of the system, to separate them. The commissioners were to meet for consultative purposes chiefly, and when they were not engaged in business of that kind they would be travelling over the country and inspecting the various railway systems. At present there was only one commissioner, who, they were told, was very much overworked, which he could well believe. Each of the three proposed commissioners would have to do only one-third of the work expected from the present Commissioner, and if they were as capable men as hon. members were led to believe they would be, the work ought to be done in a very much more satisfactory manner than it was at present. He believed that full justice could be done to all parts of the colony by those three men if they spent their time going about the country, and a good deal more inspection was wanted than was now done. For instance, take the line from Cairns to the Table-land. There was a railway under construction now, of which some twenty-two miles had been let, and it was going to involve an expenditure of something like half-a-million of money; and when that was expended the line would scarcely be at the top of the range, with no prospect of immediate traffic, and it would require at least another half-million of money before there was any traffic. Where so much public money was being sunk there ought to be adequate supervision, which there was not at present. It was impossible for one commissioner to do all the work that was required of him. He would like to know what difference the proposed change would make in the arrangements for the supervision of the Northern railways. Mr. Hannam was at present Engineer-in-Chief of that division. Was he to be interfered with?

Mr. PHILP said he was a Northern member, and he could not see the use of one commissioner residing at Townsville, or Cooktown, or Bowen. He understood that each of the three commissioners would be selected for some special quality. One might be an adept at railway working, another at managing railways, while the third, perhaps, understood the controlling of large bodies of men. If one of those men were at Townsville, another at Rockhampton, and the third in Brisbane, it would reduce the efficiency of the board altogether. He hoped that some day the North would have a board of its own. Hon. members might as well ask that one of the Ministries should live in the North. Of course the time would come when the North would have a Ministry of its own, too. If hon. members representing Northern constituencies, sitting on the Opposition side, were sincere in asking for separation they would have an opportunity of showing their sincerity at some early date. It came with a very bad grace from the members for Croydon to sneer at Northern members on the Government side of the House. There would have been fewer members for the North on the Opposition side had it not been for the persistent cry of Northern members now on the Government side. When the Redistribution Bill was going through committee last year, Croydon was almost left out. There was only one member to represent Croydon and Normanston, but by the exertions mainly of Northern members they succeeded in obtaining two extra seats for the North. The hon. member for Burke (Mr. Hunter) said there was no cry for separation in the North at all, but there would be. There was

a time and place for everything, and he did not think it was right for Northern members to raise a cry for territorial separation during the present debate. The Bill proposed a great improvement upon the present state of things. There was one man at present doing three or four men's work, and though he was a good man he could not control the vast sums of money now being spent all over the colony. He hoped the new commissioners would frequently visit the North, even staying three months out of the twelve up there. There would be plenty for them to do. If they were not doing their duty in travelling about the country, it would be in the power of Parliament to remedy the evil. He hoped that the three or four Northern members sitting on the Opposition side would not be continually twitting Northern members sitting on the Government side with not speaking for the North. They had done good duty already, and when the time came they would do good duty again. If those gentlemen were sincere, let them bring forward a motion for territorial separation, and all the Northern members would support it. But it would do no good to be continually twitting hon. members on the Government side about their duty to the North.

Mr. WIMBLE said as a Northern member, sitting on the Opposition side of the House, he rose to correct the statement made by the hon. member for Warwick in reference to the Cairns railway. The hon. member was in error in his figures when he referred to the cost of that railway as being likely to be half-a-million of money. It might cost that amount before the railway reached Herberton. He thought all members of the Committee hoped the Bill before them would be successful, having for its object the proper management of the railways. It was certain their railways would never pay the interest upon the cost of their construction until they were properly managed, and he believed the commission proposed to be appointed would undoubtedly improve the railways in that respect. So far as the Northern railways were concerned there was no doubt of their paying; when they were finished they would certainly pay the interest upon the cost of their construction—however expensive they might have been. There had been no railway constructed in the colony for the development of goldfields or mineral fields that had not paid the interest on the cost of its construction. There was one matter he wished for some information upon, and that was as to the power of the commissioners in reference to the Engineer's department. So far as he could see, the Bill did not lay down any course. The success of the system in Victoria, and now proposed to be inaugurated here, had led to a great deal of controversy as to the varying chances of the scheme as applied to Queensland. In Victoria all the railways centred in one place, so that the duties of the commissioners would be more difficult to perform satisfactorily in Queensland where the case was different. But if they procured able men to manage their railways, it would give confidence to the home people who lent money for their construction. There was another question, and that was as to the salaries to be paid. He did not think £3,000 a year too much to give an able man to take the position of chief commissioner, and he considered £1,500 a year each was not excessive for the other two. It was far better to pay large salaries to able men, than low salaries to men without the necessary ability. The dearest men in point of salary were, as a rule, the most economical, and the cheapest in the long run. He would rather pay a man £3,000 a year who could make £5,000 a year, than pay a man £2,000 a year who could only make £3,000. There were several other clauses to come on in

which he would take the opportunity of suggesting some amendments that he thought would be serviceable in improving the Bill.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the hon. member for Warwick had raised a point as to the effect of the words "or to acquire or hold any interest in any land which may be required to be resumed for the construction of any railway." That provision did raise a difficulty, because, supposing a commissioner innocently bought land in a town and a railway was afterwards required to go there, what would happen? Would he have to forego his interest in the land, or resign his office, or what? He had thought that the difficulty was sufficiently met by the provisions of clauses 12 and 13, but he did not see how they would operate in a case of that kind.

