

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 8 OCTOBER 1895**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 8 OCTOBER, 1895.

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

CHURCH OF ENGLAND BILL.  
COMMITTEE.

The clauses, schedules, and the preamble were passed without discussion.

The House resumed, and the third reading of the Bill was made an order for to-morrow.

## CO-OPERATIVE COMMUNITIES BILL.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR LANDS (Hon. A. H. Barlow), the Order of the Day for the second reading of this Bill was discharged, and the Bill withdrawn.

The order of leave for the introduction of the Bill having been read, leave was given to bring in a new Bill on the same order.

The PREMIER (Hon. H. M. Nelson) informed the House that the Governor, having been made aware of the objects of the Bill, recommended the necessary appropriation to give effect to its provisions.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS presented the Bill, and moved that it be read a first time.

Question put and passed; and the second reading made an order for to-morrow.

FERTILISERS BILL.  
COMMITTEE.

Clauses 1 to 10, inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 11, dealing with penalties for forgery of receipt or certificate—

Mr. HAMILTON: The clause provided that any person who forged any receipt or certificate should be guilty of a felony, and liable to be kept in prison for a term not exceeding seven

years. Was that the law at present? If it were, there was no necessity for inserting these words; if it were not, he did not see why they should inflict such severe penalties by this Bill.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said these certificates were a new form of instrument created by the Bill. The clause did not apply to ordinary receipts, and it would perhaps be better to make it more definite, and apply it only to the receipts and certificates mentioned in the Bill.

On the motion of Mr. CHATAWAY, the clause was amended to read, "Any person who forges . . . any such receipt or certificate as aforesaid shall be guilty of a felony," etc.

Mr. POWERS thought they might as well leave out the words "with or without solitary confinement." The penalty was sufficiently severe without that. He moved that amendment.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD thought that if this Bill was of so much importance it should have been introduced by the Government, and not have been left in the hands of a private member, when the infringement of its provisions entailed such heavy penalties.

Mr. FISHER would like the Attorney-General, as the leading legal authority in the House, to explain what was meant by "solitary confinement."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he had never undergone that punishment, and could not say what it was, but he thought the words might be omitted.

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

Clauses 12 and 13 put and passed.

On schedule 1—"Form of vendor's receipt"—

Mr. CHATAWAY moved that the words "Minimum percentage of lime (if any)" be omitted. They were quite unnecessary.

Mr. RAWLINGS: As the Bill dealt with all fertilisers, a man might be held liable to imprisonment if any he sold did not contain phosphoric acid and the other constituents mentioned in the schedule. He would like to know therefore if all fertilisers contained those constituents, as he thought there were some which did not contain phosphoric acid.

Mr. CHATAWAY: The Bill provided that in the case of fertilisers containing the constituents mentioned in the schedule, the fact should be stated, and the receipt applied to them only, and not to fertilisers which did not contain those constituents.

Amendment agreed to.

The HON. G. THORN asked was there an analytical chemist in Queensland who could provide the analysis of fertilisers required under the Bill. He did not know of one.

Mr. CHATAWAY said there were several first-class analytical chemists in Queensland. He knew of one who had been analysing manures for the last fifteen years, and there were many others.

Schedule, as amended, put and passed.

Second schedule passed with a consequential amendment.

The House resumed; and the third reading made an order for to-morrow.

## SUCCESSION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message intimating that the Council had agreed to the Assembly's amendments in this Bill.

## ROCKHAMPTON JUNCTION RAILWAY.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. R. Philp) moved—

That the Speaker do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the resolutions relating to the proposed South and North Rockhampton Junction Railway.

Mr. POWERS: I know that the proposal is only to go into committee that we may consider whether or not we will approve of the plans of this railway, but before that is done we should understand what it is we are doing—whether our approval is asked of the plans or of the work—because this is only one of a number of railways. We have four important railways on the paper. I do not intend to deal with them now, but I saw in one of the local papers a report of what the Commissioner thinks of the approval of the plans, and it is a very different thing from what the Premier has referred to on different occasions in this House. This is what the Commissioner is reported to have said—

“As soon as the plans have been passed tenders will be called, but whether for a single or a double line has yet to be determined. So great is the traffic, however, that the officials who have gone into the matter are in favour of the latter, the difference in cost being increased from £32,000 to £50,000.”

