

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 10 SEPTEMBER 1889**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 10 September, 1889.

Questions.—Petitions—grants to agricultural and horticultural societies.—Formal Motion.—Warwick Gas, Light, Power, and Coal Company, Limited, Bill—third reading.—Railway from Dalby towards Bunya Mountains—committee.—North Coast Railway Extension—committee.—Adjournment.

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

## QUESTIONS.

Mr. McMASTER asked the Minister for Railways—

Is it the intention of the Government to connect the Southern, Western and North Coast Railways, when completed to Fortitude Valley, with deep water at any point of the Bulimba reach on the Brisbane River?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. M. Nelson) replied—

The Government will exercise its right of choosing the proper time to announce its intentions with respect to the railway connection referred to.

Mr. TOZER asked the Minister for Railways—

1. Is the report from the Railway Commissioners, laid on the table of the House, on the subject of the proposed railway from Dalby to Bunya Mountain, the only report or communication received by the Government from those Commissioners concerning the proposed line?

2. If not, has the Minister any objection to state the purport of any other communication from them concerning this line?

3. Will the Minister lay on the table of the House, before the discussion of the vote for this line, all communications with and from the Railway Commissioners and the Government?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS replied—

The answer to the first question is, Yes. The other questions are irrelevant.

## PETITIONS.

## GRANTS TO AGRICULTURAL AND HORTICULTURAL SOCIETIES.

Mr. GROOM presented a petition from the Royal Agricultural Society of Queensland, at Toowoomba, praying for additional assistance to be given to agricultural and horticultural societies; and moved that it be read.

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

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

Mr. STEVENS presented a petition from the Agricultural and Pastoral Society of Southern Queensland, Beenleigh, of similar purport and prayer; and moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

Mr. MORGAN presented a petition from the Eastern Downs Agricultural and Horticultural Association, Warwick, of similar purport and prayer; and moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

Mr. JESSOP presented a petition from the Northern Downs Pastoral and Agricultural Association, Dalby, of similar purport and prayer; and moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

Mr. ISAMBERT presented a petition from the Rosewood Farmers' Club, of similar purport and prayer; and moved that it be received.

Question put and passed.

## FORMAL MOTION.

The following formal motion was agreed to:—

By Mr. PALMER—

That there be laid on the table of the House, a return showing the number of artesian bores that have been put down by the Government in the colony; the depth of each bore when water was struck; the locality of each bore, with cost of each; also, the altitude; and how much in each case has been contributed by local authorities.

## WARWICK GAS, LIGHT, POWER, AND COAL COMPANY, LIMITED, BILL.

## THIRD READING.

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

## RAILWAY FROM DALBY TOWARDS BUNYA MOUNTAINS.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS moved—

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

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed branch railway from Dalby towards Bunya Mountains (Section No. 1), from Dalby to Rocky Point Dam, length 14 miles 58 chains, as laid upon the table of the House on Tuesday, the 3rd day of September instant.

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

Question put and passed.

## COMMITTEE.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS, in moving—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed branch railway from Dalby towards Bunya Mountains (Section No. 1), from Dalby to Rocky Point Dam, length 14 miles 58 chains, as laid upon the table of the House on Tuesday, the 3rd day of September instant.

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

said that before proceeding to the subject matter of the motion, he would like for a moment to refer to a question which was put to him that day by the hon. member for Wide Bay, Mr. Tozer, which was whether he had received any further statement or report from the Commissioners; to which he (Mr. Nelson) replied that he had not. Of course, he took the hon. member's reference to be to some written statement. If he had received anything of the sort, he should have been only too happy to lay it on the table; but there had been no communication whatever between himself and the Commissioners with respect to that railway, further than the report that all hon. members had had circulated among them. The only communication he had had with the Commissioners was this: During a consultation he had with the Chief Commissioner, that gentleman asked him his opinion as to what were the functions of the Commissioners in making reports that were to be laid before Parliament. He asked whether the Commissioners were expected to make a recommendation with regard to a railway or not. He (Mr. Nelson) turned up the Railway Act, and on referring to clause 27, found that—

"Before plans, sections, and books of reference of any proposed railway are laid before Parliament, the Commissioners shall submit to the Minister a statement under their official seal, showing their estimate of the cost of the proposed line, including therein the value of land required to be resumed, of the traffic on the line, and any other returns likely to be derived therefrom, and no resolution approving of such plans, sections, and book of reference shall be adopted unless and until such statement has been laid before Parliament."

Well, in reading that clause, his impression was that the Commissioners were in the position of a judge on the bench, and that it was their duty to examine into the whole case of any proposed railway, and to state the arguments both for and against it in any report they submitted to him to be laid before Parliament. It was quite possible that they had acted on that suggestion in the report before hon. members. Of that he was not in any way cognisant. The report was dated on the 24th of last month, and it did not come into his hands until the following week. The Commissioners left Brisbane on the same day, and on that subject he had had no further communication with them whatever. That report and the report on No. 4 section of the North Coast line reached him simultaneously, although one was dated some days before the other. None of those reports ever came before him in any way, either during consultation or otherwise, until they were printed, and the Commissioners' seal affixed to them. He hardly saw them any sooner than any hon. member of the House. He might have them in his possession, but as far as advising the Commissioners in any way whatever, there was no opportunity of doing so, and even if he had the opportunity he certainly would not embrace it. The idea of the Commissioners reporting first, was that they should give an impartial report to the best of their enlightened ability. Proceeding now to the subject before the Committee, he might mention that that line was first projected about the year 1882 or 1883. In 1883 a trial survey was made, and Mr. George Phillips, who was then inspecting surveyor, inspected the line after the survey was made and sent a report upon it to the Government in 1884. That report was called for, he believed, on the motion of the present Chairman of Committees, was laid upon the table of the House and was printed in the "Votes and Proceedings" for 1884. In that report Mr. Phillips spoke very enthusiastically with regard to that line, and evidently would lead one to suppose that it met with his entire approval. The matter, however, was dropped in 1884, and the surveyors were removed, their services being required more urgently at some other places; and nothing further was done in the matter until it came before the present Parliament last session, when they gave their partial approval to the survey by voting the sum of £15,000 for the construction of the line. The Commissioners described the line as leaving the main line from Dalby to Roma at a point a quarter of a mile beyond the western end of the Dalby railway station, and running in a northerly direction (partly along a closed road) for nearly nine miles; it then proceeded north-easterly alongside a road to a site close to the Rocky Point Dam, where the section terminated 14½ miles out from Dalby. The first part of the line, for some considerable distance, went across the Dalby town common and then entered upon land owned by Mr. George Morris Simpson. It passed through that gentleman's land up to the railway reserves, which were from 500 to 600 acres in extent. It then went for most of the distance to the terminus through the property of the Darling Downs and Western Land Company. The common objection taken to lines would no doubt be taken to that one—namely, that it went through private property for so much of its course; but if anyone looked at the map of the country they would see that could not be avoided, on account of the way the land was laid out years ago. The selectors were all relegated towards the Main Range, not altogether through the baleful influence of the squatter, but to a large extent from their own choice, because that particular locality, well-known as Cattle

Creek, had been famous ever since he had known the Darling Downs for its fertility and fitness for close settlement of small selectors. He could recollect an agitation which was got up when the Government at one time proclaimed certain lands open to selection by small selectors, and through that agitation the Government had to reverse their policy and sell the land they had proposed to throw open to the small selectors and give them that portion of the country instead. That had been done at the instance of the popular demand, and he could say, from personal knowledge and long acquaintance with the place, that no better choice could have been made. The report went on to show that the line would be a comparatively cheap one, though there were some watercourses that would require culverts over them. The report also stated that provision had been made for one station at the railway reserves, about eight miles out, for another at eleven and a-half miles, to accommodate the traffic from the adjacent Jimbour cultivated areas, where there was a large area of land at present under cultivation, and for a temporary station at the end of the line. A very small amount of town land would require to be resumed, and at present the value of it was not very high. The Commissioners said that the country through which the line passed had hitherto been used solely for grazing purposes; but that only referred to the first part of the line, because hon. members would see that provision was made for a station at eleven and a-half miles out adjacent to the Jimbour cultivated areas, and the cultivation beyond the first part had been rather extended. The Commissioners further said:—

"Between Rocky Point and the Bunya Mountains, where it is understood the line is intended to be projected, the traffic is likely to be an increasing one, as the reports furnished to the department indicate that the land in the vicinity of the Bunya Mountains is well adapted for close agricultural settlement, while the mountain scrubs contain an unlimited supply of excellent timber for building purposes."

That he could corroborate from a very considerable acquaintance with the place. The railway reserves referred to were portions 18 and 19, the former containing an area of 221 acres, and the latter an area of 320 acres and 3 roods. They were close to a shaft which had been sunk, and where a considerable quantity of coal had already been excavated and tested, and there appeared to be no doubt that coal existed on the railway reserves also. The country was inspected at his request about seven or eight months ago by Mr. Fryar, of the Mines Department, and a very favourable report had been received from that gentleman. That gentleman did not seem to have any doubt whatever as to the existence of coal upon these reserves; and as to the quality and probable quantity that could be got there, he furnished an estimate from a minute examination of the shaft to which he had already referred. That shaft was exactly one mile and two chains from the railway, and only a few chains from the boundary of the reserves. In that shaft, at a depth of a little over eighty feet, a seam of coal of over eight feet in thickness had been found with a few bands of indurated clay at intervals. Two of those bands were one inch in thickness. Going down for twelve or fourteen feet another seam of over four feet of excellent coal was met with. Mr. Fryar reckoned that there were 250 acres of coal land upon the reserve, drawing his conclusions from the direction of the seam, which he said ran east and west with a slight inclination to the south, that direction taking it through the reserve. They were now called railway reserves for the following reason: As soon as that railway had been projected he had asked the Lands Department to reserve the land

for railway purposes until the question of the railway was determined, but if the Committee approved of the construction of the line the Railway Department would hand those reserves back again, either to the Lands Department or to the Mines Department, to deal with in the manner most suited to advance the interests of the public. He imagined that they would be thrown open for public competition, so that investors might take up some of that land, and provide coal for the use of the Railway Department and of the general public, and he had every reason to believe that they would have some competition. Only that day he had been told that some residents in the Bundamba district were up there examining the land with the view of securing part of those reserves in order to start coal mining. The next paragraph in the report dealt with the coal question, and showed what an immense saving there would be to the Railway Department, and also what a large amount of traffic would be likely to accrue to the department from the extensive development of the coal industry in the district. As to the existence of the coal there could not be the slightest doubt, as Mr. Fryar's calculations were fully borne out by experiments in other directions. In sinking several wells in the district he knew that coal had been found, and he could also state that coal was found farther back towards the Bunya Mountains. The report stated:—

“From a return laid before Parliament during the present session it will be observed that during the year 1888, 13,504 tons of coal were consumed by the Railway Department at Toowoomba and at stations west and south of it. Had this coal been supplied from Dalby, the haulage over the steep gradients which are met with on the Little Liverpool and Main Ranges, over which only half train loads can be conveyed, would have been avoided, and would have resulted in a considerable saving of time, labour, and steam power to the Railway Department.”

That must commend itself to every hon. member of the Committee. He had had some calculations made as to the saving which would be effected by the coal being supplied from Dalby. The tables had been drawn up by Mr. Prewett, the secretary to the Railway Commissioners, who was an expert in such matters. He had not taken into account the return of coal for the year 1888, which had been laid on the table of the House, but he had taken the very latest returns for twelve months up to the end of June in the present year. The amount of coal used during that period was not quite as much as was consumed during the year 1888, but that was against the calculation. Mr. Prewett had also been asked to arrive at a conclusion as to the amount saved in carrying the coal from Dalby to the various stations west and south of Toowoomba—not by taking the cost of haulage at the rate charged to the public, but by taking it at what it actually cost the department, so as to arrive at the actual saving to the department. That he was enabled to do by reducing the whole quantity used at the various stations into train loads, and they knew exactly what the different classes of locomotives were capable of drawing on every section of the railway. The calculations estimated that 9,565 tons were used at Toowoomba during the time previously mentioned, and, taken at the actual cost of haulage, cost the department in obtaining the coal from Ipswich £2,900 19s. 6d. The same coal delivered in Toowoomba from Dalby would cost only £1,262 10s. 6d. At Roma the quantity used was 2,170 tons. The cost of haulage from Ipswich was £2,505 12s.; from Dalby, £1,415 3s. The quantity used at Chinchilla was 704 tons; the cost of haulage from Ipswich being £194 15s., and from Dalby £48 2s. 6d. The coal used at Warwick was 275 tons;

the cost from Ipswich being £158 8s., and from Dalby £85 16s. The quantity used at Wallangarra was 179 tons, which would have cost from Ipswich £114 8s., and from Dalby £92 8s. The cost of haulage for coal used at Dalby from Ipswich was £35 4s. The total saving to the Railway Department from that quantity of coal for one year would be £3,105 6s. 6d., which hon. members would admit was a very considerable saving. At the same time that did not show the whole of the saving, because it was reckoned that all the coal used by the locomotives on the Western line would be sent as far as Toowoomba. If there was a coal depôt at Dalby, all the engines working on the Western line would coal at Dalby; they would take enough at Dalby to run to Toowoomba, and from Toowoomba back again to Dalby. That would effect another saving of over £400 per annum. So that, taking everything under the most unfavourable circumstances into consideration, there would be a saving to the department annually, from having a coal depôt at Dalby, of, at least, £3,500. And that would increase the railway revenue exactly as if it had been earned. With regard to the quality of the coal, he might mention that when it was first tried the result did not prove satisfactory. It was tried on a very small scale, a ton or two being supplied to one or two of the locomotives. That was in 1885. The locomotive superintendent reported that he did not consider a test of that sort of much value, as he always found the men objected to new coal; and he thought it would be better to try it on a larger scale. A hundred tons was then procured, and that was tried with much better results, and the locomotive superintendent, Mr. Darker, was so satisfied with it that he advised the Government to order 500 tons. Mr. Darker further reported that there was little or no difficulty in using the coal, after making certain alterations in the fire-bars. That was towards the end of 1885. The Government, instead of ordering 500 tons, as suggested by the locomotive superintendent, took another course. They were so impressed with the value of the coal that, instead of making a railway out to where the coal was known to exist, and where there was no doubt it could be procured, they came to the conclusion that the proper plan was to find coal close to the existing main line of railway. Carrying out that policy, a drill was obtained from the Works Department, and sent up early in 1886, and set to work to discover what was underneath the soil. That was done on the Dalby reserve, a very short distance beyond Dalby. The experiment was unfortunate, probably because the men working the drill were not very efficient, and very soon operations were stopped for a considerable time. Several months afterwards the work was resumed, and at a depth of 500 feet they struck some sandstone, which gave an indication of about six inches of coal, nothing further. The attempt was then abandoned, after an expenditure of £1,200 or £1,300, and nothing further had been done in the matter since. He thought the policy the Government were now recommending, to take the railway through the coalfields, must commend itself to every member of the Committee. That saving alone, which would amount to nearly £4,000 a year, would pay about 7 per cent. on the entire cost of the line. He reckoned that it would be one of the best paying lines ever constructed in the colony, and that as soon as it was opened it would be producing a revenue. But there was also a great probability that there would be developed a traffic in coal for other purposes as well as for the department. With regard to the quality of the coal for gas purposes, he believed the trials had shown that it was first-class. It had been tried

at Toowoomba, and the report was that it would produce 2,000 cubic feet more gas to the ton than any coal that had ever been taken there from Bundamba. The evidence on that point, he believed, was undoubted, and probably the hon. member for Aubigny would corroborate the statement. It had also been tried at Brisbane. Passing the coal, they came to the end of the line, which opened up a large area of thickly-settled land. The number of selectors that he knew of—and having been chairman of the board there for six years continuously and member for the district at one time, he knew nearly the whole of them—amounted to 330, with their families, on that one area. There were very few of them who had not acquired the freehold of their holdings. The area they had taken up as homesteads was 322,430 acres, and there were 166 square miles taken up as grazing areas. The rates in the division had never exceeded 6d. in the £1, and yet they amounted to £637 17s. for that portion of the division. Those facts alone would give the Committee some idea of the density of the population at the end of the proposed line. There had not been very much cultivation, he admitted, up there so far. The homestead selectors were men who made a living by keeping sheep or cattle, or breeding horses, and many of them were well up to their business. Although his own (Mr. Nelson's) business was almost entirely connected with sheep, yet whenever he wanted a good bull or a good horse he went there for them. The bull he was using at present was one he bought there from one of the breeders on a cattle selection, and he was prepared to back it against any bull in the district. That, however, would not tend very much to the traffic on the line. Of course hon. members were all agreed as to the desirability of encouraging the agricultural industry, but he did not think many of them were aware of the privilege which the agricultural farmer at present enjoyed above the farmers he was referring to. When they came to compare the rates that the former kind of selectors had to pay with those paid by the latter, he was sure hon. members would be rather surprised at the difference. He had taken the trouble to work out the figures, with this result: The principal products of the district were wool, hides, tallow, and some agricultural and dairy produce. The amount of cultivation the settlers there had gone so far into had been not so much for the sake of export as for supplying their own wants, which were not very great, and the market for which was glutted. Now, a truck of wool, which was the principal produce from there, would carry four tons, and that truck, when loaded and running between Dalby and Toowoomba, would earn £5 2s.; the same truck, when loaded with hides and tallow, would earn £4 5s.; when loaded with corn and potatoes, it would carry five tons, and earn £1 11s. 8d.; and when loaded with hay or chaff it would carry only two and a half tons, and earn only 15s. So that it would be seen that a farmer who loaded with chaff, hay, corn, and potatoes, hardly paid a tithe of what was paid by the selector who loaded with wool, hides, tallow, and similar produce. He reckoned, therefore, that the traffic from those selections, which the Commissioners believed would be an increasing one, would be a really paying one. He did not think it possible to run a railway into a purely agricultural district, and make it pay at present rates, unless they had some other traffic to work in with it on the main line, which they had in the present case. Agricultural produce by itself, at the present low rates of carriage, would never pay any railway, unless they could provide some cheaper means of working

the lines than they were at present aware of. The last paragraph of the Commissioners' report went on to say:—

"It is to be regretted that it should have been found necessary to terminate the first section of the proposed line at Rocky Point, as the Commissioners are informed that by an extension to Maida Hill, about three miles further on, the line would have reached a rising agricultural centre."