The PREMIER said he thought the clause a very useful one as showing the intention of the Legislature with regard to the position the commissioners should take. Of course, the difficulty might arise of a commissioner innocently acquiring land over which a railway was afterwards constructed. In that case he would simply be allowed to get all the advantages that he could. The object of the clause was clear—that if he used his influence as a commissioner, or the influence of other commissioners, to acquire land, certain consequences would follow. That was the case they had to provide against. He did not think it was likely to arise, and did not see any other language in which they could express the object they had in view. Of course the clause was limited by ministerial action. If a commissioner, by the exercise of his influence, acquired land that was likely to be required for railway purposes, for the purpose of making a profit out of it, his action would be taken hold of by the Government and Parliament, and he would be punished accordingly. If, on the other hand, he acquired land innocently, no action would be taken. He thought that would carry out fully the intention of Parliament.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the word "hold" was what gave rise to all the difficulty and uncertainty.

The PREMIER said the clause was rendered innocuous by the fact that neither the Ministry nor Parliament would take action if a commissioner acquired land innocently, but they might leave a loop-hole if "hold" was omitted. The question as to retaining that word had been discussed by himself and the Minister for Railways, and, after mature consideration, they thought it more prudent to leave the clause as it stood. No possible harm could arise from it.

Mr. MORGAN said he understood the Premier to say that the Government could not prevent a commissioner from holding land in fee-simple. He did not know whether he was correct or not.

The PREMIER said the Government could not prevent a commissioner from doing so, and he did not see why a man, because he was a commissioner, should not hold land. Why should the commissioners be prevented from acquiring and holding land the same as other men in the colony, and getting a little of the unearned increment? What they had to take precautions against was a commissioner using his influence as a commissioner to acquire land. He was not at all wedded to the word "hold," but he had considered it more prudent to retain it. However, if it was the opinion of the Committee that it should be omitted, he had no objection.

Mr. MORGAN said he did not wish to do any wrong to the gentlemen who were to be appointed commissioners, but he thought it well that they should be kept out of temptation's way. He thought it possible—those things did always run

in possibilities—that a commissioner looking after his own little interests, might acquire, for instance, coal land, timber land, or land of any other description, and before the seven years of his tenure of office had expired, a railway might be required to run through that land. He might acquire an interest in that land without the Government knowing anything about it. That was the idea running through his (Mr. Morgan's) mind, and he thought perhaps it would be better to go the whole length and say at once that the commissioners were not to hold land.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said they must assume that all men were honest, and that the men who would be selected for the position of commissioners would not be amongst the worst—the dishonest men. They should safeguard the State against any possible danger in that direction, and he did not think that any man accepting the position of commissioner would object to the clause as it stood. Of course possibilities of all sorts might arise with men placed in positions of trust, and he thought it was better that they should clearly define to the commissioners what their actual position was—that they could not acquire or hold land which was to be used for the purposes specified by the clause.

Mr. BARLOW said the point appeared to be whether they should take away from a commissioner the right to hold land, a right that was inherent in every citizen.

Mr. LYONS said there was a provision in the Land Act of 1868 by which surveyors who surveyed land were liable to a very heavy penalty for dealing with the lands they surveyed in any shape or form, and he thought a similar clause might be inserted in the Bill, so as to protect the public against any abuse of power or influence by the commissioners.

Mr. BARLOW said he thought the Colonial Secretary did not catch the point he raised. The question was whether the Legislature had the right to take away the right of any man to become the owner of land in fee-simple.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said the commissioners would only be precluded from acquiring land under special circumstances. The clause did not say that they should not hold any land at all.

Mr. FOXTON said that if the commissioners were prohibited from holding any land which might require to be resumed for the construction of any railway, that would apply to every portion of the colony where it would be possible to build a railway at all.

Mr. HUNTER said he did not see why the commissioners should not be allowed to acquire land, any more than the Minister for Mines should not be allowed to buy shares or the Minister for Lands to acquire land. If the evil was allowed to exist in one case he did not see why it should not be allowed in the other.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said it was the opinion of some hon. members that the commissioners should be appointed for five years, but the Bill provided that they should be appointed for seven years. Was the term of seven years sufficient?

The PREMIER said the term of five years would make the choice of the Government too circumscribed; but he thought seven years would be sufficient.

Clause put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said : Mr. Speaker,—I move that this House do now adjourn. The business for to-morrow will be the Railways Bill ; and I would like to get on with the Chinese Restriction Bill. I can scarcely pledge myself to move the second reading of that Bill to-morrow, but I will try. In the event of my not being able to do so we will go on with the Railways Bill. At any rate the Chinese Immigration Restriction Bill will stand first on the paper to-morrow.

Question put and passed.

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