That is the Commissioner's idea of what the House is going to do in approving of these plans. The Audit Act provides that no expenditure is to be incurred until the money is voted by Parliament, but if the Commissioner enters into a contract with a tenderer the Ministry will be bound to see him through. I therefore think we should hear from the Minister as to whether tenders are to be called for the work if these plans are approved of. Of course if any Ministry should call for tenders on the approval of plans their followers would necessarily see them through, and that would make the calling for tenders for a railway a party question. This is only one of four lines which are to be submitted to the House, and if the Commissioner calls for tenders on the approval of the plans in this case he may do so in others. I therefore think that in going into committee it should be clearly understood that we are simply passing the plans as the best that can be submitted for this particular work, if it is carried out. That is all that I have understood the passing of plans to mean.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is all it means.

Mr. POWERS: But the hon. gentleman must see that if the Ministry call for tenders—for if the Commissioner does it it really means the Ministry—and they put contractors to the expense of preparing tenders, we shall be committed to the expenditure. I do not think tenders should be called for until the money is passed by the House. This is the least important of the lines to be discussed; but we should clearly understand that the passing of the plans does not mean what the Commissioner appears to think it means, but that the work is not authorised until the money is voted by Parliament.

The PREMIER: I think the hon. member has very properly drawn attention to this subject. It is one that ought to be clearly understood by the House and the public. I cannot say that I attach very much importance to the report of anything the Commissioner may have said at Rockhampton, but anything he may have said does not bind the Government or the House. I do not know that he has been correctly reported. However, it is just as well to understand the matter thoroughly before we go any further. The hon. member is perfectly right in saying that when we go into

committee to consider the plans, book of reference, and so forth we are simply dealing with that subject, and that subject alone. All that is before the Committee is simply the question as to whether the plans of the proposed railway are good and proper plans; the approval of the plans in no wise commits the House to build that railway, nor does it commit the House to vote any money for that railway. It is simply the initial stage that we must go through in dealing with railway construction. There are so many stages that a matter of this sort has to go through that I have always been of the opinion that there is not so much importance to be attached to the approval of the plans, specifications, and book of reference as some people imagine. The plans and so forth may be approved of in committee, and the matter may go no further. I have known many instances of that. This is almost the initial stage. Of course the primary initial stage rests with the Government, that is to say, the Executive have to decide first of all whether it is desirable in the interest of the colony that a certain amount of money should be spent in preparing the surveys of a railway, and after that has been done the Government take the responsibility of submitting to the House plans prepared on those surveys. Then it is for the House to say whether they approve of those plans. If they do not approve of them, of course the matter goes no further. Some years back the system was quite different, and that is where a great many members and a great many of the public are deceived. The practice then was for the Government of the day to submit to the House railway proposals in a schedule on a pretty extensive scale, and the House was immediately asked to provide the money for those proposals before the surveys or anything else connected with the railways was made. Generally speaking, the House approved of the proposals, and authorised the Government to raise the money for those railways without any specific information being before the Committee, and that is what the public of Queensland understands by a railway policy. I do not think that anyone who looks at the history of Queensland can pretend that that kind of a railway policy is a good one. Everyone who has studied the subject must have come to the conclusion that the effect of submitting plans of railways *in globo* to the House, and getting authority to raise the money for those railways, was to lead us into many of the difficulties which subsequently took place in Queensland. It was simply putting the cart before the horse, and we ought to reverse the whole system. The initial stage, as I have said, ought to be a survey of the line, and after the survey has been made the plans ought to be submitted to the House to say whether they approve of those plans or not. If they do not approve of them the matter ends there. Assuming, however, that the plans and specifications have been approved of by this House, they have then to be submitted to the co-ordinate branch of the legislature, and according to their Standing Orders they have to be referred to a select committee to make further inquiries, after which they may be approved of or otherwise. These resolutions differ in this respect from ordinary resolutions of this Assembly, inasmuch as having been approved of by both Houses of Parliament, they then have the force of law. Under our Railway Act it is not necessary to bring in a Bill for every particular railway, and in that respect I think our railway system will compare favourably with the systems of any other of the Australian colonies. Then, assuming that any proposed railway does meet with the approval of both branches of Parliament as far as the plans and sections are

concerned, that carries the matter a little further. It is not only saying that the plans are good plans, but also that the route proposed is a good route. We are deciding whether in the interests of the colony as a whole it is worth while entertaining any such proposal. We have to consider whether the proposal will effect the object which we have in building our railways, whether it will increase the exports of the country. This colony in particular, as compared with the other colonies and many other countries, lives upon its exports. That I brought prominently before the House three years ago. Brisbane lives upon our exports; so does Rockhampton, Townsville, and all the other parts of the colony.