He might as well explain how that arose. When the survey reached Rocky Point the surveyor had a doubt as to the route the line should take beyond that point, and, in order to settle the matter, he had to make some trial surveys. Those trial surveys took considerable time, and if they had had to wait until the question was properly settled it would have been impossible for him (the Minister for Railways) to have the railway brought before the House during the present session. He therefore decided to stop for the present at Rocky Point, where there was a good supply of water. The further extension of the line would depend on the report received from the surveyors in course of time. The estimate of cost was put down at £46,690, which included the value of the land, although the report of the Commissioners might lead to the idea that it did not include that. The £46,690 would be the total cost of the line, including the value of the land. He himself thought the land was over-valued, and the Commissioners seemed to be under that impression themselves. The statement that £32,690 would have to be provided was very nearly correct. As a matter of fact, £15,000, and not £14,000 as stated, had been voted for the line, but over £700 had been expended in the way of surveys, and so on. He did not think he could say much more to commend the line to the Committee. It was a railway which he had thorough confidence in laying before hon. members. He was perfectly satisfied that it would be a paying concern from the time it started, and he hoped it would be the means of developing a large industry on the Darling Downs—the coal industry. They all knew that when an article of that sort was provided in abundance and cheaply the consumption of it would increase proportionately. With regard to the valuation of the cost of the line, he had to express a hope that hon. members would not do as they did on the last occasion when he submitted a railway to them; that was to say, that they would not make their own calculations upon quite a different basis from any which he was aware of. If any hon. member thought the valuation made was incorrect, he should give his reasons for that opinion; but he (the Minister for Railways) could state that the valuations had been made up from the very best data available. They were not made up until the permanent survey had been completed, and until the department knew the whole of the details of the permanent section, so that the engineers were able to tell the quantity of muck to be removed to a single yard, and if with that data before them they could not make a proper calculation, they were not fit to occupy the positions they held. He did not wonder that hon. members should be somewhat sceptical as to the estimate laid before them, because they had been deceived so often in years passed—in many cases the original estimate being exceeded to the extent of 50 per cent. or more when the line was completed. But he did not think they would find that in connection with the railways he brought before them, because he always took the precaution of putting the engineers on their mettle, and telling them that he should hold them responsible for the correctness of their estimates. Moreover, in justice to the engineers, he should state, that when estimates were laid before the House previously, they were made up before the engineers had

sufficient data before them to enable them to form a proper calculation. But that was not the case with the line now proposed, nor any railway that he should lay before the House. In every case the permanent survey would be completed before the plans and sections were submitted to the House for approval, and they would then be able to obtain the very best estimate procurable. As some guarantee of the reliability of the estimate, he might mention that when tenders were accepted for No. 9 section of the Central line the competition was very good, no less than ten tenders of various amounts being sent in. When the time for tendering had arrived, the Chief Engineer and his staff prepared an estimate revised up to date, taking into calculation the price of labour and everything else at that time, with which information they made up what they conceived would be a fair price for the construction of the line. That revised estimate of the Chief Engineer was sealed and put in the tender box with the tenders, and was afterwards opened at the same time and by the same officers as the tenders were opened. On the occasion to which he was now referring there were, as he had stated, ten tenders sent in, and when the amounts of those tenders were added together and divided by ten, to get the average, the result came within £1,000 of the engineer's estimate. That was very satisfactory, and showed that care was taken to arrive at a reliable estimate. It was only by doing that that they could avoid the errors they had fallen into in the past. It was only by doing that that they had saved themselves from falling into error with regard to the Maytown Railway. Having taken time in that matter, and having refused to be influenced by the pressure which was brought to bear upon the Government to carry on that line, which they had every inducement to do, and having made an inexorable rule that before lines were tendered for or let in any way they should have prepared a reliable estimate of the cost of them, the country was saved from error with regard to the cost of that line, and he could congratulate the country on the result of the delay in that respect. At any rate, he was quite sure that it was a very wise policy not to hurry on those matters. He hoped that there would be no political animus brought into the discussion of the railway before them, and that hon. members representing Northern constituencies would not tell the Committee that because that line was not to be constructed in the North they could not approve of it, and that the Government were not giving enough to the North. He could not give the North any more than he was giving it now. The fact of the matter was, as every Northern member must know, that nearly the whole of the powers of the surveying staff had been employed during the whole of the last twelve months on the particular railway he had mentioned—namely, the Maytown railway. In his opinion, surveys ought to precede by two years at least the laying of plans on the table of the House. They ought to be a long way ahead of the approval of plans by Parliament. He had always been in favour of the extension of surveys, and if hon. members would look at the Estimates, they would find that he was asking the Committee to make provision for double the number of surveyors that were employed last year. With that staff of surveyors they would not be working in the dark. The greater part of the staff having during the past twelve months been engaged on the Cooktown line, the other surveys were, of course, in arrears to a certain extent. They ought now to be proceeding with the survey of the extension of the Hughenden line, the Tewantin line, the line from Normanton to Cloncurry, and from Cloncurry to the coast.

They might have the line from Townsville to Ingham properly surveyed; but it was too late now to submit the plans for the approval of Parliament this session. Proper steps had, however, been taken, as he had said before, to proceed with that work, and there could be no doubt that the plans would be ready to be laid on the table of the House next session. It was a line that he looked upon very favourably. With regard to the Bowen extension, there was no particular hurry for surveying that, inasmuch as there was the second section still to be built, and the time for calling for tenders would not arrive until about the end of the present year. By that time the three routes would have been surveyed to extend the line to connect with the Northern railway, and it would be quite time enough next session to lay before the Committee the results of those various surveys. They would also have by that time the Commissioners' recommendations on the subject. He did not think the Northern members had any great grievance to complain of—justly at any rate.

Mr. HODGKINSON: Don't you? I will show you.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said he would like the hon. member for Burke to show him what he ought to have done that he had not done. So far as he (the Minister for Railways) was concerned he felt quite satisfied that nothing more could have been done than had been done for the extension of railways in the Northern parts of the colony under the circumstances in which the Government took them over. The whole available surveying talent had been fully occupied in getting ready for the extension of railways where they were most required. At any rate, if objections were raised against the proposed line, he hoped they would be of a different nature from the objections which were urged against the last line he brought before the Committee. If any valid objection was raised, or any further information required with regard to the present line, he could only promise that after hon. members had discussed the question, he would do his best to give any further information at his command. It was of course impossible for him to anticipate every objection that might be raised. He moved the motion standing in his name.

Mr. HODGKINSON said the hon. gentleman who was in charge of the motion, when moving the resolution with regard to the Drayton deviation, prefaced his remarks by stating that he trusted no member of the Committee would vote on it except in accordance with his strict conscientious convictions. On the present occasion the hon. gentleman thought it unnecessary to make a point of that, feeling sure probably that hon. members would bear in mind his charge in connection with that line, and adopt the same plan now. He (Mr. Hodgkinson) only spoke for himself, and he must say that nothing had surprised him so much as the gravity, the almost unnatural gravity, with which the hon. gentleman had made the painful and elaborate statement that he had just made to the Committee. The great Buddhist faith placed the genesis of the world as resting on the back of an elephant, and if that elephant was removed the original chaos was restored and cosmos disappeared. Now, instead of adopting the elephant as a support, the hon. gentleman had chosen a bull, and the breed and locality of that bull had been made clear to them by the assertions of the hon. gentleman. He, for one, should take it as indisputable, but admitting that the bull was all that the hon. member depicted, he did not feel himself called upon to make an expedition to inspect him, or to vote for a railway so that he

might visit the locality in which he thrived. The hon. gentleman implored the Committee not to adopt the same course as they took with the Drayton deviation. He intended to adopt that course, for the simple reason that the arguments in favour of the Drayton deviation were much more powerful than those used in favour of the present line. In the first place, he would sweep away the ground of disputation, by referring to the statement made by the hon. gentleman in the latter part of his address in regard to the Northern surveys, namely, that the North had nothing to complain of. He (Mr. Hodgkinson) thought it had, and asked the hon. gentleman to quote to him a single instance, during the last twelve months, of any surveyor being employed on any Northern survey, either the Cloncurry, and Croydon or the Croydon and Georgetown line. It was only by the hon. gentleman's courtesy that he was enabled, with the greatest difficulty, to obtain a promise of a flying survey of the extension of the line from Croydon to Georgetown. Now those districts had been for eighteen years waiting for railway communication. They had been large factors in the production of the colony's wealth. Money for the construction of one line had been voted for a great many years, and at present the whole survey carried out in the Gulf country was being carried on by special contract with Mr. Phillips. The Railway Department, as a department, had nothing to do with the surveys in the Gulf country, except in pursuance of a contract arrived at with Mr. Phillips, and it was only by the hon. gentleman bringing pressure to bear on Mr. Phillips that he would in any way expedite the survey in that quarter. So much for the merit claimed by the Railway Department for the expediting of surveys in that portion of the country. He would now come to the credit assumed by the engineering staff with regard to the Maytown extension. It was a well known fact, and admitted by the hon. gentleman himself in proposing the Drayton deviation, that the carelessness displayed in the survey of the Maytown extension had only just now been noticed by the department, although it was pointed out in the reports of Government officers some years back, and was pointed out by him (Mr. Hodgkinson), as admitted by the hon. gentleman himself. Owing to the inexcusable negligence—and he could use still stronger language were the gentleman responsible for it present to defend himself; he could prove his assertions, and call upon him for a reply—owing, he said, to inexcusable negligence a great factor in the development of the Palmer Gold Field was simply stayed because the Commissioners' requirements of railway knowledge had not been complied with. With regard to the Cairns Railway, he would leave the member for the district to deal with it. He had shown that the North had nothing much to thank the hon. gentleman for. Not for a moment did he attach all the blame to the present Government any more than previous Governments, but the North had nothing to thank any Government for so far as railways were concerned. They knew very well that the fact was recognised in the last report of Mr. Commissioner Curnow, giving the details of the expenditure, and the amount of money voted and owing to the North, and still unexpended. But to return to the question before the Committee. He took it that the Railway Commissioners received their appointments and were paid high salaries—not high relative to the ability of the gentlemen, but high as compared with the resources of the colony—because it was supposed that the first thing they would set themselves to do would be to grasp a general idea of the railway communication of the colony; to

ascertain, so far as possible, the resources of the colony for railway communication, and then to formulate a plan, paying strict attention to the relative importance of the different districts of the colony, and of the probable payability of the lines, before submitting any further projects to Parliament. Instead of that, with the most extraordinary assiduity, they had contrived to become better acquainted with the railway requirements in connection with Southern Queensland than many men who had lived there for half a century. By what extraordinary intuition did those gentlemen become acquainted with the necessity of the Drayton deviation, and by what extraordinary intuition were they filled with the importance and necessity of the line upon which the present resolution was based? Parliament was asked to construct a line fourteen and a-half miles in length; and they were told as one of the primary motives of that construction that they would save £4,000 a year in the haulage of coal. Now, the hon. gentleman was generally very clear in his statements, but he was rather confused that evening, and rather hesitated to express a distinct opinion upon the quality of that supposed coal mine to which the line was meant to be constructed in the first instance. He said that certain trials of the coal in the vicinity of the main line had not resulted satisfactorily, yet he declared it as a fact that the coal was suited to the manufacture of gas. Anyone acquainted with the qualities of coal knew perfectly well the significance to be attached to those trials. The hon. gentleman did not for one moment dwell upon the one point that the consumption of those 13,000 tons of coal, which was to pay 7 per cent. upon the assumed cost of construction of the line, would have a depreciatory effect on the coalfields already opened up and in work. Now, he (Mr. Hodgkinson) asked him where that coal mine was situated—was it on Crown lands, or on private lands? Did the Government propose to open it, and work it for the benefit of the railway, or did they propose to run the railway in order to give an incentive to the present proprietors to open it up? He asked the hon. gentleman if he were to submit such a project to him, would he listen to it and consider it a good investment? The other night he rather excited the animosity of many hon. gentlemen with whom he was proud on most occasions to act in concert, by making some remarks as to the value of the agricultural interest. He shocked the ex-Minister for Lands because he spoke what he believed to be the truth, and adhered to his statements. The hon. the Minister for Railways the other day, in proposing the Drayton deviation running through a purely agricultural district, called attention to the amount of paying traffic that would ensue, yet that afternoon he told the Committee that agricultural produce was not a paying quantity for railway carriage.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Taken by itself.

Mr. HODGKINSON: Taken by itself. He was not going to misquote the hon. gentleman if he knew it, and the hon. gentleman entered into an elaborate calculation as to the quantity of hay and corn that a truck would carry, and the rate per truck paid for that carriage, and he said that should be combined with pastoral produce. Let them submit that to the light of common sense. How many tons of produce would grow on a well cultivated acre of ground, and how many trucks would it fill? And how many trucks would an acre devoted to pastoral occupation supply? He thought any squatting member of the Committee would bear him out in the statement that land that would support

one sheep to the acre was land of unexceptionable pastoral quality, and that sheep, presuming him to be equal in breed and development to the celebrated bull of which they had heard, would at the most give 7 lb. of wool, and that was taking a high average of the clip of the best quality of sheep feeding on the pastures of Queensland. The same argument applied to bullocks; so that the annual freight per acre would be at the outside 7 lb., and in order to obtain the same amount of freight from land under pastoral occupation as from agricultural land under cultivation they would have to magnify the area by at least a thousand acres to one. Perhaps there were other causes, apart from the quality of the land, which provoked the eloquence of the hon. gentleman. The whole of the land it appeared was taken up in very large selections, and much of it was owned by a private company. The hon. gentleman quoted the number of selectors whom the line would immediately benefit at 330, and giving those selectors an average family of four, which was doubtless in excess of the real figures, that would give a population of something like 1,320 people. Would 1,320 people with the cattle and sheep depastured on that land maintain a profitable revenue for that railway? Was it right to come down to that Committee with those chaotic fragments of a railway policy, and ask hon. members to vote blindfold for them, knowing that every sum they voted diminished the chances of railway construction for which the colony had been crying out for years? He was not going to oppose the line except on fair and impartial grounds, although it seemed to him that it stopped short of the point where it promised to be of some utility to the colony. It went through land which was almost invariably described as "unimproved" or "fenced pasture," and there was one solitary exception of "coal land," hinting at a probable development of coal; but the hon. gentleman knew as well as he did that the development of that coal would mean the expenditure of an immense amount of capital. The line went through pastoral country, and it had never and never could compete with agricultural country, so far as regarded the development of railway traffic. That was not worth arguing about; yet they were asked to vote £46,000 for the construction of that line through land which had already been alienated, and from which the Crown could derive no benefit, and from which the only problematical benefit to be derived, was a doubtful saving of £4,000, at the expense of existing industries, for which they had already provided railway communication. If those reasons were sufficient to enable the Committee to accept the dogma of the hon. gentleman, all he could say was that he had failed to see them. They had been cautioned on no account to interfere with the professional calculations on the subject, but strange to say the hon. gentleman himself was the first to set them that example, and to acknowledge the information which his own department failed to give him, and which he derived from hon. members of the Committee. In introducing the Drayton deviation, the hon. gentleman had made these remarks:—

"The next paragraph dealt with the financial aspect of the question, in which the Commissioners referred to the fact that the vote on the loan estimates for 1884-5 for that work was only £44,000; the estimated cost was £67,000; and they accordingly advised that £23,000 additional would be required to finish the line. There was a slight error in connection with that, inasmuch as the Commissioners had failed to observe that about £4,000 of the vote of £44,000 had been spent in surveys and other preliminary work; so that it would be his duty to ask the legislature to provide at least £27,000 or £28,000 instead of £23,000."

Now, the hon. gentleman had cautioned them against attempting to criticise the calculations

of the Commissioners, and he set the evil example by being the first to do it himself. He (Mr. Hodgkinson) would like to know also how some of that land through which the line was to go had been acquired. He would like to know how much of it had been dummied under the Acts of 1868 and 1876. In the discussion upon the Bill amending the Act of 1884, they had had many references to dummied, but there had not been a word said about it on the present occasion. He had no doubt there were many members of the Committee who would be able to continue the discussion, with a far greater local knowledge of the situation than he possessed; but he wished to impress upon the hon. gentleman that he was not animated by any opposition to any resolution the hon. gentleman introduced, but he felt it to be his duty to oppose the line until they had a definite programme of railway construction submitted to them, by which the money available for railway construction would be equitably allocated throughout the different districts of the colony. In so doing he knew he was earning the dislike and censure of gentlemen sitting and acting on his own side more than of gentlemen opposite, but until that was done he should feel it his duty to oppose railway construction of any kind whatever. There was a large sum of money incontestably due to the North; there were large sums voted and never expended, and large sums of lapsed votes, and so long as those existed, and some determined effort was not made to grapple with them, he would hold the same opinion with respect to railway construction. He did not say that because the present Government were in power, as if his colleague the leader of the Opposition was in power, he would immediately walk over to the other side of the House if that hon. gentleman persevered in pursuing the policy which had hitherto been adopted by the House. In pursuing his present course with respect to railway construction, he claimed the sympathy and was entitled to the active support of every hon. member representing a Northern constituency; and so long as he had a seat in the House he would continue the policy he had hitherto carried out in dealing with that question.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said he might say a few words in reply to the hon. gentleman. The hon. member had, first of all, said he was determined not to vote for any railway whatever until some scheme was brought up by which money for railway construction should be distributed in some equitable way all over the colony. It was a terrible pity the hon. member had not come to that determination before the Croydon line was brought before the House. Why did not the hon. gentleman start then? Why did he not say then that he would block all the railway proposals of the Government?

Mr. HODGKINSON: I started it in 1874.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said if that was what the hon. gentleman called an argument against other lines, and he had nothing better to say, it would be hardly worth while taking up the time of the Committee. They had engagements hanging over their heads which they could not get out of—he thought he had made that clear to the Committee previously. They were simply trying to do what they could in developing the resources of the colony where they were most urgently in need of it, and he was sure that he had made the necessity for the line clear to every hon. member of the Committee. The hon. member for Burke had not made good use of the talent of turning everything into ridicule, which he possessed in a very high degree, upon the present occasion. His attempt had been rather lame—at least he had not noticed the Committee laughing at the hon. gentleman's remarks, as they

usually did. Certainly, in discussing the Drayton deviation the hon. member had a cemetery to refer to, but along the proposed line there was no cemetery. The only thing the hon. gentleman had urged in the shape of argument was with reference to the statement he had made that the population in the district the line would pass through consisted of grazing farmers. There was no doubt there was truth in what the hon. member had said—that an acre of agricultural produce would fill more railway trucks than the produce derived from a thousand acres in the shape of wool, hides, and tallow. No one would dispute that, but in that case it did not apply, seeing that there was hardly one of those settlers who had not some portion of his land under cultivation; but if he took his produce into Dalby, which was an average distance of twenty miles he had to carry it, his profits were all consumed in cartage. He could not expect to compete with the produce sent from Toowoomba; but if that railway were constructed there was not the slightest doubt of the whole of the land being quickly taken up and cultivated. There was no better land in the colony for agricultural purposes; but even if the produce were not sent down by the railway, the grazing farmers, instead of being able to keep one sheep to the acre, would be able to keep ten or twenty to the acre. The district was one of the most favoured in the colony in respect of its climate. It was 3,600 feet above the sea level, and there were large scrubs of bunya bunya pine. The map which he had obtained from the Lands Office showed that there was an unselected area of about ninety square miles between the present settlement and the Main Range. He knew the land well, and so far as grazing land was concerned it was inferior land; and then it was farther away from communication. That was the reason it had not been selected for agricultural purposes, but a great portion of it was just as good as any other land.

Mr. HODGKINSON: How far is it from the terminus?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said it was about ten miles. For many years twenty-five square miles of the unselected land near the ranges had been a timber reserve.

Mr. HODGKINSON: How far is the timber from Rocky Point?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said one saw-mill was only about five or six miles from Rocky Point. There was another very large saw-mill which had been exporting timber to Brisbane for a long time in large quantities. They had to haul it twenty-eight miles to Dalby to the railway station there, and their profits suffered considerably in consequence of that haulage. There was scope, therefore, for a large extension of traffic, and for a large extension of settlement through the construction of that line. Of course it was intended, when the circumstances of the colony permitted, to push the line on another ten or twelve miles, and that would meet the requirements of that very large and very rich district.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that he rose to reply to a few remarks made by the hon. member for Burke. The hon. gentleman's speech amounted to insinuations against the proprietors of the land through which the line would pass. He hinted that the line was being proposed for their benefit, and in addition he hinted that they had acquired their land through unjust practices—that was by dummied. Now, he (Sir T. McIlwraith) was the manager of the company whose lands adjoined the line, and if the hon. gentleman referred to him—

Mr. HODGKINSON said he rose to make an explanation. He had never contemplated referring to the hon. gentleman, as he did not know that he was connected with the land in any way. Had he known that he should have been very careful in what he said. He had stated that he believed the land at the extremity of the line was pastoral land held by a number of large selectors, and he had asked how much of that land had been dummied under the Acts of 1868 and 1876. With regard to the lands to which the hon. gentleman referred, he did not know how they were procured, but he had always been under the belief that they were purchased from the original proprietors by the company which now held them. Such being the case, the hon. gentleman was altogether in error in supposing that he (Mr. Hodgkinson) even insinuated such a charge as that attributed to him. He would be the last man to make such a charge against the hon. gentleman.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he did not take the charge as personal; he was dealing with it as if it had been brought against anybody. The lands in question were purchased by auction from the Government under the Railway Reserves Act of 1876, according to which the land was to be devoted to the purpose of making railways in the district. That was a complete answer, for the money raised from the sale of those lands could not be devoted to a better object than to make a railway through lands sold for the very purpose. As to the hon. member's criticism, that the whole of the land along the line was pastoral, what did it amount to? The hon. member read from the book of reference line after line "pastoral," "pastoral," "coal," "pastoral," "coal," and so on. What railway, he would like to know, had ever passed the House that had not had exactly the same record, with the exception of the word "coal," coming in? Indeed, it was necessarily so from the fact that there was very little agricultural land under cultivation. The land was always marked in the books of reference as pastoral, because it never happened that a line was taken through land that was actually under the plough, but only to it. The hon. member also seemed to be in a great rage about the figures given by the Minister for Railways. What the Minister for Railways showed was simply that if the coal used by the department at Toowoomba, Warwick, Wallangarra, and Dalby, was obtained from Dalby instead of from Ipswich, the saving in haulage alone would be £3,500 a year, taking it at cost price. That was a very strong argument in favour of the line, for it showed that the Government were going to make a profit in that one item alone of £3,500 a year. How did the hon. member meet that? By saying that the saving to the Government would be a loss to somebody else—that the coal which was now supplied to those places would not, for the future, be got from Ipswich but from Dalby. Where was the loss? That argument might be used against trying to open up a coalfield anywhere. The Ministry of which the hon. gentleman was a member projected a railway from Bowen to the coalfields, although the coalfields had not really been found at the time. Would it have been a right argument to use against the construction of that line, to say that the line could not be permitted in the North because every ton of coal raised there meant a ton less sent up from Ipswich, and that the people at Ipswich would lose their trade? The question for consideration was, what was the profit to the country? With regard to the line under discussion, £3,500 a year was the profit to the country on the haulage of coal alone. For his own part, he had been forwarding the interests of that line for the last eight or ten years, ever since

he saw there was a great coalfield on the Darling Downs. His own personal interests in it were so small that they need not be referred to. He would only refer to the great interests lying at stake in having a coalfield opened up on the Darling Downs. He knew quite well that it was said some years ago that in projecting that line he was trying to forward his own interests. What he did in 1885 was, that he wrote to the Government informing them that the company had got coalbeds on their own ground, told them the depth of the seam and the quality of the coal, and gave them every opportunity of sampling it to the extent of 1,000 tons; and he also offered them the whole mine, to work themselves, without any charge for five years, and after that for twenty-one years for a nominal amount of royalty. As the offer was still in existence, he stood absolutely acquitted of having the slightest personal interest in the construction of the line. All he wanted to show was that the construction of the line would result in a large saving to the Government, and would open what he considered a splendid coalfield. The hon. member referred to the great amount of capital necessary to open up a coalfield. The company had opened up the coalfield at its own expense, and had got it ready for starting work to-morrow. They had offered the Government as much coal as they liked for five years for nothing, and for a nominal royalty for the next twenty-one years. As to the quality of the coal, there was no doubt that Mr. Fryar was one of the best authorities on coalfields in the colony, and the following was what he said in his report on that particular field:—

“At the Dingo Point well the shaft has been sunk through 70 feet of surface soil, then  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet of impure coal, which would make a safe roof, then a seam of coal 8 feet thick, but with 5 bands of shale, having an aggregate of 1 foot, leaving 7 feet of workable coal, under which there is 13 feet of fireclay and shale, and a second coal seam 4 feet thick, with three thin partings of clay. But the lower seam, in consequence of water in the shaft, could not be fully examined.”

He might mention that they had since gone through the second seam of coal and ascertained that it was eight feet thick.

“The comparative value of the coal as fuel has been determined by burning fine samples taken from the different parts of the seam in a small vertical steam engine, with a special tank for measuring the water evaporated, the apparatus having been used for testing almost all the coals found in other parts of Queensland, and also some from New South Wales; so that the relative results can be relied on for the determination of the relative value of steam coals in the market.

“As a steam coal it comes closely up to the average of the Ipswich coal, now in use on the railway, in regard to the work done per ton; but it has a great advantage in its superior hardness and weather-resisting qualities, while the Ipswich coals are so tender that it is difficult to prevent their wholly falling into ‘slack.’

“The economic value as a gas coal is about double the average of the Ipswich coals.

“Apart from the value of the Jimbour coal as fuel, it has, perhaps, a higher prospective value as a source of paraffine and illuminating oils, giving  $16\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. of crude petroleum, or about 37 gallons per ton of coal. The manufacture of illuminating oils as a commercial question involves many contingencies that are beyond the scope of this report, and it is, therefore, sufficient to state that an unlimited supply of the raw material available.”

At that time he (Sir T. McIlwraith) was not a member of Parliament, but he was anxious that the Darling Downs coalfield should be opened up, and when he received the report from Mr. Fryar and Hon. A. C. Gregory he wrote the following letter, on behalf of the company of which he was manager, to the then Minister for Mines and Works, Mr. Miles:—

“Sir,

“Sir Thomas McIlwraith lately had the honour of an interview with you, in reference to the supply of coal for the Southern and Western Railway, west of the Main Range. At that interview, you were good

enough to desire him to put his views in writing, and I am instructed by my board to lay before you two propositions, either of which the Darling Downs and Western Land Company are prepared to carry out.

“Before doing so, however, allow me to draw your attention to the fact that at present 12,000 tons of coal is required by the Department for Railways west of the Main Range. This coal is at present purchased at the Ipswich coalfield, and hauled by the department up the steep gradients of the Main Range. This is done at large expense to the Government, and to the serious interference with the general traffic of the railway. It is clear that the Government have felt the strain on the working department, for efforts have been made at different times to secure coal west of the Main Range. At present a diamond drill is prospecting for coal close to Dalby, and from this fact the company conclude that Dalby is looked upon by the Government as about the most convenient centre for the supply of coal for the railway.

“On section 6, parish of Jimbour, the company have sunk a shaft to a depth of eighty feet, at which depth a very good seam of coal has been worked. This seam is eight feet in thickness, having, after deducting three leads of shale equal to one foot, a workable seam of coal seven feet thick. This coal has been used by the company on the station for domestic purposes, for gas making, and for steam purposes in connection with the engines employed. There are seldom less than three engines constantly at work, and for these no other fuel than the coal referred to is used. We have found the coal good for steaming purposes. We have supplied the Railway Department with 100 tons for trial, and no doubt from your experience you are in a position to know its value. Allow me, however, to point out that the coal supplied for trial has been exposed to the weather in the open air for the last eighteen months, and has, I believe, been consequently much deteriorated in quality. We have at present at the pit over 500 tons, which can be inspected, and the mine itself is also open for inspection.

“I enclose a report made on this coalfield by the Hon. A. C. Gregory, C.M.G., which will give you a large amount of information on which to base your judgment. I forward also a plan of the district showing in red pencil the situation of the pit and the road by which it is reached from Dalby. From the pit to the main road leading from Dalby to Jimbour, and thence along that road to the railway line near Dalby is about ten miles distance. A tramway that length connecting the pit with the railway at Dalby could be laid down by the Government, to be worked either by steam or horse, for about £4,000 to £5,000.

“The two proposals which we have to make are based on the assumption that the Government will construct the tramway. They can acquire powers to construct the line along the main road, which is 10 chains wide, as far as section 4, parish of Jimbour. From that point through sections 4, 5, and 6, the company are willing to grant free to the Government the right-of-way to the mine. The tramway may be laid on the surface all the way, the road is quite level, and few culverts required.

“The propositions which the company make to the Government are:—

“1st. The company will hand over free to the Government, for their sole use, the coalpit as it now stands, with the right to mine for coal as far as they choose to extend the workings, and to use the coal free of any royalty for the next five years. Should a longer term be desired, the company will continue the arrangement on a royalty of 1s. per ton. This agreement to apply to all coal used by the Railway Department. If, however, the Government made arrangements by which they sold to the public coal raised from this mine, then the company would charge 1s. per ton on all coal used outside the Government service.

“2nd. Should the Government make a tramway as suggested above, the company are prepared to deliver in Dalby all the coal required by the Railway Department, west of the Main Range, at 9s. per ton, the company paying the Government for the haulage of the coals over the tramway at the same rates per ton per mile, as apply to other portions of the Southern and Western Railway.

“My directors consider the propositions made above of the greatest importance to the Railway Department, and that the acceptance of either will lead to the saving of many thousands of pounds per annum in working the railway. Your early consideration of these proposals, I hope, will lead to the acceptance of one or other of them.

"Referring again, however, to the attempt made to find coal with the diamond drill at Dalby, I would respectfully point out that it is possible that this prospecting work may alone cost quite as much as the proposed tramway, and should the Government not think favourably of either of the propositions made above, the company have to suggest another arrangement which may suit the Government better. Sections 18 and 19, parish of Jimbour, constitute a Government reserve, and adjoin section 6. From Mr. Gregory's report it is almost certain that coal will be found on this reserve at about the same depth as it has been found on section 6, and within half a mile of the coal pit already spoken of. Here, then, the Government have in their own possession about 500 acres of a proved coalfield, which can be reached by a tramway over a very level country, ten miles from Dalby. Should the Government determine to work this coal, in preference to accepting any of the propositions made above, the company are prepared to grant free to the Government a right-of-way through their property to the reserve already mentioned."

It might be said that in taking that course he was studying his own interests, but he had put them entirely on one side for the purpose of getting some settlement near a coalfield on the Darling Downs, and for this reason: He had an immense belief in the richness of the Darling Downs. The place referred to was not ordinary pastoral country. It was as fine agricultural land as there was in any part of the world. The rainfall was not small, the average being very fair, and the land ran up to within about twenty miles of the Main Range; so that it was nearly at the foot of that range, and as good agricultural land as any in the Warwick district. The proposition was made under the belief that coal could be raised at a certain price, but the raising of coal had been lowered at Ipswich, and no doubt it would be out there as well. There was not the slightest doubt that if the Government had accepted the proposition they would have been able to supply themselves with coal at 7s. per ton, which was about 3s. per ton less than the price they had mentioned to him in other letters as being the cost of the haulage from Ipswich to Dalby. There was no doubt as to the quality of the coal. It had been inspected by many persons during the last four or five years, and it had been found excellent for steaming purposes. Of course they could not expect a new coal to be taken up and pronounced better than coal that was in use on the railway, because the fire-bars and the feeding of the fire-boxes were matters that could not be ignored. The workmen required to get accustomed to them, just as a man would get accustomed to a horse; and there was no doubt that when the men got accustomed to that coal they would get better results. Nobody who saw the coal could doubt that. There were great big pieces of it, twice as big as himself; it required a hammer to break it, and even when broken the lumps remained intact for years. There were heaps of it there that had remained in the same state for four or five years, not having decomposed or melted away the same as the Ipswich coal did. As a household coal there was no doubt whatever of its quality; but the most important point was this: At the present time the railway was pretty well blocked with traffic; there was plenty of traffic, and if they could take off that traffic—the 12,000 tons of coal now hauled over the Main Range—it would be an immense saving to the colony, besides developing a highly important industry. He did not want the Government to accept the proposition made, because the railway did not go within a mile of the mine offered to them for nothing on the terms proposed. The line was to be made to the Government reserve, where coal was as certain to be found as in any part of the world. It had been proved beyond doubt that the country all round was coal-bearing, therefore the Government having coal on their own land would be able to get a good royalty for that land for coal mining. Of course

it was a bad thing that that would interfere with other similar industries elsewhere, but they could not attach any weight to a circumstance of that kind. Their object was to open up the country, and every member must admit the immense advantage it would be to have within 160 miles of Brisbane a large area of splendid agricultural country, in such a fine climate as that of Dalby, with an unlimited supply of coal, especially when they could start working that coal at once, and supply it to the Government railways at the same price, or a great deal less, than they were paying for the same article at Ipswich. Of course it was unfortunate that that would clash with Ipswich interests, but they could not help that. They could not stop finding coal in other parts of the country simply because there were coalfields at Ipswich. He had seen a leading article in the *Telegraph* a few days ago, headed "Ipswich interests imperilled," which proved his case completely. Of course they knew the Government would not be such fools as to take coal all the way from Ipswich to Dalby, when they could get it at Dalby at about half the price. At the present time the coal sent to Dalby cost, according to the figures furnished by the department, 7s. per ton in Ipswich. It cost 10s. per ton more to land the coal in Dalby; so that they were paying about 17s. per ton, besides blocking the railway with traffic, and shutting out what would very likely be more profitable traffic. Instead of that the line now proposed offered them coals delivered at 7s. 6d. a ton. He had not the slightest doubt that if the line was constructed people would get coal delivered at Dalby for 7s. 6d., that was a little less than half the present price. That was a business transaction which hon. members could understand, and it was on business principles that he advocated the line.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he would like to know how large that coalfield was. He was not present when the Minister for Railways moved the resolution, but from what had fallen from the Vice-President of the Executive Council it appeared that the justification for making that line was for the purpose of getting coal, and he (Sir S. W. Griffith) would like to know what area of coal land was supposed to be there. It was not so many years ago that there was a coal mine at Clifton, which was also on the Darling Downs, but for some reason or other that coal was not used for the Railway Department. Perhaps it did not pay for working, and it might be the same with respect to the coalfield near Dalby. A school had even been established at Clifton Colliery, but he believed it was closed now. They did not know very much about the coalfield near Dalby. He thought that all the information they had about it was the information given to the Committee just now by the Vice-President of the Executive Council. For his part he (Sir S. W. Griffith) did not believe there was much prospect of agricultural settlement in that locality, as it was a well-known fact that all the land there was alienated in large blocks.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that nearly all of it was alienated. The blocks were small enough on the map, but they were owned by large companies. After the proposed railway left Dalby it passed through land owned by Mr. G. M. Simpson, whose name was very familiar to members of the Committee, and other large holdings. There was only one selector whose land was resumed. He would like very much to know where the settlement came in, because the Commissioners in their report stated that the line did

not go far enough to touch it. Was it intended to extend the line any further, or was it to be made simply for the purpose of opening up the coalfield?

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the Minister for Railways explained very clearly that the coal alone justified the construction of the railway; but quite irrespective of the coal, he (Sir T. McIlwraith) did not know of any district that more thoroughly deserved a railway—if they looked at its capabilities—than the district in which it was proposed to construct that line, taking it right up to the Bunya Mountains. No line that he knew of passed through country where there was so much land in the possession of the Government with permanent water. Right along the range there were over twenty-five miles of land, not an acre of which had been sold. As for the coalfield, it was very well defined. It was defined by a shaft on the east side of the Government reserve, and by another shaft about four miles distant, showing that the strike of coal was carried along by a line of coal pits from Jimbour house right up to that place, and to within six or seven miles of the present railway terminus. The proposed railway would add nothing at all to the value of the property, because it only went through a small corner of it. What they wanted to get at was a supply of coal for their railways, and for general use throughout the colony. They would never have manufactures on the Darling Downs until they got a supply of coal; and the supply near Dalby was better than that down here, because the seams were so much thicker, and the coal was so much more easily obtained.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said he might add to what the Vice-President of the Executive Council had said, that coal had been found at several places in the vicinity of that coal area. He would just read an extract from Mr. Fryar's report on that particular coalfield. The strike of the seams was nearly east and west, with a slight dip to the south. Mr. Fryar said:—

“It may also be stated that coal has been found at several points north-easterly and north-westerly from the point now referred to, notably in a well north-easterly and distant about four miles, also at the head station of Jimbour, a little west of north and distant seven miles, where a seam four feet six inches in thickness was cut at a depth of sixty-eight feet from the surface, and was worked for station purposes; with the exception of a band two inches thick at one foot from the floor, the seam is a clean seam. Coal has also been found at more distant points in the vicinity of the Bunya range of mountains, probably the basset edges of the seams as tilted up by the upheaval of that ridge.”