Mr. McDONALD: And the absentees.

The PREMIER: And so do a great many absentees, I am sorry to say, but that we cannot avoid, so far as I can see. The question is whether the proposed railway will conduce to the expansion of our exports. Will it enable our producers to bring their products into the market at a lower rate than they otherwise would be able to do; and will it enable producers and those whom they employ to live at a cheaper rate and thus reduce the cost of production? All these matters must come fairly under consideration at the initial stage, because unless a railway will contribute in some way or other towards these objects, it would be better for the House to say that it does not approve of any such railways being constructed. But then comes a further safeguard, even if the House should happen to have made a mistake. Having approved of the plans, the next step for the House is to say where the money is coming from to provide for the payment of the cost of construction. That, of course, is the most serious matter of all. That comes subsequently, according to the method we adopt now. It seems absolutely useless for the House to consider the question of where the money is to come from until it has first of all decided whether the railway is to be constructed or not, because, as has happened before, the House has found the money for the construction of the railway, and Parliament has afterwards decided that the railway should not be constructed.

Mr. McDONALD: It may decide that it will not grant the money.

The PREMIER: That is so; I am coming to that. Parliament having approved of the line, it remains for both Houses to say where the money is to come from. In the case of the railways submitted during the present session I have already said that the money is to come from the present loan fund, which I have given my assurance is sufficient to meet all demands that will be made upon it. But there is another safeguard beyond all that. We have then to vote specifically the amount of money to be spent within the present financial year, according to the new Audit Act. Proposals have to be submitted to the House, and estimates laid before the House stating the amount of money that will be required for the present financial year for the construction of any one of those railways. Hon. members will therefore see that every precaution is taken to obviate any hasty decision on the matter. The matter comes under review by the House, not on one occasion but on half a dozen occasions. It must necessarily do so, and if in the meantime anything transpires—any new information is brought forward, any fresh evidence crops up—the House has the opportunity of refusing to vote the money during the present year for going on with any such railway. I may mention further that it is not the Commissioner for Railways who constructs railways. He practically has nothing whatever to do with the construction of railways. He has

certain functions, and he has under his charge the engineers and the surveyors, all of whom are servants of the Government. The last stage of all, after tenders have been called for, and even if the Commissioner approves of the tenders, is that the Governor in Council must give their approval for the construction of the railway. You will see that that is absolutely necessary, because even up to the time of calling for tenders, although everything may look fair and prosperous, something might happen at the very last moment whereby it would be undesirable in the interests of the colony to proceed with the construction of the line. The last stage therefore, before a tender can be accepted, is that the Commissioner shall get direct authority from the Governor in Council to accept a tender. As for the Commissioner saying at Rockhampton that he would call for tenders as soon as plans were approved of, it is just possible he might have said something to that effect, but I do not think anyone was misled by what he said.

Mr. McDONALD: Probably a large number of people were misled by him.

The PREMIER: I do not think so. Any railway contractor, unless absolutely a newchum—any man who has had the least experience in the construction of railways—knows very well what ordeal these tenders have to go through. It is known very well that the Government are not bound to accept any tender. At the same time I quite agree with the leader of the Opposition that it would not be desirable to call for tenders unless there was a fair prospect of the line being proceeded with. What I am pointing out is that the calling for tenders does not commit the House or the Government to going on with the construction of the line. Every tenderer for the Gladstone-Bundaberg line knows that his tender will be accepted only on the condition that Parliament first of all provides the money; and therefore it appears to me utterly impossible that anyone could be led astray. What is done in many cases is that the Secretary for Railways authorises the Commissioner to call for tenders before Parliament has actually passed the money. That is done solely to save time. Tenderers for railway contracts require a long time to make out their estimates. It generally takes three months at the least before a contractor can make up his mind what he will offer to do the work for. And if we had tenders in for a railway next week we would not be in a position, even if Parliament voted the money, to accept one for a month afterwards; because all the tenders are made out on schedule prices, and though one tender may appear *prima facie* lower than the rest, it may be found after making calculations that it is second or third lowest. It often happens, as in the case of the Gladstone-Bundaberg line, that tenders are called simply to get some work in hand. At present we have hardly any work in hand, and it is desirable, in the interests of all portions of the community, that we should have some work in hand. It is solely with that object that tenders have been called for.