As to the quantity of coal there was not the slightest doubt.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: What does he say about the quality of the coal?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said the coal had been tested by Mr. Gregory. Mr. Fryar stated that—

“Any pieces of coal now obtainable, have been lying about under the influence of the sun and rain for several years, and therefore an analysis of such would not only be untrustworthy, but also misleading, as it would give no true indication of the real nature of the coal, which, it may be stated, is more nearly allied to the cannel variety, than to the bituminous, evidently rich in oil, and a good gas coal. And although the demand for coal for the extraction of its oil, or for the manufacture of gas in that locality is not at present large, any coal of even moderate quality for steam purposes should be valuable, inasmuch as it is 130 miles by rail further inland, than the chief source of supply at Bundamba, and would have the further advantage of avoiding the vertical lift of nearly 2,000 feet in the ascent of the Main Range; considerations of

greater moment in respect to coal, than perhaps to any other description of merchandise, as the cost of carriage under the circumstances mentioned would amount to nearly double the cost price of the coal at Bundamba.”

He did not know why hon. members were so very jealous of the facts in that particular case. It was hardly possible for anyone to doubt the facts.

Mr. ISAMBERT: What is the quantity of ash in the coal?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said a trial of the coal had been made, and five samples taken from around Ipswich, and a similar number from Darling Downs. The amount of ash in the Darling Downs coal represented 14, 16, 18, 20, and 20. For Ipswich it represented 18, 15, 15, 10, and 12. That was a slight advantage in favour of Ipswich, but that, he understood, was not a very material question, and could be obviated by the manner in which the coal was extracted. Moreover, he might mention the fact that the Chief Commissioner, in a conversation he had with him a day or two after his arrival, told him that lately a machine had been invented in Germany, and introduced into Scotland, notably into one of the pits of Bothwell, and the functions of that machine were to separate the dirt or waste from the pure coal, which was accomplished by the aid of a few boys. The result of the introduction of the machine into the district was, that instead of the coal being the lowest priced in the market, it went up and commanded the highest price. He believed a machine of that sort would be very profitable to introduce here. He knew that the coal at present used on the railways varied greatly, according to the portion of the Ipswich district it came from. Some was very good, and some very poor, and his instructions to the Locomotive Superintendent had been to buy in accordance with the samples, and not on account of the cheapness of the coal, because, as a rule, the cheapest coal was not the best.

Mr. TOZER said the fact that he had asked some questions in the House that day had led the Minister for Railways to give a rather long explanation, much more laboured than the importance or significance of the question necessitated. He had been moved to ask those questions not so much in connection with the line under discussion, as to remove doubts as to certain statements that had been frequently made outside the House. Hon. members on both sides had heard the statements, and he thought it best in such cases to go to headquarters. He should not have done that in the present instance, had it not been that the report that was presented to the House did not come up to the standard of expectation which hon. members had formed when appointing the Railway Commissioners, and voting their large salaries. He wished to explain that there was no insinuation whatever intended to be conveyed by him. It had been freely asserted in the city of Brisbane that another report had been furnished, and he thought it might contain a little more information and be given on a different basis. The answer to the question he had asked would satisfy the country in that respect, and show that the Minister for Railways had acted, as he had always acted in connection with public matters, with the utmost desire for the interests of the country, and with the utmost honesty of purpose. He must, however, express his surprise that the Commissioners had not given that information to the House that they had got from the Minister for Railways and the Vice-President of the Executive Council. When the hon. gentleman last session brought forward that railway from Dalby to the coalfield he had no warmer supporter than himself (Mr. Tozer). He made out a very strong case indeed. He (Mr. Tozer) was one of those

who thought that the colony was already committed to enough new railways, and if he had his way he would stop all further railway extension until they had had a little breathing time and then settle upon some definite railway policy. He was sorry to see by the late Commissioner for Railways' report that nine or ten railways were drawing upon the money of this colony and being worked at a loss. It was dreadful to think that nine railways which had been brought before Parliament with great promises, were being worked at the present moment at a direct loss to the taxpayers of this colony. Therefore, hon. members, when new lines were brought forward, must say to themselves, "Is this one of that character?" He had always held that they might fairly look to the public to supply interest on money borrowed; but they had no right to build railways which when worked, even for the first year, would be worked at an absolute loss to the country. The question therefore arose: What case had the Minister for Railways made in respect to that line? He was sorry that they would lose in the discussion the valuable assistance of the hon. member for the district. In consequence of his occupying the position of Chairman, his constituents on that occasion, so far as he was concerned, had their mouths closed; but that hon. gentleman might rest assured that, so far as he (Mr. Tozer) was concerned, he would lose nothing and his constituents would lose nothing by the fact that he was silent. If he (Mr. Tozer) had any doubt at all on the subject, the fact that the member for the district was silent in consequence of occupying the position of Chairman, would make him give the doubt in favour of the railway. Those persons who had any sense of justice would rise to the occasion, and say they would give the the railway in consequence of that hon. gentleman's mouth being closed. He would like the Minister for Railways to remove one doubt. A clear case had been made out for the first seven miles of that line of railway. The Vice-President of the Executive Council distinctly told them on a former occasion, when they were asked to vote the sum of £15,000, that the object of the line was to tap coal for the use of the Government. Those were the precise words the hon. gentleman had used. On the present occasion the hon. gentleman had made the same statement, and had thoroughly convinced him that it was desirable in the interests of the colony to run a railway or tramway to utilise the coal on the reserves and private land in the vicinity of those reserves; but he found that similar circumstances occurred in other parts of the colony, and at a distance of five miles or seven miles from a line there were collieries which private enterprise had brought into communication with the railways of the colony. If the question only rested upon the construction of a line to get that coal away, he would ask, was there not enough private enterprise in the owners of that land to build the railway?

THE HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: Where is there one line made in the way you mention?

MR. TOZER: The line to Thomas's coal-mine was one.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: How long?

MR. TOZER said that, so far as he knew, that line was about two miles long; but he believed, from the nature of the country through which it was made, the cost of it would be about as much as the cost of seven miles of the line from Dalby to the coal-mine in that locality. He believed that the Government had made out a strong case for the line, because he was one of those who did not believe in private lines of railway, but in the Government keeping all the railways

of the colony in their hands. What he was urging was to know, why they were asked on that particular occasion to depart from the request made to them last year? Last year, with the same facts he assumed as were before them now, the Colonial Treasurer came down with a most reasonable proposal which did not meet with a dissentient voice on that side of the Committee, to make that railway at a cost of £15,000 up to the coal mines for the benefit of the Queensland railways, and the proprietors of the coal mines; but now the Government, with haste that had not been accounted for, brought forward the extension of the line to fourteen and three-quarter miles. The point of his observations was that if the Committee chose to expend the £46,000 asked for for that line, they would be practically committing themselves to the expenditure of £100,000 because that was only the first section of the line, and further extensions would be necessary to make the line of practical value to the agriculturists—the people who he contended were deserving of railway communication. He fully appreciated the contention of the Hon. Vice-President of the Executive Council, that the lands in that district were sold upon the express condition that the money realised from their sale would be expended in the making of railways; but that contention applied in other cases where railways had not been proposed, and the Minister for Railways had not shown any more reason for the extension of that line from the seven miles to fourteen and three-quarter miles, than had been shown for the refusal of lines where similar facts were brought before him. He was not opposed to railways, as he believed they were a good asset, and a good investment for the colony; but his arguments were put forward to find out why that railway was brought on in advance of other railways in the colony, which had to some extent been approved by the House many years ago. No doubt the majority of the objections he had to the whole of the line had been removed by the very clear and honest statement made by the Minister for Railways in connection with this locality. The hon. gentleman had stated that the locality was well known to him, and had given the Committee the assurance that independently of the coal, there was a large amount of land unalienated to which the line would extend. He only wanted to know now, how far from the end of the proposed section the unalienated land was situated, and what chance there was of the country deriving any benefit from the sale of that land? So far as he could find from looking at the map, it was a distance of about sixteen miles to the nearest part of that land, and that would mean the extension of the line for another sixteen miles. What amount of money did the hon. gentleman think would be required for the extension of the line to the unalienated lands spoken of? He would not ask the hon. gentleman to say within a matter of £5,000 or £6,000. Those were facts which he had expected to find in the Commissioners' report. In the Railways Act they had passed, express directions were given to the Commissioners to report upon the capabilities of a line, and the traffic they expected to get from the line. He could not gather from the report before the Committee what amount of traffic the Commissioners expected the line would derive—first, from the coal; secondly, from agricultural settlement; and thirdly, from pastoral settlement.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: And timber?

MR. TOZER said he did not place the slightest value upon the probable timber traffic, because he knew the Government carried timber pretty well at a loss, and there was nothing before the Committee to show that any timber

could be got from the Bunya Mountains to any place where there was a reasonable market to pay. First of all, a case had been made out with respect to the coal; and secondly, a case had been made out on account of the lands being sold on the *bond fide* understanding that the money would be devoted to the construction of railways. He admitted the justice of that, but he did not see his way to vote for the line at present with the very small amount of information the Commissioners had given them upon it, and the idea in his mind that there was not very much chance of the line paying working expenses, and he had determined to vote for no railway that it could not be shown would do that.

Mr. GLASSEY said he was sorry, on the Chairman's account, that he had to oppose the construction of the proposed line. He was sorry to have to oppose it, because the Chairman of Committees, owing to his official position in the chair, was unable to make any defence of the line which affected the district he represented. There were many other districts in the colony which required railway communication very much more than the district of Dalby, notwithstanding the very plausible reasons advanced in defence of the proposal by the Vice-President of the Executive Council. One district to which he alluded formed a part of his own electorate—namely, Tivoli, which was one of the oldest coal-mining districts in the colony. That district had laboured under difficulties for many years, and its progress had been seriously retarded from the want of railway communication. He did not wish to impeach the present Government for any laxity in the matter, but successive Governments had neglected the development of that district, where coal had been produced for the last twenty-five or thirty years, by not giving facilities for the removal of the coal. Though Tivoli only occupied a third or fourth rate position as a coal-producing district, last year—as had been pointed out to the Minister for Railways by a deputation which had lately waited upon him—they had produced between 40,000 and 50,000 tons of coal and coke. The district was very hilly, and all the coal raised had to be taken either to the Ipswich railway siding or to the river over ridgy country in large drays, and the cost thus incurred retarded the development of that locality very materially, both by reducing the profits and by preventing closer settlement. The deputation to which he had alluded also brought under the notice of the Minister the amount of material taken from that district and from the adjacent localities down the Brisbane and Bremer Rivers in punts, to show that the interest on the cost of construction of a railway to Tivoli would be paid from the very first. It was shown that there were brought from that district, by river alone, coal, coke, bricks, tiles, and other materials—not including agricultural produce—of the average yearly value of nearly £100,000. It must be borne in mind that the coal raised there had first to be tipped into drays, then taken to Ipswich or to the river, then tipped into waggons or punts—the principal portion went by punts—then lifted out of the punts in baskets, and the baskets tipped into the steamers. Such an enormous amount of handling injured the coal, destroyed its appearance, and lessened its value in the market on account of the amount of breakage that had occurred. In addition to that, the river was frequently blocked, punts had to lay for days before they could be moved, and the whole trade of the district was often paralysed for weeks together, much to the detriment of the colliery proprietors and others, and to the injury of the workmen employed in those industries. A district like that had a prior claim on the

Government for a railway, to the district through which the proposed railway was to run. With regard to the saving to the country through coal, if of good quality, being supplied to the Western Railway from Dalby instead of from Ipswich, that was no doubt a solid and plausible argument. It was the duty of the Government to consider the welfare of the country as a whole, and to try to effect whatever saving they could. But while he was not prepared to pit his opinion against the opinion of the Hon. A. C. Gregory, who was a scientific expert in connection with minerals, his own experience had taught him that coal which produced such an immense quantity of oil had not been proved so far to be a first-class coal for raising steam. At the same time that might be an exceptional class of coal; it might be capable of producing the quantity of oil stated, and also be a first-class steam coal. But he doubted it very much. With regard to the danger likely to arise from the competition which the production of coal on the Darling Downs was calculated to produce, he did not share in the fears which some hon. members seemed to entertain. Coming to the question of ash, which had been raised, the Minister for Railways stated that there had been a machine patented, and tried in Scotland, which separated the good coal from the dirt. He had examined several samples of the Darling Downs coal, and there was a considerable quantity of dirt in it. He had also received a letter the other day from a gentleman who was acquainted with the mine in question, and he told him that there were no less than eight bands of stone in it, or a band for each foot of coal. He had referred to this matter when the Mines Regulation Bill was going through the House, and some people had stated that he had struck a fatal blow at Queensland coal; and if pointing out errors in connection with the coal industry was likely to strike a fatal blow at it he would, he feared, be obliged to refer to it again. The excavation of coal in no way lessened the quantity of ash produced, except in so far as the coal was improperly cleaned, and it could not be properly cleaned belowground with the light of an oil lamp or candle, especially where there was a large quantity of coal mixed with stone, such as there would be in a dirty seam like the one referred to. There being eight bands of stone in the seam, unless particular care was paid to cleaning the coal when it came to the surface, very much more ash would be produced in consequence of the laxity in cleaning it. So far as his practical knowledge of mining was concerned, he was bound to confess that he had not yet seen a first-class steam coal from between five and six miles of Walloon, on the Southern and Western Railway to Warwick; but he did not say that it did not exist. As he had said, he had no fear of the coal in question competing successfully with the coal raised in the district he represented. Coming now to the remarks of the Hon. the Vice-President of the Executive Council, with respect to the note of warning that appeared the other day in the *Telegraph* to the representatives of the Ipswich district, in consequence of the opening of the coal mine at the place where the proposed railway was to go, he contended that a hon. member would not be worth his salt if he did not guard to the best of his ability the interests he was supposed to represent. He had not the least fear that the party in power would guard the interests of the country so far as they were able; but, at the same time, hon. members were not to fold their arms and say the country might develop while the interests of their districts might perish. Supposing the coal raised from this mine was likely to come into close competition with that raised in the district he represented, and the Government by making this railway were giving them an undue advantage

over his district, he would have a perfect right to protest against it, at the same time knowing full well that he would be beaten. Had the people who sent him there no interests to guard? Had the working men of his district, who had bought allotments of ground, borrowed money from societies, and built themselves comfortable little houses and homes, no interests to be guarded? The Vice-President of the Executive Council said the interests of the country were to be protected; but the interests of one district should not be protected at the expense of the destruction of another. Supposing the Ipswich workshops were taken away from there—of which great fears were entertained at that moment, although he did not share them—what would be the result? Hundreds of working men who had bought houses and property in the locality would be ruined and have to take up their all and go to other localities to carve out new homes for themselves. He was not prejudiced in the matter, because he should always endeavour to assist in developing the resources of the colony, so long as it could be done without striking a fatal blow at the district which he more immediately represented. The development of the district of Tivoli was very much retarded by the want of railway communication, and he contended that that and other localities were entitled to railways prior to the place where the railway under discussion was proposed to go; and unless some stronger arguments were advanced in support of it than had been he should certainly oppose it.

Mr. CORFIELD said he did not rise to oppose the railway under discussion, which, from what he had heard, appeared to be a very necessary one. He rose for the purpose of giving some information with regard to the extension of the Northern line, as he had understood the Minister for Railways to state that a survey was being prepared of that line. A few days since he (Mr. Corfield) presented a petition to the House, from the inhabitants of Winton and the surrounding districts, asking for the extension of the Northern line from Hughenden to that place. He did not know what the intentions of the Government were with regard to the extension beyond Hughenden, but he hoped that it would be extended in a direction which would be for the benefit of the country, and in which it would not compete with any other line. Though Winton was nearer the latitude of Rockhampton than that of Townsville, yet, owing to the coast line trending to the north-west, it was nearly 200 miles nearer the latter than to the former place, so that all the trade of the district of which Winton was the centre went to Townsville. In addition to that, Muttaburra, which was some 110 miles eastward of Winton and nearer to Rockhampton, also did its business with Townsville, although it was only 95 miles from Barcaldine, the terminus of the Central line, while it was 143 miles from Hughenden, the terminus of the Northern line. That preference for dealing with Townsville instead of Rockhampton was caused by the trending of the line he had already referred to, and which brought Townsville very much further to the westward than Rockhampton, and so caused a much shorter railway carriage on the Northern line as compared with the Central railway. That shorter carriage completely cut Rockhampton out of the Western trade. The trade of Rockhampton with Muttaburra and the whole of the districts westward of that place was nothing. The extension of the Central line from Barcaldine to Longreach might affect the Muttaburra trade, but only to a very slight extent; as regarded Winton and the country west of it, it would not have the slightest effect, because when that extension was completed, there would be 425 miles of rail and 110 miles of land

carriage, or a total of 535 miles from Rockhampton to Winton, while the carriage from Townsville would be 236 miles by rail and 144 miles by land, making a total of 380 miles, or a difference of 155 miles in favour of Townsville. The distance between Hughenden and Winton could be lessened by fifteen miles, so that the distance from Townsville to Winton would be 170 miles shorter than from Rockhampton to Winton. There was another point that should be taken into consideration, and that was that when the railway termini at Rockhampton and Townsville were extended to deep water, Keppel Bay would be fully 200 miles further from Winton than Cleveland Bay. He was particularly anxious to draw the attention of hon. members to that point, because whatever port secured the trade of Winton would secure the trade of the whole of the Western districts also. Such being the case, it could not be thought that the extension of the Northern line to Winton would interfere with the legitimate trade of the Central line in any way. On the other hand, if the Northern line was extended due west from Hughenden, it would compete with the line which would be built in the near future from Cloncurry to Normanton; while, if it was extended in a north-westerly direction, it would compete with the line from Normanton to Croydon, which would no doubt be ultimately carried to the Etheridge, and across to Herberton. He would like the Committee to understand that, from its peculiar situation, all traffic from Rockhampton to the immense district to the west of the Diamantina, and all down that river, must go through Winton, and the reason of that he would explain. About fifteen or twenty miles to the south of Winton the country became very broken, and was liable to floods; and that continued for a couple of hundred miles to the south of Winton in a belt varying from fifty to 100 miles in width. Of course there was some good country in that tract, but the patches of spinifex and broken country were so numerous that all traffic on the Central line to stations on the Diamantina was compelled to skirt the edge of it and to pass through Winton. That traffic was not so great as might be supposed, as he would presently show. He merely referred to the matter at the present time to show that the only road for traffic from the Central line to the Western country was through Winton. That being the case, it was apparent that the trade of Winton and the districts west of it should go to Townsville rather than to Rockhampton. That was really the case. The only competition Townsville had to contend against for the trade of the Lower Diamantina was not from Rockhampton or Normanton, as a person studying the map might judge, but from Adelaide. The carrying trade between South Australia and Western Queensland was altogether in the hands of Afghans, and strings of camels might be seen carrying goods between those places. Flour and sugar could be delivered at stations not 200 miles from Winton at a cheaper rate than the same goods could be supplied from Rockhampton to Winton, that was before the road between Hughenden and Winton was opened by the Water Supply department. Since that had been done Townsville ran Adelaide very closely as far west as Boulia. He had in his hand a comparison of the different prices paid for flour from Rockhampton, Adelaide, and Townsville to Boulia, in a telegram he had received from Messrs Burnell and Jones, of Boulia. It was as follows:—

“Including trainage Adelaide about £33 Normanton cannot quote Rockhampton £24 Townsville quickest and cheapest £20.”

Comparing the present rates from Townsville and Rockhampton to Muttaburra and Winton he found that first-class goods by rail landed in

Muttaborra from Rockhampton, cost £12 16s. 8d. per ton, whilst the same class goods landed from Townsville at the same place cost £12 6s. 8d. per ton or 10s. per ton less than from Rockhampton. From Rockhampton to Winton first-class goods cost £17 8s. 4d. per ton, whilst the same class of goods could be landed at Winton from Townsville for £12 7s. 6d. per ton, being 10d. per ton in excess of the rates for Muttaborra, and £5 0s. 10d. per ton cheaper than from Rockhampton. Now he would take the rates to those places when the Central line was extended to Longreach. Taking the same class of goods by rail, they would cost £12 9s. 2d. to land at Muttaborra from Rockhampton, or 7s. 6d. per ton less than from Rockhampton *via* Barcardine, the present terminus of the Central line, and 2s. 6d. per ton more than from Townsville at the present time. The same class of goods by rail, landed at Winton from Rockhampton by Longreach, would cost £14 19s. 2d. per ton, being £2 9s. 2d. per ton less than from that port *via* Barcardine, and £2 11s. 8d. per ton more than the same goods could be landed from Townsville *via* Hughenden at the present time. In the district he represented it was impossible to get loading from Rockhampton by the Central line, as carriers would not take it from Barcardine on account of there being no back loading. It would not pay even at the high rates charged. It was well known that Rockhampton merchants in supplying goods to Winton and the western country paid the freight from Townsville in preference to sending the goods by their own railway. That might perhaps be used as an argument in favour of the cheapness of goods from Rockhampton as compared with Townsville; but that does not affect the comparison of the two lines as regards the Western traffic carried on each. The country round the Diamantina and west of that was also very much broken, so that the main road to Boulia and the West had to pass through Winton. He had shown that at present Winton did all of its trade with Townsville, because it was the cheapest and quickest land carriage, and that proved that Townsville was the natural port for that part of the country. That was further exemplified by the fact that a deputation from Rockhampton waited on the Minister for Railways in the last Government, and asked him quite innocently to make differential rates on the Central line, so as to enable it to compete with the Northern line for the trade of Townsville and the district, of which it was the centre. History did not say whether the Minister laughed or smiled at that proposal, but he certainly, and very properly, refused to grant the request. He (Mr. Corfield) had proved that Townsville was the natural and most convenient port for Winton, and as it was in a position to compete with Normanston and Adelaide for the trade of the far Western districts, and as that trade must go through Winton, it followed that if they extended the Northern line in the direction which, as he had before stated, would be for the benefit of the country, it would not compete with any other line, and Winton must be the point to which it must go. It was not for him to speak with authority on the cheapness with which the line could be built; but he could not help expressing his opinion that, with Phillips's sleepers, the line could be built for a little more than £1,000 a mile, or a total cost of £130,000. He trusted that the Government would give consideration to the reasons he had advanced why the line should be extended in a south-westerly direction towards Winton, instead of a westerly direction towards Richmond Downs, or in a northerly direction towards Woolgar. He intended to vote for the motion under discussion, and he trusted that when the line he had spoken of came under discussion it would meet with the same success that he believed the present proposal would.

Mr. MACFARLANE said he would not follow the hon. gentleman who had just sat down, although he had a little railway he would like to advocate, but the present was not the time to do it. The Minister for Railways had asked hon. members, as a favour, to discuss each line by itself, and to vote for or against them, according as they were good or bad. A considerable amount of sympathy had been expressed for the Chairman because his official position prevented him from advocating the line now under discussion; but the hon. gentleman might be satisfied inasmuch as it had two good advocates in the Vice-President of the Executive Council and the Minister for Railways. From the few remarks that fell from the Vice-President of the Executive Council, he gathered that he expected the opposition of the Ipswich members, but there was no reason why they should oppose the line if it was likely to be payable, and a benefit to the inhabitants of the district. The principal objection he had to it was taken from the report of the Commissioners themselves, who said in the 2nd paragraph on the 2nd page of their report:—

“On the 22nd instant the Commissioners, accompanied by the Chief Engineer, Southern and Central division, traversed the whole length of the line, and were much surprised to find such an extent of really good country as they met with so sparsely settled.”

The lines that had been advocated successfully in that House had either been through settled districts, or where there was a probability of trade developing and people settling down on the land. He could not see that that was at all likely to take place in the present case. He had always advocated railways where there was a prospect of their paying. It would be well, no doubt, for the country to be opened up, but there were other objections. A strong point had been made of the fact that £3,500 a year would be saved in the haulage of coal. The Vice-President of the Executive Council had also said that coal was supplied from Bundamba at 7s. a ton, and that it could be supplied at 9s. a ton on the Downs; but the difference between 7s. and 9s. would be only £1,300 on 13,000 tons of coal. There was another objection to the line, and that was that it would give a monopoly of the coal trade, as regarded the Southern and Western railways, to the company on the Darling Downs. In fact, they would be able to charge what they liked, because the Bundamba coal cost 7s. or 8s. a ton to take up; and if the Darling Downs company sold at 10s. a ton it would be cheaper for the Government to use that coal, rather than the coal for which they paid 7s. a ton. He did not think the profit to be derived by using Downs coal would be so great as the Vice-President of the Executive Council supposed. His (Mr. Macfarlane's) principal reason for not supporting the line was that there was not the population in the district to warrant it being made. It would not pay. The Minister for Railways had said that the fourteen miles proposed to be made would take the line within two miles of the population. It did not even go into the settled country, and if it did there were only 1,200 persons in the whole district. It was not to be supposed for a moment that 1,200 people, even if there was agricultural and pastoral produce, would create sufficient traffic to make the line return interest on the cost of construction. If that railway was to be constructed as other railways going to the coal districts of the colony had been constructed, no one would have cause to oppose it. The railways connecting with the coal-fields in the Ipswich and Bundamba districts had been built by private enterprise. Mr. Gulland's line was over two miles long. Mr. Thomas's line was over two miles in length, and there was

Stafford Brothers' line, which was a short one, and a number of other little lines connecting with Thomas's line; they had all been constructed by private enterprise. If the proposed line to the Downs coalfield was to be constructed by private enterprise no one would have cause to complain, but rather to be joyous that a new industry had been opened up in that part of the country. All things considered, he hoped hon. members would not see their way to vote for the line, as there was very little possibility of its paying anything at all. He was very sorry to hear the Vice-President of the Executive Council, in speaking of the quality of the Downs coal, rather traduce the Ipswich coal. He had always found that when a gentleman was compelled, in order to advocate a cause, to traduce another, that he was advocating a very weak cause indeed.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: I did not say a single word against the Ipswich coal. Not a single word.

Mr. MACFARLANE said the hon. gentleman had not done so directly; but he had spoken highly in favour of the other coal, and had said it was much superior to the Ipswich coal, and that put the Ipswich coal in rather an invidious light. Although the Ipswich coal was more friable than the Downs coal, its qualities as a steam and coke-producing coal were very superior indeed. It was scarcely possible to compare the two coals, as one was a house coal, and the other was a steam-raising coal. He had nothing further to say, but that he felt in duty bound to oppose that railway.

Mr. CAMPBELL said that when the Drayton deviation railway was knocked out a few nights ago he, for a time, felt it would be his duty to vote against any other line that might be brought forward; still he felt bound to support the proposed line, because it was calculated to benefit almost everyone who lived on the western side of the Main Range. He knew something of the country, though it was some considerable time since he had been over it, and he knew that the first part of the line would go through very good pastoral land. He knew, also, that there was a considerable quantity of timber on the Bunya Mountains, and, notwithstanding what had been said to the contrary—that it would not pay to bring it to any market—he could say there was a considerable quantity of that timber now sold in Brisbane, although those engaged in the industry laboured under such great disadvantages in getting it. He knew also that there was a considerable quantity of good agricultural land in the district, which, he had no doubt, would be largely taken up as the line was extended. With reference to the coal, he did know something about that. He knew nothing about the thickness of the seam, or whether it was hard to work or not, but he knew it was a first-class coal, and, with the exception of the Burrum coal, it was the best coal for gas purposes yet discovered in Queensland, and it was equal, if not better, for steam purposes than the coal they got from the Ipswich district. He was speaking from experience, because they had tested both in the gasworks at Toowoomba, and the Downs coal would return something like 600 feet of gas per ton more than Thomas's coal, which they were using at the present time. It was true the Bunya coal did not coke so well, but burnt to a fine ash, and it was just possible the gas companies would not be able to take their whole supply of that coal, and would require some of the coal from the Ipswich district for coke. He was quite sure if the railway was made that coal would be largely used throughout the Downs district, because it would have a decided advantage in the matter of carriage. He believed

that if the line was constructed it would pay, as the whole of the people west of the Main Range would use the coal. The argument the hon. member for Bundamba used against the line was a very selfish one. That hon. member had said that it would be very hard on those men who had built homes and had got settled work in his electorate, if the line was built for the purpose of competing against them. If every hon. member of the Committee took such a view, the country would not be likely to progress very rapidly. Notwithstanding that the coal industry of West Moreton was a great one, they were in duty bound to develop the other also if possible, and he felt it to be his duty to support the proposed line.

Mr. BARLOW said he had deferred speaking upon the subject to a somewhat advanced period of the debate, because he felt that in his position as one of the representatives of Ipswich he might perhaps be charged with partiality and unreasoning opposition to the line. He desired to take up the argument used in the article in a newspaper which had been referred to by one of the speakers on the other side: that if the interests of Ipswich were not imperilled by fair competition, there probably would be no objection to it. The proposed line was a railway in three pieces. It was, first, a railway to the alleged coal measures at the eight-mile peg; then it was another railway to Rocky Point; and then it was a projected railway to the timber districts of the Bunya Mountains. He felt at all times great diffidence and great disinclination in opposing any vote that would lead to the employment of labour in the Southern districts of the colony, which had been left out in the cold to a great extent in the matter of public works. There was at present an undoubted want of employment in the Southern districts in what had been aptly termed in that House the loan industry. That being the case, he felt great unwillingness in opposing any vote of that character, and as he thought the Northern members had been soothed by the dulcet tones of the Minister for Railways; and the hon. member for Toowoomba, and the hon. member for Aubigny and one or two more had got over the rejection of the Drayton deviation, the result of the motion was a foregone conclusion; it was therefore necessary only to put a few facts on record in regard to the proposed railway. The first question was whether the line should have extended any further than the coalbeds. He found, by looking at the map, that the area of portion 6A, which contained the coal, was 640 acres, and the railway reserves contained 320 acres.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said portion 18 contained 221 acres, and portion 19 contained 320 acres 3 roods, making a total of 541 acres 3 roods.

Mr. BARLOW said the map must be very much out of scale. However, that did not change the argument. If the Darling Downs and Western Land Company constructed the railway for themselves—as they might very well do—there could be no opposition. It was only a question of degree between constructing a coal siding for eight miles and constructing one for two or three miles, as had been done in the West Moreton district. That was a great objection to the construction of the proposed line. Then came the question whether by taking that line on to Rocky Point the want of traffic in that section would not more than swamp any profit which might be derived from the section to the coalbeds, and whether the saving on the haulage of coal to places on the western side of the Main Range would counterbalance the general loss upon the line? Apart from that, the point had been

put very clearly by his colleague, that a monopoly would be created to the extent of the saving. It was quite possible that the company having a monopoly would raise the price of coal to within 1s. of the price of the coal which had to be carried over the Main Range. Apparently there were three money divisions in connection with the line. £17,000 had already been voted, £1,000 of which had been appropriated for surveys. Then there was another £46,000 proposed to be voted for the second section, and by the time the line got to the timber regions it would amount to £100,000. He really did not think that whilst such railways as the Tivoli branch were required, they should proceed with the proposed line. In the Tivoli district they had a large trade in the manufacture of bricks and pottery; and the best coke made in Australia came from there. The coke was almost free from sulphur. He did not see that it was fair for the Government to construct the line at all. He certainly sympathised with the Chairman of Committees, whose position precluded him from addressing the Committee. He did not wish to press unfairly upon that hon. gentleman, though he had no doubt that before he accepted a position which prevented him from advocating the interests of his constituency he had consulted his constituents. He would direct the attention of the Committee to the percentage of ash in the Dalby coal. According to the Minister for Railways, five samples gave an average of 14 per cent., and the average in the Jimbour coal was 17½ per cent. People called a great number of diverse substances coal. To a certain extent they were coal, but they differed just as much as the diamond differed from the sapphire. Mr. Warrington Smyth, writing about cannel coal, said:—"Cannel coal is commonly considered a variety of bituminous coal," and he gave the characteristics of that coal. It was strong in its structure, and though it was obtainable in large quantities it was not a steam coal. It was allied to torbanite, or "boghead mineral," a ton of which yielded 15,400 cubic feet of gas, while good cannel only gave from 8,000 to 10,000 cubic feet, and steam coals gave very much less. As far as he could understand, the Jimbour coal was not true coal at all, but a variety of cannel coal or bituminous shale. The Ipswich coal was soft, but that did not alter the fact that it was a steam coal, which belonged to one genus of coal, whereas the Jimbour coal belonged to an entirely different genus. He had some acquaintance with the Dalby district, and he knew that it was a semi-pastoral district. They could not expect the same amount of traffic on the line that they would have were it a line through purely agricultural country. Of course there was the timber there, and he believed there was a saw-mill. He was not going to bring up hearsays, but he believed that saw-mill had a history, and that one reason for the taking of the line to the Bunya Mountains was that that saw-mill was already there. By analysing the land to be resumed they found that there were 7 roods 16 perches of town land, 4 acres 2 roods 24 perches the property of Mr. Smith, 30 acres 1 rood 25 perches commonage, which he presumed was Crown land, 1 acre 2 roods 16 perches resumed from roads, 39 acres 0 roods 16 perches of Mr. Simpson's property, and 52 acres 3 roods 34 perches to be resumed from the Darling Downs and Western Land Company. Those were the facts he had taken from the book of reference. There could be no doubt that the proposed line would go right through the Jimbour property. It had been stated by the Vice-President of the Executive Council that there was already a line through the Jimbour property,

and that was true. That line ran through Jimbour and Cumkillenbah. The Commissioners, in their report, spoke in a very diffident way about the line, and it was with them a matter of belief and conjecture. In favourable seasons good crops would be got, and so on. There was no desire on his part, or on the part of any hon. member, to oppose anything from selfish motives; but that a coalition had been formed in favour of the line was evident, judging from the speeches of hon. members who had been addressing the Committee. That was apparent from the speeches of hon. members who had addressed the Committee, and all he could do was to put those facts on record. He still maintained that a railway was more urgently required in the Tivoli district. There was a large amount of coal land there already worked; there were immense interests in the way of brick and tile making and pottery making, which were all valuable. Only the other day one of his constituents, Mr. R. H. Rogers, made a set of chemical retorts of the capacity of forty-two gallons. With such interests already in existence railway communication was urgently required there. Tivoli, he might point out, was cut off from the existing railway system, being on the north side of the Bremer River, and there were only two ways of getting coal to Brisbane, either by putting it into punts and taking it down the river, or by carting it across the Bremer bridge to the railway station, and sending it down on the Southern line. He could see very plainly, from the coalition that had taken place, that there was no chance of successfully opposing the line. He had therefore contented himself with putting on record what his opinions about it were.

Mr. STEVENS said the hon. member for Ipswich had stated that the Commissioners had spoken in terms of very faint praise of the proposed line. Several paragraphs of their report seemed to him to be strongly in favour of it. For instance, they stated—

"In the neighbourhood of the railway reserves, about seven miles out, extensive coal deposits are known to exist, and as it has been ascertained that excellent coal has been obtained there in large quantities, the Commissioners are of opinion that the value of this discovery in so favoured a locality for railway purposes cannot be over-estimated."

That was not speaking in terms of faint praise; and in a further paragraph they spoke very strongly in favour of the line, and also in favour of an extension of it. Taking the report as a whole, anyone could see that it was very much more in favour of the line than against it. The chief argument against the line was that a large portion of it ran through land which was already alienated from the Crown. At first there seemed to be a feeling, though it was not plainly expressed, that that land had been obtained improperly, and when that idea was exploded one great argument against the line was removed. As to the land being already alienated, if that argument carried weight, the farmers in agricultural districts outside lands already sold would be in a very unfortunate position indeed. That argument might safely be dismissed. Some difference of opinion had been expressed as to the quality of the coal. There was independent testimony that the coal was of a high quality, while the evidence against the quality of the coal had been, and must necessarily be, more or less biased. Placing those two statements one against the other, there was a distinct balance in favour of the good quality of the coal. Although there was no close settlement on the land at the present time, the report showed that the line led to land already settled by farmers. In addition to that there were thousands of acres of the richest agricultural land in the Southern portion of the

colony ready to be availed of in the direction of settlement. There was no doubt that as soon as the line had gone the short distance indicated by the plans, the Government would only have to survey that land and it would be immediately taken up. There was another argument in favour of the line, which he had never before heard urged in favour of any other line, and that was that not only would the line more than pay interest on the cost of construction from the start, but that in ten or twelve years the entire cost of the line, apart from rolling-stock, would be paid for, through the saving in the cost of the haulage of coal. No argument could be stronger in favour of the line than that. He had heard no argument sufficiently strong to induce him to oppose the line, and if it came to a division he should vote for the motion.