Mr. GROOM: To a certain extent the hon. gentleman's remarks are perhaps accurate; at the same time I think there is another side to the question. I am speaking now with regard to railway construction in the past. Generally the railway policy of the Government followed a general election, and if the hon. gentleman will direct his attention to the history of our railway construction when it commenced on anything like an extended scale he will find that to have been the case.

The PREMIER: I am sorry to say it has, and nearly ruined the colony.

Mr. GROOM: I am not sure that will not bear another interpretation. I do not think you would have had the large traffic returns you have if those railways had not been constructed.

The PREMIER: That is another question.

Mr. GROOM: The railway policy of the past has not been the unmixed evil some persons want to make out. Whether or not the plan adopted in bringing in those policies was best suited to the interests of the country is another question.

The PREMIER: That is the question I bring before you—the only question.

Mr. GROOM: When the hon. member for Fassifern sat where the Premier sits now, that was the first effort made of what was called "Vogelising" our railway policy. That was the first departure from the principle which the Premier himself lays down. My memory takes me back to 1864, when Mr. Macalister, member for Ipswich, moved the first lines from Ipswich to Toowoomba and from Toowoomba to Dalby. He did exactly what the Secretary for Railways is doing now—moved the approval of the plans, sections, and books of reference only, and the money was provided afterwards. To do the late Mr. Macalister justice he carried out that policy; but the hon. member for Fassifern made a departure from that.

The Hon. G. THORN: A very good departure.

Mr. GROOM: He came down proposing six lines of railways and he put the House—acting under good advice—in this position: You must either take the whole of the six or you get none.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. D. H. Dalrymple): That was followed by subsequent leaders.

Mr. GROOM: That was the initiation of the policy here, but it was not original on the part of the hon. member for Fassifern. The same thing had been done before by Sir Julius Vogel in New Zealand, and the hon. member thought it was a good idea to import into Queensland, and he succeeded in carrying his six lines of railway.

The Hon. G. THORN: Very good lines, too.

Mr. GROOM: I dare say. It is perfectly true that other Ministers have done exactly the same down to the £5,000,000 loan of 1878 and the £10,000,000 loan of 1884. The course as formulated by the present Premier goes back to the policy originally laid down in 1863-4; and I have no doubt as to which was the correct one. The 1878 policy followed a general election. The people were appealed to, and sent in a majority pledged to construct railways. Then in 1883 there was another election, and another lot of railways approved of by the electors and brought in by the Government. So that it is not the Government who are to blame, but the constituents themselves who demand that there shall be railways constructed here, there, and in various other places. I am not going to decry past legislation, and heap all sorts of blame on those who initiated the railways already constructed. I have no doubt that Sir Thomas McLlwraith, in 1878, and Sir Samuel Griffith, in 1884, were actuated by a desire to serve the country; and but for the policy adopted in the past you would not have had the large traffic that has taken place during the last month—the record month in regard to traffic. A large number of stockowners have taken advantage of the railways to rush their stock to market instead of letting them die of starvation, and I contend that the railways constructed under the 1878 and 1884 policies have largely contributed to swell the returns for last month. Our frozen meat trade has developed to a large extent, simply because cattle can now be trucked, instead of being driven, 400 or 500 miles. On the present

occasion we are asked at the tail end of the last session of Parliament to approve of certain lines which may or may not be constructed. That is the departure the hon. gentleman is taking now. We have been four years stationary—doing nothing; now a general election is coming we have a railway policy without the people being asked whether they are in favour of it or not.

The PREMIER: It is not a policy.

Mr. GROOM: A continuation of existing lines.

Mr. McDONALD: The Winton line is not a continuation policy.

Mr. GROOM: The policy in regard to the main lines was that they should go westward—towards "the setting sun," as it was called. Whether or not a divergence should be made now is for the country to decide. As I said, I think the course the hon. gentleman is pursuing now, in asking the House to approve of these plans, sections, and books of reference, is the correct one, and I also think the course taken in regard to surveys may be an improvement. It would be most amusing if I were to read from *Hansard* the figures given by Mr. Macalister in 1864 as to the cost of the surveys of the line then constructed by Mr. Fitzgibbon from the Little Liverpool Range to Toowoomba, including the ascent of the Main Range at various gradients, and also his figures for the survey to Dalby.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: We cannot be asked to go back a generation.