Mr. MORGAN said he had carefully read the Commissioners' report on the line, and, in his opinion, it did not contain one distinct recommendation in favour of the construction of it. It was a non-committal report from start to finish. The Commissioners visited the locality, they saw certain things, they were told certain things, and they communicated what they saw and heard to the House. A more pronounced report one way or the other might have been expected. The Commissioners were expected to furnish something like positive information, so that the Committee could come to an intelligent decision on an important question like that. The construction of the line had been justified on three or four grounds. There was coal along it; so they were told. There was agricultural settlement along the route to a small extent, and they were told that there was to be, in the future, a much larger extent of agricultural settlement. The Committee knew that there were some sheep and cattle, horses, bulls, and cocks and hens raised in the locality, but the produce, putting aside wool, was very small indeed, and certainly would not fill more than a couple of train loads yearly. From the point of view of the settlement already existing on the line, the proposed expenditure could not be justified. The Minister for Railways had stated, and no doubt correctly, that there were 330 resident selectors in the district. Multiply that by four, it would give a population of about 1,300 people, who were engaged chiefly in raising stock, and the product in the shape of wool was very small indeed. The product in the shape of cattle and sheep would still carry itself to market, even if the railway were built to-morrow. As to the agricultural products of the district—not merely the country along the route of the proposed line, but the whole of the Dalby district—they were very small indeed. The Registrar-General, in his report on agriculture and live stock for last year, gave, in table 6, the gross produce raised in each police district during that period, and the figures were as follow:—Of grain crops, the district of Dalby produced no wheat, no barley, 2,500 bushels of maize, no rice; English potatoes, 8 tons; sweet potatoes, 2 tons; and of course it produced no sugar-cane, arrowroot, or tobacco. It produced no wheaten hay, but 12 tons of oats, 71 tons of lucerne, and 17 tons of panicum and other fodder grasses. Under the head of vines, he found that no wine had been made in the district, and that of grapes for table use only 768 lb. had been produced; no bananas, pineapples, or oranges. How anybody could justify the construction of a railway for the conveyance of agricultural produce in a district like that was beyond his comprehension. He did not think anybody could seriously do so, and as a matter of fact the Commissioners themselves very frankly said the land along the greater portion of the proposed line was unsuited

for agriculture. They were told the great reason for the construction of the line was that there was a coal deposit in the reserve between the seven and the eight-mile pegs; but it had not been shown that that coal had been developed to any extent, nor had it been shown that it had even been fairly tested. But, granting that it had been tested beyond dispute, and developed to some extent, was that sufficient reason why they should expend £46,000 to build a railway to that coalfield, when they had no guarantee whatever that it would be worked when the line was finished? A railway might be built there to-morrow, but the coalfield might remain undeveloped for the next generation. If there was such a good thing to be made out of working that coalfield—if, as pointed out by the hon. member for North Brisbane, any company, by the expenditure of £5,000, could lay down a tramline and make a profit of £3,500 a year by selling coals to the Government—how was it that that had not been done before now? Why should the State be called upon to assist in developing that coalfield—to spend money in entering into competition with private enterprise in other parts of the colony? His chief objection to the line was that it could only be justified on the ground that it would develop that coalfield, and as against that they had no guarantee whatever that the construction of the line would result in the development of the coalbeds which were supposed to exist there. Were the Government going to become coal masters themselves and develop those fields? The Minister for Railways was silent on that point.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No; I was not.

Mr. MORGAN said the hon. gentleman had given the Committee no information as to how those fields were to be developed—whether by the Government or by private enterprise. He thought before asking the Committee to assent to a proposal of that kind; before all that hurry and haste was displayed, the Minister for Railways should have set about making arrangements with some company for the development of those coal deposits; and if he had come down to that Committee with a draft agreement prepared for ratification he (Mr. Morgan) did not think there would be any objection to the passing of the railway. He could promise the hon. gentleman that he would offer no objection to it if he could give any guarantee that the coalfields there would be worked in the interests of the public, to the extent that the Railway Department would be supplied with coal from them. But the hon. gentleman had given no guarantee on that head at all. Of course, he could not give such a guarantee without having set about the business in a systematic manner, and that he did not appear to have done. The Hon. the Vice-President of the Executive Council had read to the Committee a proposal submitted to the last Government, which was a sound business proposal, and which he understood the hon. gentleman to say was still open; and if the Minister for Railways said he was prepared to ratify that agreement the Committee would have had something definite to go upon. He repeated that the Minister for Railways had given the Committee no ground to suppose that any scheme for working the coalfields in question, for the purpose of supplying the locomotive department with coal, would be ratified in any reasonable time in the future. A good deal had been said about the quality of the coal. They were told that it was splendid for gas and steaming purposes. The hon. member for Aubigny, amongst others, asserted that it would produce a very much larger quantity of gas per ton than any other coal in the colony other than

Burrum coal; but, as against that, he ought to have added that the coal was not as good as it might be for gas purposes, because it produced no coke whatever, the residuum being merely a little ash. Coal that did not give a reasonable quantity of coke was not so good for gas purposes as the hon. gentleman would have the Committee believe. Of course he did not expect the Government to accept any suggestion from him; but still he thought the wise course to adopt in connection with the proposed railway was to let it terminate for the present at the coalfields. The vote that was asked for when the loan estimates were submitted to the Committee was £15,000 for a railway to that coalfield. Now that survey had been carried forward, and the Railway Commissioners came down and told them that they had only £14,000 at their disposal, and they wanted £46,000. Under those circumstances he thought the Committee should hesitate before giving their consent to the proposal of the Minister for Railways, particularly in the absence of any guarantee that the coal deposits existing on the railway reserves, which was the chief argument in favour of the line, would be worked.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he would like to know why it was not proposed to take the line three miles further on, so as to get to a place where there was a prospect of some traffic?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said he stated before that the reason was that the inspecting surveyor was not able to bring up his final recommendation for the route beyond the present proposed terminus, and that, therefore, was left for the next section.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that it was supposed by hon. members to be a railway to a coalfield, but at present it did not reach the coalfield. It only touched the edge of the field, but when it reached ten miles further it would go right through the field. Fourteen miles was a reasonable length to construct in one section.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he understood that the Government coalfield, if there was any, was about six miles from Dalby.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Seven and a-half miles.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said six miles was the distance mentioned last year. All the rest was private property undeveloped.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said there was not the slightest doubt that the road ran in that direction and the proper way was to take the railway there so that they should have competition. As to the argument used by some hon. members opposite that the proper thing for private individuals to do who would compete, was to make the line by private enterprise; that was absurd. He should like to know what line made to any coalfield in the colony was constructed at the expense of private individuals. Look at the Ipswich coalfields. How many years did they fight to get the line down there? The argument used in that case was that the Government should make the line from the coalfield to a market, and they assisted the people of Ipswich to get that. After the railway was made to the coalfield, people made their own lines, as would be done in the present instance.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he understood that nearly all the land was alienated. How many owners were there of land on that coalfield from which competition was likely to come?

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said there were very large areas close alongside the line.

Mr. BARLOW said the argument of the Vice-President of the Executive Council bore out his contention that the railway from Dalby westward represented the main line from Brisbane to Ipswich, and that the proposed line towards the Bunya Mountains was nothing more nor less than a coal siding; no argument in the world could alter that.

Mr. SAYERS said he had listened attentively to all the arguments about the proposed railway from Dalby to Rocky Point, but he had not yet heard the Minister for Railways say what the ultimate destination of the line would be, or what expenditure it would involve. He should like to know that before they went to a division, as they no doubt would, and very likely the motion would be carried. He did not think any company would construct the line upon the information given to the Committee in the Commissioners' report. It had been stated that 13,000 tons of coal were consumed by the railway over the Main Range. But what was that? A very small mine indeed, employing a small number of men, could get all the coal that would be required by the Railway Department. A mine worked by, say, fifty men, would produce at least 600 tons of coal a week. It had also been stated that the earnings of the line would pay 7 per cent. on the cost of construction, but he very much doubted that. There was not a branch line in the colony in any farming or timber district that paid at the present time. Another statement made was that the line would pass through private property nearly all the way. If that was so, then those persons who would benefit by the line and sell their land at an increased price, should pay for the improvement and development of their property, and that was one reason why he would vote against the railway. As regarded the character of the coalfield, it had been stated that a shaft had been sunk to a depth of 60 or 80 feet. That was a very small test for a coalfield, and the information it afforded was very meagre. He was positive that in three months the locality could have been tested by several shafts, which would have proved whether there really was coal there in large quantities. But one small shaft of the depth mentioned was not a proper test. When he first read the report of the Commissioners he thought it was a very lame report. The Commissioners really did not recommend the line, and gave no information which hon. members could not have got from any ordinary source. They stated that—

"The country through which this line passes has hitherto been used solely for grazing purposes, and although the soil is of excellent quality it is doubtful whether the land immediately along the first seven or eight miles of the line will ever be thickly settled, owing to the uncertain rainfall along this belt of country."

That was not very favourable to the construction of the line. They went on to say that—

"Between Rocky Point and the Bunya Mountains, where it is understood the line is intended to be projected, the traffic is likely to be an increasing one, as the reports furnished to the department indicate that the land in the vicinity of the Bunya Mountains is well adapted for close agricultural settlement, while the mountain scrubs contain an unlimited supply of excellent timber for building purposes."

In connection with nearly every railway that was proposed, it was stated that it would open up the timber industry; but it must be understood that there was only a limited demand for timber. Queensland could compete with the other colonies so far as cedar was concerned, but not in regard to pine or hardwood. In fact, a duty had been put on timber to protect the saw-millers, who could supply four or five times the quantity at present supplied if there was any demand for it. He was not going to say whether the railway towards the Bunya

Mountain, or any of the others proposed, should be made first, but he would oppose the line on the ground that no case had been made out for its construction. Even the Minister for Railways had stated that there was very little agriculture along the route, and he (Mr. Sayers) was given to understand that the land was held in large areas by people who would not put it to farming purposes, even if it were suitable; so that the construction of the line would simply increase the value of the land to the present owners at the cost of the State. He thought the Government should not make railways through private property, when there was plenty of Crown land through which they might be made. The hon. member for Logan said that if private persons held large blocks of land, and settlers wanted land beyond, there would be no possibility of getting a railway to them without going through those blocks. That might seem a hardship, but, as a rule, settlers only took up land where there was a prospect of a railway being made; and if the Committee decided that the line should be constructed through private land to reach the land that belonged to the Crown that land would be taken up by settlers if it was good land. There was already sufficient land taken up by small settlers to supply ten times as much as the population of the colony could consume; and he did not see why railways should not be made in those districts where land was already taken up, because they would not only benefit the settlers in those districts, but would bring about more settlement. Even taking the consumption of coal by the Government over the Range at the quantity stated by the Minister for Railways, and allowing another 20,000 tons for private consumption, he did not think it would pay to make the line. People did not open up coal mines from philanthropic motives, in order to supply the Government with cheaper coal; but if it turned out to be a good article, those people would want from the Government within 3d. a ton of what it would cost to bring coal from Ipswich. And if they tendered at 3d. a ton less than the price at which it could be brought from Ipswich he supposed the Government would accept their tender. He had no interest one way or the other in the railway, but considering all the facts of the case he did not think he should be justified in voting for its construction.

Mr. POWERS said he wished to say a few words with respect to the result of building a line to a coalfield on a previous occasion. Some years ago Parliament voted £54,000 for the purpose of building a railway to the Burrum, from which there had not been, at that time, as much coal taken out as had already been taken from the field to which it was now proposed to build a railway. Mr. James Robertson held a selection of 160 acres in the district to which he referred, and he never touched the coal in that selection till tenders were called for the railway. At present there were 300 or 400 men living there, and the output last year was 24,000 tons; and they had only touched the coalfield; they were only working two seams within an area of from twenty to fifty acres. Then there was the township of Howard. Between Howard and Torbanica there was a population of 1,000 people subsisting on the coal industry in the district.

Mr. TOZER: They have a market.

Mr. POWERS said that, according to the Minister for Railways, there was already a market to the extent of 12,000 tons a year for the coal in the district to which it was proposed to make the railway now before the Committee, and that was a very good start. And the people employed in getting that coal would benefit the

agriculturist, because if there was no agriculture carried on in the district before, there would be when the coalfield was developed. The timber industry would be developed also. Anyone looking at the map would see that there was a timber reserve of twenty-five square miles, or 16,000 acres. The timber-getters were now drawing timber in the district more than twenty miles, so that it was accessible to the railway even now. Then there was a timber reserve of twenty-five square miles, and nearer to the railway was ninety square miles, or 57,600 acres of unalienated land. Now, with 57,600 acres of land not far from the railway, with 16,000 acres of timber reserve, and with a coal mine that had been tested fairly, why should the line not be built, and what stronger arguments could be used in favour of it being built? He had no hesitation in supporting the line. He admitted that the report of the Commissioners was bald, and that they had sent in a report that the House never expected from them. He did not think it sufficiently full; but the information given by the Minister for Railways and the Vice-President of the Executive Council was quite full enough. There was one other point he should like to raise. They had been building expensive railways, and they knew that light lines of railway might be constructed to such places as now suggested at a very much less cost, yet the Commissioners had stuck to the old red-tape methods, without offering any suggestion as to building cheaper railways. He hoped that in future, when branch lines were to be made, the Commissioners would see their way to recommend cheaper lines than had heretofore been constructed, and thus allow of the building of more branch lines. Hon. members talked about branch lines not paying during the first year, but he did not think they should look upon that as a loss. They developed the country, and it could not be expected that they should pay immediately. Miners did not expect a shaft to pay immediately it was sunk; and those branch lines being simply for the development of new country, they were justified in building such as benefited the mining, pastoral, timber, and agricultural districts, as it had been clearly proved that line would.

Mr. COWLEY said when the line was under discussion last year he promised to vote for it and after hearing the arguments used by the Vice-President of the Executive Council, he must say that his previous convictions were confirmed. He considered that the arguments used were unanswerable, and conclusively proved that the line would be a benefit to the country. At the same time, he thought that the cost was excessive. It appeared from the report of the Commissioners that the mine would cost £3,000 a mile. He believed that in the Gulf country they were building lines over worse country at a considerably less cost, and he sincerely trusted that when the work was carried out it would be completed for a much less cost than now anticipated. If a railway could be constructed so cheaply between Croydon and Normanton, there should be no difficulty in doing the same thing down South. He was very sorry that that matter had not been delayed until after passing the Decentralisation Bill so that the Southern members could settle it amongst themselves. That Bill had to come on for discussion next week, and he for one would certainly vote for no more railways until the Decentralisation Bill was disposed of. He had given a promise to vote for the line under discussion, and the arguments used being so strongly in its favour he felt compelled to vote for it. The Vice-President of the Executive Council had shown clearly that there was a good seam of coal, partially worked, and that the company were prepared to sell coal to the

Government at 7s. a ton delivered at Dalby. On the other hand, they had offered to hand over the mine for five years free of expense, giving in the work done, and let the Government work the mine themselves. He considered that it would be suicidal to reject the line after such an offer had been made. He was much surprised at the arguments used by the hon. member for Bundamba. When a work was proposed that he said would rob the working men of his district of a little employment he was up in arms, but when there were thousands of working men in the North who would be thrown out of employment through the stoppage of one industry, he had nothing to say in favour of their claim. He (Mr. Cowley) maintained that the arguments of the hon. member were utterly false, and that the construction of that line would rob no working man. On the contrary, it would give employment to them. Cheap coal meant increased consumption, and increased consumption meant increased employment. The hon. member need not be in the least afraid that the coal miners of Bundamba would suffer. The export trade would increase; the Ipswich collieries would not suffer. If they could produce good coal they would be able to sell it. The arguments of the hon. member amounted to this, that the present amount of protection was not enough for the coal miners, but that the taxpayers of the colony must pay at the rate of £3,000 a year more to support the hon. member's constituents. He (Mr. Cowley) maintained that that was not fair, and as it had been proved that from £3,000 to £5,000 a year could be saved by opening up that coalfield, he considered that, in justice to the taxpayers, he was bound to vote for the line. Another argument that had been used was that the line would pass through private lands, but he would like to know what railways would not pass through private lands? What about the cost of the Fortitude Valley line? Look at the expense for resumption of land there. Yet the cost of resumption for the Dalby to Bunya line would be slight indeed in comparison. It was impossible to build railways without benefitting private owners to a certain extent, but if they settled population on the land that was what was required. As the Vice-President of the Executive Council had said, the land had been bought fairly and squarely from the Government, and it was bought with the intention of building railways. Therefore, in justice to the purchasers of that land, the railway should be built. The hon. member for Charters Towers said that the coalfield had not been tested, but they had evidence that it had been tested, and to a great extent for several years past. The hon. member had said that he was not satisfied with a test of eighty feet. He would ask the hon. member, as a practical miner, if he could get 10 oz. of gold to the ton by sinking sixty feet, would he go down another fifty feet? Probably he would be thoroughly satisfied and go on working his mine; but if he liked to sink deeper with his spare cash he could do so in the hope of getting greater profits. He (Mr. Cowley) maintained that the hon. member's argument utterly fell to the ground, and that the assertions from the Treasury benches, that the coal was first-class, that it was obtainable in any quantity and easily, was uncontradicted. Therefore he thought that instead of no arguments having been adduced, as some hon. members had said, very strong arguments had been given in support of the line. On those grounds he, for one, in conformity with the promise he had given last session, would support the line.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that of all the debates he had ever heard in that House about the construction of railways that

was the most unsatisfactory. Some extraordinary arguments had been used in support of the line. One argument used was that the land in that part of the colony having been sold under the Railway Reserves Act for the purpose of constructing railways, therefore railways should be constructed through that land.

The HON. SIR T. MCILWRAITH: That was not an argument used. It was a statement made in answer to an hon. member on the other side who said that land had been dummied.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said the argument used was that that land having been sold under the Railway Reserves Act for the purpose of constructing railways, therefore, railways should be constructed through that land.