Mr. GROOM: I only wish to show that the cost of those surveys was exceeded five times.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: That only showed his ignorance.

Mr. GROOM: He was misled.

The PREMIER: They were paid by the mile.

Mr. GROOM: Yes. If the approval of the plans, sections, and books of reference will have the effect of preventing any such expenditure in future as has occurred in the past, then the course proposed to be adopted is a wise one. I simply rose to make these remarks because, whatever might be said as to the railway policy of the past, it has conduced more or less to the benefit of the country. There have been very serious mistakes which, no doubt, we shall avoid in future.

Mr. DRAKE: I still think that the Premier should first give us a statement showing the amount of money he expects to be available from the loan fund.

The PREMIER: You will get that in good time; I have promised it.

Mr. DRAKE: The hon. gentleman has promised it again and again, but I contend that we have a right to know it before the House considers any plans, sections, or books of reference.

The PREMIER: The House is not asked to appropriate anything.

Mr. DRAKE: No; in form we are asked to approve of the plans, sections, and books of reference; but, as a matter of fact, we are asked to approve of certain lines. The Government have already, in advance of asking for any money from Parliament, called for tenders for one line, and if they have done that in one case they may do it in another. The Premier tells us now, and it is an extraordinary thing, that—after we have had hardly any railway construction for the last four years, because the loan fund has been depleted, and it was not advisable to go to the English market for a fresh loan—in consequence of the condition of the loan fund it is desirable to have tenders called for in advance in order that we may get on quickly with the carrying out of public works, and the loan fund will be sufficient. The lines we are

now asked to consider may be ideally desirable, but the question is whether it is desirable to construct one line in preference to another. One factor we ought to consider in coming to a conclusion is, what amount of money is available. Every railway submitted to Parliament is in competition with every other railway. If that railway is going to cost £100,000, then we want to know not only whether it is desirable that it should be built, but whether it is more desirable that that one should be built rather than any other.

The PREMIER: That will come before you later on.

Mr. DRAKE: The hon. gentleman may say so; but this is one of the matters we should have before us when we are considering the desirability of constructing any particular railway.

The PREMIER: I cannot do everything at once.

Mr. DRAKE: The hon. gentleman may be able to do only one thing at a time, and he contends that what he is doing now is what ought to be done first. I contend that what he proposes to postpone should be the matter previously considered. I fail to see how hon. members can decide as to approving of those lines unless they know the amount of money available. Of course how hon. members will fall into the trap will be this way: They will be asked to consider whether the construction of certain railways is desirable. If that is all they are asked they will say "yes." Railways might be brought down to the extent of millions, and if the House were asked whether it was desirable to construct them it would say "yes." But if hon. members are told there is only a certain amount of money available they will have an opportunity of saying whether a certain line should be built or not.

The PREMIER: We are doing that now.

Mr. DRAKE: Supposing there is only £500,000 available for expenditure from loan fund for the construction of railways, have we not a perfect right to say in considering this motion, "We consider this is a very desirable railway and hope it will be built soon, but seeing that there is only this amount of money available, we would rather that the money were expended upon some other public works?"

The PREMIER: You will have a full opportunity of doing so.

Mr. DRAKE: I beg the hon. member's pardon, we shall not have that opportunity, because in the course the hon. member is taking now he will bring down one railway, and get the approval of the House to that, then bring down another and get the approval of the House to that, and then bring down a third and get the approval of the House to that. Afterwards he will come down and say, "Here are my loan estimates for the year, which include these three railways and no more." If there is only a limited amount of money, and probably there is, the Committee should have an opportunity of saying whether, taking into consideration the limited amount of money available, it is desirable that any particular line of railway should be constructed in preference to any other. That is a very different thing indeed from the policy of bunching railways that was pursued in the past, because in that case the House was asked to approve *en bloc* of these railways—to approve altogether or reject altogether. But that is not the case here. What I contend is that the hon. gentleman should do first what he tells us he is going to do afterwards. Why, if he intends to do it later on, cannot he do the same thing now? Is it not perfectly clear that the hon. gentleman has a reason? He never does anything without a reason, and is it not clear that his reason is to get hon. members to vote for these lines separately, before they have an opportunity of knowing the extent of railway con-