The PREMIER (Hon. B. D. Morehead): It was not an argument.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said it had been stated as a fact, and the conclusion had at once been drawn, that it was only a fair thing to make a railway through that land! That was perfectly preposterous. That land had been sold for the purpose of making the line between Dalby and Roma, but the money had not been spent for that purpose, but was withdrawn by the Government and put into the revenue to pay current expenditure. Another thing which was most unsatisfactory in connection with the debate was that the Committee did not know what the proposals of the Government were with respect to railways. The Minister for Railways had told them the other night that he could not tell the Committee what the Government proposals were. They knew that, and they knew the reason for it was that not having any railway policy the hon. gentleman was not in a position to disclose one. Still, it was a most unfortunate thing that the Government had no definite policy to submit to the Committee upon so important a matter. Several times attention had been called to their loan expenditure, and the necessity for some information of a definite character as to what their future obligations in that respect were likely to be was admitted. Instead of that, they had those little single railway proposals submitted. The Government could not give the Committee their policy in the matter, because they did not know what it was; and not knowing, they could not say. Then extraordinary arguments had been used with respect to the profits from the line, and the probable saving to the country had been impressed upon the minds of some hon. members. The argument used was that 13,500 tons of coal were used on the Downs west and south of Toowoomba, and it had now to be got from Ipswich at a haulage cost of 10s. per ton. But the whole of the 13,500 tons was not used west of Toowoomba, and he ventured to say that at least 10,000 was used south of Toowoomba, and not more than 3,500 tons on the Western line; because the traffic on the Southern line was so much greater. The Minister for Railways laughed, but they knew how many trains were run on the Southern line.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes; the whole of the figures are in the tables.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said they knew that statistics proved a great deal, and the more practical view to take of those figures would be that 10,000 tons were used on the Southern line, and 3,500 on the Western line. He would take the haulage cost from Ipswich at 10s. per ton, and what would the haulage be from the Dalby coal pit to Toowoomba? There would be sixty-four miles of haulage at 1d. per ton per mile, and it would be seen that the saving would be very much less than had been stated.

The PREMIER: There is a range to be got over from Ipswich.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he was allowing for that. Making a present of all that, it would be seen that the saving after all would not be more than 4s. per ton at the outside, and that made a great difference in the saving to the country which had been spoken of. The saving would not be more than £2,000 on that quantity of coal, and on the remaining quantity the actual saving would be much less, so that the conjectural saving at the outside would be something less than £4,000. Against that they had a certain expenditure of £2,000 a year for interest, and probably £1,500 a year for working expenses. That would be as a set-off against a conjectural saving of about an equal amount, so that actually the interest and working expenses alone would be equivalent to the saving.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Do you know what the traffic will be?

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: What would the other traffic be? Did anybody suppose there would be any other traffic?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: Some day; not yet; in the future, perhaps.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH: It will start with ten times the traffic there is on the Beauaraba line, irrespective of the coal.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he believed that line did not pay, or anything like pay. The Minister for Railways had told them so the other night, so that that was not a very good line to refer to. That conjectural saving which had been mentioned was based upon two assumptions. First of all it was assumed that that coal would be as equally good coal for railway purposes as the Ipswich coal, and that was a matter of pure conjecture at present, so far as the information before the Committee went. The next assumption was that the proprietors of that coal mine intended to sell the coal to the Government at the same price as Ipswich coal. An hon. member had told them just now that the company offered to sell the coal to the Government at 7s. per ton, but that was an offer made some years ago; they were not at all likely to do that if the railway was constructed.

Mr. AGNEW: They would be very foolish if they did.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: As the hon. member had said, they would be very foolish if they did. They would get as much for their coal as they could make the Government give, and they might say, "If you can get it from Ipswich at 16s. we will let you have it at 15s., and that will still be 1s. less."

The PREMIER: That assumes that there will be only one colliery.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said that was what he was assuming, and he did not see that there would be any inducement for the establishment of another. How many tons of coal sold did it take to make a colliery pay? To make a liberal allowance, he supposed the total consumption on the Downs was not more than 20,000 tons, and where would be the demand for the establishment of a second colliery, especially in view of the advantage the first mine would have? He had listened attentively to the debate, and the more he heard of it the more clear it appeared to him that that railway was a private railway—a railway to a private coal mine, to be made at the expense of the Government. That might be a justifiable proposal under certain circumstances. A proposal had been made last year to make a railway to

a private gold mine—Mount Morgan—and he believed that line would pay more than interest, as the traffic would be so great. But the same arguments could not be applied to the proposed line. It was a Government railway to a private coal mine. There might be circumstances which would justify such a thing, but he confessed he did not see them in the present case, and it might be as well to let the Committee know who the proprietors of the mine were. For those reasons he said it was the most unsatisfactory proposal or debate he had ever heard in that Committee on the subject of railway lines. The information given was so unsatisfactory that he could not see his way to vote for it. Before he sat down he would like to call attention to one very remarkable circumstance in connection with the line, which formed an admirable comment upon what he had said last week about the way in which big estates were aggregated. One resumption for the proposed line was a strip of land three miles in length and one chain wide, the whole of it consisting of a closed road running right through one property. The whole of that road had been closed and sold to the owner of the land on both sides, and now it was proposed that that road should be resumed again by the Government. He wished they had some information as to the amount of traffic they were likely to get from the end of the line. He confessed he was not familiar with that part of the country, but from the information they had, there was not likely to be any more traffic upon the line than there was upon the Beauaraba line—probably less. They had been told the other day by the Minister for Railways that it was foolish to make such lines, but the proposed line was just one of the same sort. The only inducement offered was that it would open up a coal mine. He did not know of any instance of mining for coal on Government reserves in the colony, although there were great inducements offered for the purpose. He confessed he did not like the proposal.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that he had been in the House a good many years, and he had always engaged in the discussions upon railway proposals, and his experience was that he had never seen a line discussed where the Committee were put in possession of as much information as in regard to the proposed line. The hon. gentleman started with the assumption that the coal owner would get as big a price as he could. No doubt he would; but the safety of the Government and of the public lay in having as many coal owners as possible. The principal coal owner incontestably was the Government in the present instance.

Mr. TOZER: Where will there be a market for more than one coal mine?

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said that if the hon. member knew anything of the Darling Downs, and of their capabilities for agriculture, and the development which would take place if they could only get cheap coal, he would not ask a question like that. The supplying of coal to the Government was a very small matter. He looked upon it as an immense thing that 170 miles from Brisbane there was an immense coalfield which would be able to supply coal at 7s. a ton at the coal pit; and if they took into consideration the fact that within a few miles of that and of that railway line there was the Condamine River, which was well adapted for irrigation and which would lead to great agricultural prosperity, they would see that it would be of immense benefit to the country. Nothing would benefit the Darling Downs so much as a supply of cheap coal. At Toowoomba the other day he had been astonished

at the great amount of agricultural implements shown there which had been made in the place. He got a large amount of machinery made there, with which he was perfectly satisfied, and the demand would be much greater if they could obtain cheap coal. It had proved a great bar to any industry on the Darling Downs that they could not obtain coal there.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: There is only a difference of twelve miles in haulage.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said the difference was only twelve miles, but there was a difference between having to get up over 2,000 feet and going along a level. The hon. member did not seem to recognise the difference at all. If he had seen the trains climbing the Main Range he would see that there was a great deal more difference than the actual twelve miles. The Darling Downs and Western Lands Company had made an offer to the Government with respect to the coal mine on their property, and that offer was still open, and they could accept it to-morrow if they chose. Within the last few days he had received an offer to raise 500 tons at 6s. a ton, and he thought that offer had been accepted. An Ipswich company were going to work in another mine two miles off, and adjoining the line. He did not know what price they were getting, but the result would be that coal would be sold there at exactly the same price as in Ipswich. The competition between the Ipswich coal owners had brought down the price to what would pay them all, and the same thing would occur at Dalby. There would be competition between the different collieries on the Darling Downs, but they would not enter into competition with Ipswich, because Ipswich coal would be out of that market. He did not know a place in the colony where a railway could be made which would develop the resources of the district more. The climate there was the finest in Australia, and the soil was of a rich volcanic nature right to the top. 25,000 acres were ready for settlement now under the Land Act of 1884, and that settlement would be greatly assisted by the proposed line. The question was asked where the line was to go. It would go as far as it could be made to pay, and that the line would pay was beyond a doubt. It would pay right off. The leader of the Opposition had not been present when the Minister for Railways had given all the particulars. The Minister for Railways had taken the consumption of coal at Toowoomba, Warwick, Wallangarra, Dalby, Roma, and Chinchilla for twelve months, and he had put down the cost of the carriage of that coal from Ipswich and Dalby, respectively, to the several places, and had shown that there would be a saving to the country of £3,500 per annum. At present to deliver coals in Dalby cost 10s. a ton for carriage alone, while from the mines there it could be supplied so as to save 60 per. cent. They would not only save the cost price of the coal, but 30 per cent. of the capital as well.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH: That is in Dalby.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said of course the Government would make a less profit by supplying Toowoomba, because there was so much more carriage; but the carriage was very easy, as it was over a level part of the line, on which there was not the congested traffic that here was on the eastern side of the range. The amount of coal which had to be taken over the range was a great hindrance, and the quantity was constantly increasing. He would ask the Ipswich people to consider—because when the whole thing was boiled down it simply meant that the Ipswich people did not want

to be deprived of a certain amount of trade they possessed at the present time—that that was not the way to look at it. They should consider the great development to the country, and to the coal-mining industry also, which would result from opening up a new coalfield. He was quite sure there was not a coal miner in the Ipswich district, who understood the question, who would not admit the benefit to the colony in having two coalfields instead of one. For a short time the Ipswich interest might be affected; but if the wants of the Government could be supplied elsewhere, and at a cheaper rate, the country got the benefit. They were not bound to consume Ipswich coal for ever. To talk about spending £46,000 to open up that new coalfield, when they had spent £600,000 on a railway which enabled the coal-owners of Ipswich to get their coal to market, was mere twaddle. As he had said, Ipswich could not be deprived of its trade until the railway was completed, and when the line was completed private individuals would have to construct their own connecting lines, as they had done in the Ipswich district.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he could not see any objection to another coalfield being opened up in the colony, and he certainly did not oppose the line because it would compete with the coalfields in the Ipswich district. He looked at it from another point of view. He believed the rate of haulage for coal to Toowoomba was 1d. per ton per mile, for seventy-six miles. From the Dalby coalfields to Toowoomba would be sixty-four miles—that was to say, they would save twelve miles, or 1s. per ton.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It is fifty-two miles from Toowoomba to Dalby and seven and a-half miles from there to the coalfields.

The HON. SIR S. W. GRIFFITH said he did not think even 1s. 2d. per ton would make Toowoomba a manufacturing centre.

Mr. BARLOW said the Vice-President of the Executive Council had spoken as if he meant that the line from Brisbane to Ipswich was made expressly for the accommodation of the coal traffic.

The HON. SIR T. McILWRAITH said he meant no such thing. What he had said was that one of the principal reasons for making the line was that they would be able to get the coal to market.

Mr. BARLOW said the line to Ipswich was made to complete the Southern and Western system. He had no objection to any fair competition, but what the Ipswich people objected to was that the coal sidings should be made at the Government expense. Messrs. Thomas, or Gulland, or anybody else might just as well have said they wanted sidings made at the Government expense. He could not lay his hand on the book of reference; but he had made a careful inspection of the plan, and had found that four miles beyond the Dalby coalfields they would still be in the territory of the Darling Downs and Western Lands Company, and competition could not exist unless the Government intended to work the coalpits at their own expense. He had no desire to offer any factious opposition; that would be useless, but he would remind the hon. member for Herbert that he was perfectly at liberty to use his vote as he liked; if he was pledged to anything it was only to £15,000, which was the amount voted on the loan estimates for the line last year. Because hon. members were pledged to the amount of £15,000, that was no reason why they should spend £50,000. He agreed with the leader of the Opposition that in all probability the line would be worked at a loss, and that the loss would counteract any advantage

that might be derived by the Government in the cheaper haulage of their coal. A certain amount would be taken off the cost of coal on one side, and added on to the railway expenditure on the other, and that would be the end of the transaction. He could hardly believe that any competition would arise, at any rate not in the near future, and if it did, he did not think it would have the effect of giving the Government the whole advantage. The probability was that there would be only one pit opened and the price of coal would lower 3d. or 6d. or 1s. below the cost of getting coal from Ipswich. The haulage would be much the same as at present.

Mr. GROOM said he would like to correct the Vice-President of the Executive Council in what he had said, so that too much importance would not be attached to his words in that way. He said that the cheap coal that the proposed railway would bring, would establish Toowoomba as a manufacturing centre. If the Government—and his remarks applied not only to the present Government, but to the preceding Government—desired Toowoomba to be a manufacturing centre, they would have to make other concessions besides cheap coal. He had had some experience in manufacturing industries, and many other townspeople of Toowoomba had also, and the hon. gentleman had said, no doubt correctly, that the machinery turned out there was of the highest class of workmanship; but that machinery had been supplied at the cost of the shareholders of the foundry company. He was sorry to say that up to the present time the foundry there had not been a success.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS (Hon. J. M. Macrossan): They paid 10 per cent.

Mr. GROOM said there was something behind that. At the time that dividend was paid there was a heavy bank overdraft, upon which interest was also being paid. The shareholders were not satisfied, and the question was asked the other day why that dividend was paid, and the answer was not of a satisfactory nature. He believed it was paid to keep the thing together and to give the shareholders some confidence. But the great point was this: that when tenders were called for by the Government for rolling stock, there had been the one condition that the article must be delivered in Brisbane. The carriage for iron to Toowoomba was 35s. per ton more than to Ipswich, and that affected not only the foundry company, but other persons who used it. In addition to that, they were charged railway freight upon the manufactured article to Brisbane. It was stated by the managing director of the Toowoomba Foundry Company that the down freight upon two tanks amounted to 25 per cent., and Brisbane contractors were saved that; so that, if Toowoomba was to become a manufacturing centre, as the hon. gentleman desired it to be, other inducements would have to be held out besides cheap coal, although that would be a step in the right direction.

The MINISTER FOR MINES AND WORKS: It would be the foundation.

Mr. GROOM said it would be the foundation supposing they had iron ore. Some time ago coal and iron land was taken up in the neighbourhood, and it was pretty well tested; but the shareholders could make nothing out of it, and they could never import iron ore at the present freight. He was not going to say that because the Drayton deviation was thrown out, he would oppose any other line. Hon. members upon that occasion no doubt voted as they thought right, and voted conscientiously; but he still believed that that railway was lost more through political considerations than from any

desire to serve the country. At the present time there was no public work outside of Brisbane in the Southern portion of the colony likely to be gone on with for the next eighteen months, and there were hundreds of men walking about unable to get work. They were looking forward to works of that kind in the hope of obtaining employment. The Committee having already sanctioned the line by voting a sum of money for its construction, he was quite prepared to sanction the approval of the plans laid on the table. It would be the means of providing a considerable amount of work; but whether the coal mines would turn out in the way anticipated, was a question which time alone could decide. The hon. member for Burrum had pointed out what had been done in his district by carrying the railway to a coalfield, and no doubt the hon. member was perfectly correct. But the position of the coal mines at Jimbour and at the Burrum were widely different. At the Burrum coalfield they had a navigable river almost at their doors, and a large demand for coal at Maryborough and other places in the locality. But on the Darling Downs, with the exception of the Government supply, the demand would be very limited. Even in the manufacture of gas, a very large proportion of Ipswich coal would have to be used; and the same remark applied to Warwick, as well as to Toowoomba. All over the Downs Ipswich coal was being supplied at a very cheap rate. He could land Ipswich coal at his own private house, at Toowoomba, for 16s. 6d. a ton. Of course, if coal could be obtained still more cheaply, it would be more largely consumed. If the coal mines at Jimbour proved the success the Vice-President of the Executive Council seemed to anticipate, it would no doubt be a large benefit to Toowoomba. Looking at the question in all its aspects, and especially from the point of view that it would provide work for the unemployed, he felt it his duty to support the motion.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS said the Government had taken steps to secure that all work which could be done in the colony, provided the price was not too excessive, should be done in the colony. There was not an indent went home from the Railway Department that was not carefully scrutinised, and if it appeared that the work could be done in the colony the order was not sent to England. With regard to the expense of manufactures at Toowoomba and at Brisbane, he had brought that question before the Commissioners, and he hoped to see something done in the direction indicated by the hon. member very shortly. The tanks mentioned by the hon. member happened to be required for the North Coast railway. If they had been required for Charleville, the difference would have been in favour of Toowoomba, as against Brisbane. In reply to the leader of the Opposition, and his calculations of coal charges he might say that he (the Minister for Railways) was looking at the question from the point of view of what would pay the Government. His calculations were not made on the ordinary rate of a penny per ton per mile, but on the actual cost of haulage, and that was regulated by the gradients on the various sections of the railway. There was a printed table issued to every stationmaster, engine driver, and guard, in which that was distinctly laid down, and the engine driver had only to refer to his table to know whether his train was overloaded or not. The steepest gradient on the journey was the ruling gradient, and the steepest gradient between Ipswich and Toowoomba was from Murphy's Creek. The most powerful locomotive they had could only draw 100 tons between Ipswich and Toowoomba. Coming from Dalby, on the other hand, the steepest gradient was near Toowoomba. But all the coal

would not go there; a good part of it would go on the Southern line. However, taking the steepest gradient near the Toowoomba end, the same engine that could only draw 100 tons from Ipswich to Toowoomba, could draw 185 tons, or nearly double, from Dalby to Toowoomba. The quantity of coal consumed at Toowoomba during the year up to July last was 9,565 tons. The cost of hauling that, calculated in the way he had pointed out, was £2,950 19s. 6d., and if hauling it for the public, the charge would be £3,068 15s. 5d., leaving to pay for working expenses, maintenance, and everything else, £168; so that they were really hauling coal for the public at Toowoomba at a loss. The same quantity carried from Dalby to Toowoomba, would cost the department £1,262 12s. 6d.; if carried for the public, the charge would be £2,037 11s. 3d. In that case they made a clear profit of £775 in haulage. Hon. members would therefore see the difference it would make to the railway revenue, if that coal was supplied from Dalby instead of from Ipswich.

Mr. TOZER said he had always maintained that the best policy for the country was to construct reproductive works, and his desire when he spoke before, was to draw from the Minister some information which might induce him to give his vote for the railway. He did not intend to vote against it; certainly not. He would point out that the Government, being fortified as they were by the report of the Railway Commissioners, there must be very strong reasons indeed that would operate to reject proposals coming from such a source; but there had not been that information given which would induce him to strongly support the line and throw the whole weight of his arguments in favour of it. He believed that the line would ultimately go over the Bunya Mountains, through a gap which he knew to exist there, having been over it, and that it would open up the rich lands of the Burnett which would settle a large population. He hoped that would be so, but he had been unable to get any information as to the ultimate destination of the line. If it was intended to open up those lands in the Burnett district, and bring them into communication with the Dalby railway, and thence into communication with Sydney and Melbourne, he thought there would be a strong case in favour of it, even though they might consider it inopportune at the present time. The difficulty one laboured under in dealing with those matters was when he saw how other people saw them. He had before him a London paper, which the Hon. the Premier had spoken of as a remarkably good journal in commercial matters, and it alluded to the railways of the colonies in these terms:—

"Had the Australians conducted their railway enterprise as a business affair, we do not doubt that the lines in both Victoria and New South Wales would now be returning dividends little short of 10 per cent.; but, unhappily, a railway soon became in every district the great political question, and a matter involving the life and death of administrations. The result has been that every colony can point to lines which no sane man would have expected to pay, and which were made, in the teeth of professional opinion, to meet the exigencies of political life.

"To prevent any doubt or misunderstanding, an example of this vicious mode of expending money may be given. In the little colony of Tasmania the Government started, some six years ago, a few short railways in the Northern part of the island for the development of the mineral and other resources of that part of the island. Whether those lines have as a fact paid we do not know; but they were built to pay, and were a legitimate object of expenditure. The representatives, however, of the Southern part of the island, in which minerals are poor, and where hops and fruit are the chief products, demanded as a matter of right an expenditure of public money equal to that

which the North had received, and they forced the Ministry to construct a railway along the valley of the Derwent, where there is not—and where there never will be—any traffic, and where the connections both by water and by road were already more than adequate. Now, the £500,000 or so spent by Tasmania on these railways has had no permanent effect on the colony, except adding to the debt; the advantage of higher wages has come and gone; and an asset practically almost worthless has been left on its hands."

That really disclosed the position of many of their railways. He did not say the railway under consideration was one of that kind, but, as he had previously pointed out, they had a lot of railways upon their hands which had given employment to a lot of men, and which remained as an asset almost worthless in their hands. He was sorry indeed to find hon. members on the other side, instead of giving an independent vote on the question, trying to justify a party vote. He had stated before that that system of party voting on matters of that kind was not conducive to the best interests of the country. He would not be guided by any block vote, or vote against any proposition of the kind as a party vote. The other day they had a railway proposed of which he was in favour, and if the Government had taken the same course on that occasion, and called their supporters together, as they had apparently done on that, judging from the manner in which every one of those who had spoken had advocated it, they would have had a very different result. He contended that when the Government brought forward railways they should put the same force into one as into another, and not treat one in one way because the hon. member representing the district happened to sit on one side of the Committee, and another in a different way because the hon. member for the district sat on the other side. He had listened attentively to all the arguments adduced on the question, and could not help being surprised to see how far hon. members on the other side strained every point to try and make reasons for voting in favour of the proposed railway. He observed notably the comparison drawn between that line and the Burrum line. The two lines could not be compared. Burrum was within a few miles of Maryborough; the line was a main line from Maryborough to Bundaberg, two large centres of population, and, to a considerable extent, one was a manufacturing town. There was an enormous supply of coal in the district, and Gympie, Maryborough, Bundaberg, and the whole of the North drew large supplies of it from Burrum; and still he had yet to learn that the coal mines now in work had ever been able to pay a single dividend. He, unfortunately, had been associated with them for a long time, and had never got one sixpence profit out of them. Burrum had exceptional advantages, a tried coal, good management, and all the circumstances in its favour, and to compare that field with the untried deposits of coal on the proposed line was not a just comparison. However, there was the fact that there was a large agricultural population extending from Dalby to the Bunya Mountains; there was room for further settlement, and no doubt, if there were opportunities for irrigation, a very large amount of settlement would take place, especially if the line was extended into the Burnett district, and eventually it would be reproductive. For those reasons he was of opinion that the line was justified. But, as he had stated, he was not in a position to form such an opinion as to justify him in voting £46,000 for the line, and he did not know enough about it to vote against it. He had no interest whatever in Ipswich coal mines, so that that aspect of the question would not affect him. He looked upon the question in this

way: That if circumstances were brought under the notice of the Committee which proved that a line would even pay working expenses, and that there were prospects of a reasonable amount of traffic in the future, it was the duty of every hon. member not to throw it out because it was brought forward by one person or another. He had his own ideas that there was a chance of the line paying; therefore, he should not vote against it.

Mr. POWERS said the hon. member for Wide Bay had stated that some hon. members on that side of the Committee had stretched their—consciences, he supposed—as far as possible to try and vote for that line for party purposes. He (Mr. Powers) could only say—and he was sure the Committee would believe him—that no member of the Ministry, or of the party, had even asked him how he was going to vote on the question, and to his knowledge the party had not been brought together to discuss the matter. He was not trying to salve his conscience in voting for a railway he did not believe in. He contended that the circumstances of that line were exactly similar to those of the Burrum railway. The Burrum line was put before the Committee as a line to a coalfield; so was the line now under consideration. The Burrum line was carried near a Government reserve and into private lands—the lands of Mr. James Robertson, the late Hon. W. H. Walsh, Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Staley—and the same conditions prevailed in regard to the proposed line towards the Bunya Mountains. The Burrum railway entered private lands, and there were private lands beyond it, and for three miles on both sides of it. That it was a line to a coalfield was shown by the fact that a company asked Parliament for power to construct it to a coalfield. When the Vice-President of the Executive Council was Premier, he placed a sum on the loan estimates for the construction of the railway in case the company failed to carry it out, and he thought no member of the Committee would say that it was not a good thing for the country that that line was constructed by the Government. He had no hesitation in voting for the line now before the Committee. As for the hon. member for Wide Bay, he did not think any hon. member knew even now after his two long speeches how the hon. member was going to vote. He (Mr. Powers) thoroughly agreed with half the hon. member said in his first speech, and thoroughly disagreed with the other half. It was as contradictory as a speech could possibly be. The hon. member went all round a circle, and never came to the point. In one part of his speech he stated that he was opposed to branch railways, as the Commissioners' report showed they did not pay, and in almost the same breath said he believed in that line; and he (Mr. Powers) accompanied the hon. member the other day on a deputation, which was introduced by the hon. member, to ask the Minister for Railways to construct a line from Kilkivan to Nanango. As far as the references to himself (Mr. Powers) were concerned, he passed them by. He believed that the railway before the Committee would be a benefit to the country, and would vote for it.

Mr. SMYTH said he was going to vote against the railway, but would not give a silent vote. He had lately been associated with a company to construct a branch line to a small mine, a little over 100 yards in length, and before they could attempt to make that line they had had to place over £1,000 in the hands of the Government. There was a time when, if a branch line was demanded anywhere, the persons who proposed to construct it had to deposit a certain sum in the hands of the Government, and after a certain amount of traffic had gone over the line the money was refunded. He thought that was

justified, as it prevented people applying for branch lines when they had not sufficient capital to construct them. The line he referred to cost over £1,200, and the Government had traffic to the extent of 100 tons a week over it. A similar thing occurred at Charters Towers, where the Day Dawn Block Company had to deposit £4,000. He believed it was contemplated to run a line from the coal pits at the Burrum River to deep water, a length of ten miles, and that also was to be done by a company, who intended to raise money in England for the purpose. If the line to the Bunya coalfield and a great big saw-mill business was going to be constructed through private property, why did not the persons who would benefit by it construct the line? Perhaps in voting against that line he was voting against his own interest. He was told a while ago that he had a railway to be constructed in the district he represented, and that he should vote for the line before the Committee; but he was not going to be guilty of log-rolling, and vote for a line he did not believe in, for the purpose of getting a railway in his own district. The country about Dalby was tolerably level, and a line there could probably be constructed for £1,500 a mile. He contended that the owners of the mine who would be benefited by the railway should construct it, and own it themselves. It was a common thing to see such lines in the Ipswich district, and also in New South Wales. He did not think it was right for the Government to construct that line when they had refused to do the same thing for other persons in the colony.

Mr. SALKELD said he wished to say a few words as to why he intended to vote against that railway. He noticed that the Vice-President of the Executive Council, before any member on the Opposition side, except the hon. member for Burke, Mr. Hodgkinson, had spoken, made reference to Ipswich, and he did so again in a speech which he delivered later on in the evening. He (Mr. Salkeld) did not know whether the hon. gentleman was judging the hon. members for Ipswich by his own feelings, and thought they had not the good sense or honesty to vote for anything which they considered might affect or injure the interests of their district. The remarks were quite out of place. He was going to vote against the railway, but not because it would affect any of the interests about Ipswich. The influence of the proposed railway on the interests of Ipswich would be a mere fleabite. The first objection he had to the railway was that it was simply a fragment. He could not say that it was a fragment of the Government policy, because their railway policy was pretty well on a par with their policy in regard to other matters—they had not got any. The Government had not informed them what they proposed to do with regard to those railways for which money had already been voted by the previous Parliament. A sum of money was voted on the loan estimates last year for the construction of the line now under consideration, and now that line somewhat altered was brought forward with what he thought was quite unnecessary haste. The report of the Railway Commissioners was most peculiarly worded, and they could not be said to recommend the construction of the railway. It was argued, when the Bill for the appointment of Railway Commissioners was before Parliament, that they were going to get rid of political railways, but he just laughed the idea to scorn, as did many other hon. members. He did not for one moment believe that it would have that effect, or that they would get rid of political influence in regard to railways, any more than they would political or social influence in regard to appointments in the Civil Service, by the appointment of a board. The Commissioners stated that part of the land along the line was good, but it was doubtful

whether it was suitable for agriculture on account of the rainfall, and that was a very damaging statement. Judging by the report of the Commissioners, he was of opinion that they simply recommended the line because it was proposed by the Government. With regard to the saving to the Government that would be effected on the price paid for coal used beyond the Range, the hon. member for Charters Towers hit the nail on the head when he said that the price would be only just below that for which it could be obtained from Ipswich. If the proprietors could get 12s., 14s., or 18s. a ton for their coal in Dalby, it was not likely that they would take less. Whatever might be said to the contrary, the line would not pay; it would not lead to settlement, and the principal outcome of it would be that a few large owners of land would be able to sell their land at a very high profit. He had never yet voted against a line being taken to a coalfield, and if he believed the proposed line would open up a good coalfield, he would vote for it cheerfully. In the early times a coal mine was found at Clifton; and he remembered seeing glowing accounts of the quality of the coal and the thickness of the seams. A little settlement took place and the coal obtained there was used for a short time on the railway, but its use was very soon discontinued because it was found to be unsuitable. The field could not be worked at a profit and it was abandoned, and that would be the experience of the field to which it was now proposed to construct a railway. The Vice-President of the Executive Council referred to the construction of the Brisbane and Ipswich railway, and contended that the principal object in view was the opening up of the Ipswich coalfields; but the real reason why people were in favour of its construction was because they wanted to do away with the break in the journey to Brisbane by changing to the steamer or the coach at Ipswich. He knew that a considerable number of the Ipswich people, including some very influential persons, were opposed to the railway being taken to Brisbane at all, but he had always been in favour of its construction. The coal owners about Ipswich had been obliged to make all their branch railways at their own expense; and the main line from Brisbane to Ipswich was made without reference to them—in fact the principal coalfield in the district at the time the line was made was at Tivoli, on the north side of the river. That coalfield was still without the benefit of railway communication; and if the Government wanted to develop the coal trade, and give employment to a large number of people, they might construct a line to Tivoli, where there were thousands of acres of coal lands not yet touched. He had no hesitation in saying that it was the policy of the Government not to make railways to districts already settled, where the settlers wanted to get access to market by means of railways, but were not influential enough to do so. He intended to vote against the line now proposed, and he hoped every hon. member representing a farming constituency in need of railway communication would do the same.

Mr. COWLEY said he was surprised to hear the hon. member for Wide Bay accusing hon. members on the Government side with being compelled to vote for the proposed railway. He (Mr. Cowley) had not been asked by any hon. member to vote in any way for the railway; and had the arguments used by the Vice-President of the Executive Council not confirmed the statement he made last year, he (Mr. Cowley) would have voted against the resolution. He should have considered that he was absolved from his promise; but seeing that the arguments were substantiated, he felt justified in voting for the line.

Mr. TOZER said he never mentioned that hon. members opposite were forced to vote for the line, and he would not have risen but for the personal attack made upon him by the hon. member for Burrum. He never mentioned the hon. member's name or constituency. He referred to the Burrum and said members must go very far when they strained their arguments in such a way as referring to the Burrum coalfield. He never alluded to the hon. member. He never would follow hon. members in abuse of each other. He had made up his mind to that course. With reference to the criticism of his speech, he must explain that he said he disapproved of railways that did not pay their working expenses, and that there were nine that did not pay working expenses. He then expressed clearly the views he had upon that matter. His strong sympathies were with the line, but he stated that in spite of that he did not feel justified in voting with the Government, nor did he feel he was bound to record his vote against the motion. He did not intend to convey to hon. members that they were voting under direction.

Mr. ADAMS: You said so.

Mr. TOZER said he did not, and would be content to refer to *Hansard*. He told hon. members on the other side that they were voting *en bloc*, and that it seemed strange that hon. members representing Northern constituencies, who endorsed the remarks of the member for Burke when speaking against the Drayton deviation, did not support him when he opposed the line before them on the same ground—namely, that no more railways should go on until the North was satisfied. He regretted if hon. members thought he intended to be offensive in any way. That was not his desire. His desire was to explain thoroughly that whilst he had his strongest doubts in reference to that railway, yet so strong were his sympathies that he should not vote against it.

The PREMIER said he certainly understood from the hon. gentleman's remarks and by the construction of his sentences that some instruction had been given to hon. members to vote in a particular direction. He could assure the Committee that there had been nothing of the kind, and that the Government had not spoken to any of their supporters on the subject of how they should vote.

Mr. PAUL said he could endorse what the Premier said, and could refer to the way in which the Minister for Railways had introduced all railways to the House. He had never endeavoured to force the party in any way whatever. With regard to the line proposed, he intended to vote for it. He knew the country well and was over it twenty-five years ago.

Mr. AGNEW said the hon. member for Toowoomba inadvertently made a mistake which he desired to correct in the same issue of *Hansard* as the hon. member's speech would appear in. He said it was the practice of the Government in this colony to insist upon the delivery of all rolling-stock in the city of Brisbane. He was sure the hon. member stated that in good faith and thoroughly believed it, but he did not think that would be found to be a fact. The specifications for rolling-stock provided that the contractor could deliver on any portion of the Southern and Western Railway. As to the merits of the proposed line, the arguments used in support of it had never been contradicted.

Mr. GROOM said he based his statement upon the report of the Toowoomba Foundry Company, in which the managing director regretted that the company were unable to tender for any rolling-stock in consequence of the

condition that delivery must be in Brisbane, and until that was altered the company would not be in a position to do that work.

Mr. CAMPBELL said he could endorse what the hon. member for Toowoomba said. The Toowoomba Foundry Company had been compelled in times past to deliver all their goods in Brisbane.

Question put, and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 37.

Sir T. McIlwraith, Messrs. Morehead, Nelson, Black, Donaldson, Pattison, Macrossan, Luya, Smith, Paul, Hamilton, O'Sullivan, Groom, Murray, Powers, Callan, Stevens, Gannon, Dalrymple, Lissner, Corfield, Little, O'Connell, Plunkett, Rees, R. Jones, Palmer, North, Agnew, Adams, Campbell, Watson, Dunsmore, Philp, Crombie, Stevenson, Casey, and Murphy.

NOES, 16.

Sir S. W. Griffith, Messrs. Morgan, Salkeld, Glassey, Barlow, Foxton, Sayers, Macfarlane, Mellor, Wimbles, Smyth, McMaster, Grimes, Hyne, Unmack, and Isambert.

PAIR.

For the motion—Mr. Cowley.

Against the motion—Mr. Hodgkinson.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. FOXTON said he desired to make a personal explanation. The hon. member for Cook informed him that the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Archer, had left the Chamber previous to the division, on the understanding that he (Mr. Foxton) had paired with that hon. gentleman. He had expressed his willingness to pair with the hon. gentleman when the hon. member for Cook had asked him if he would do so, in a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes. He had afterwards sat at the table writing, and had not noticed that the hon. member for Rockhampton had left the Chamber, probably under the impression that he (Mr. Foxton) had done so. He made the explanation in justice to the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Archer, who might have desired to see his name in the division list, and to express his regret for having voted in the division in the absence of that gentleman, under a misunderstanding as to the time at which the pair was to commence.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported the resolution to the House, and the report was adopted.

#### NORTH COAST RAILWAY EXTENSION.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS moved—

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

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the North Coast Railway (section No. 4), from 70 miles 25 chains at Yandina to 90 miles 29 chains at Cooran, length 20 miles 4 chains, as laid upon the table of the House on Tuesday, the 3rd day of September instant.

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

Question put and passed.

#### COMMITTEE.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS, in moving—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the North Coast Railway (section No. 4), from 70 miles 25 chains at Yandina to 90 miles 29 chains at Cooran, length 20 miles 4 chains, as laid upon the table of the House on Tuesday, the 3rd day of September instant.

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

said that with regard to that 4th section of the North Coast Railway, he would assume that every hon. member had carefully read the

report of the Commissioners, and if they had done so, he did not anticipate that there would be the slightest objection to going on with that line. It was simply the last link required to complete the chain, and even if any hon. member present had objected to the original proposal to construct the North Coast Railway, it was certainly too late to object to it now. It would be the utmost folly on the part of Parliament to refuse to finish that line, seeing that until it was finished they would not derive any of the benefits for which the line was originally projected. With those remarks, he would leave the matter in the hands of the Committee, feeling sure that no speech that he could make would commend it more to the Committee than the report of the Railway Commissioners.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported the resolution to the House, and the report was adopted.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER said: Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move that this House do now adjourn. The first Government business to-morrow will be the further consideration of the Land Bill in committee.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at half-past 10 o'clock.