struction to which the Government intend to go? The extent to which they intend to go may be practically unlimited either way. They may stop at any moment, and say, "We will not construct any more," or they may go on getting the approval of the House to railways to the extent of millions. We know perfectly well that the Government cannot carry on a public works policy without going for a fresh loan. If that is not so the country has been deceived for the past four years. I think we ought to have a statement from the Premier. He knows perfectly well what I am asking for, because he says that he will give it later in the session. Of course hon. members can do as they please if this proposal to go into committee is carried, but I shall vote against every railway until we have a statement made of the money available from the loan fund for the construction of public works, and the extent to which the Government propose to go.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON: The weak spot in the present mode of procedure is that the plans, sections, and books of reference are brought down for our approval, and nothing is said about asking for the money to build the railway. Doubtless, in the present instance they will be approved of, as this is a very proper line of railway. The plans may be approved of, and the Government may then do nothing, but keep the lines dangling before the public for one or two sessions before they take steps to obtain a vote of money. Nothing of that sort could occur under the old system. I do not say that the Government intend to do anything of that sort, but it is quite within their power. The public would be led to believe, from the action taken by Parliament, that, at a reasonably early date, the construction of the railway would be proceeded with. Under the present mode of procedure it is a mere empty form to submit to us the plans, sections, and books of reference. Not one-half the members of this House have sufficient knowledge of the technique of the matter to give an opinion as to the merits of the proposed plans. They must trust to the professional officers for the purpose of arriving at a conclusion as to these lines being constructed upon safe principles, and such as are salutary to the public generally. Therefore, the assent given by this House is an assent more in form than in substance, and it has hitherto always been given on the assumption—which is enjoined by our Railways Act—that it is preliminary to the early construction of the line by the Government. From the remarks of the Premier and of the hon. member for Toowoomba, I have arrived at the conclusion that there is nothing whatever binding on the Government of the day to proceed in the session in which the plans and books of reference are approved of to apply for the money to build the railways. When the application for the money is presented, the Government are bound to a certain extent, because then the materials are provided out of which the railways can be constructed.

The PREMIER: You would have the money voted first?

The HON. J. R. DICKSON: I am inclined to think that the application for the money and the approval of the plans should be as nearly as possible simultaneous, or else a statement should be made as to when the vote would be applied for. I do not suspect the present Government of any want of sincerity in the matter. In fact, the Premier has stated that the loan fund is sufficiently large to provide for the railways for which he is now seeking our approval; but at the same time, I think, in the best interests of the country, the plans, sections, and books of reference should be accompanied either with a

loan estimate, or a request for the money, or with a promise that that shall be done during the session in which the plans are approved of.

The HON. G. THORN: I have full confidence in the sincerity of the Government, and I think that this particular line will be a great saving to the country, and will be the means of greatly increasing the traffic. But, like the hon. member for Bulimba, I do not altogether agree with the proposal of the Government to ask us to approve of the plans before they ask us for an appropriation. I am quite aware that the Government intend to ask for an appropriation, but I believe that the appropriation and the plans should go hand in hand. They ought to come down, as nearly as possible, simultaneously. The hon. member for Toowoomba referred to the lines going to the "setting sun." There is no doubt that that has been our policy, and I believe that the extension of the Northern line was determined upon at the season of the year when the sun sets to the south of west, and therefore the Northern line had to take a south-westerly direction. The extension of the Southern and Western line from Roma to Charleville was likewise determined upon at a time when the sun set to the north of west, and therefore that line goes to the north of west. I trust the Central members will not be annoyed at that line going a little to the north-west.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is now anticipating the discussion on another motion on the business-paper.

The HON. G. THORN: There is another matter upon which I wish to touch, with regard to this and other lines—we must bring in other railways. Sums were voted in the Loan Act of 1884 for the *via recta*, and also for a railway from Warwick to the southern border; and money for the Drayton deviation, to which I am surprised the hon. member for Toowoomba did not allude, was appropriated in the Loan Act of 1890. What I want to know is, whether any of the money voted for these lines is going to be used to construct this line to North Rockhampton?

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is now transgressing again. The matter of appropriation is not before the House.

The HON. G. THORN: I hope that when the Appropriation Bill is introduced, either the Premier or the Secretary for Railways will tell the House that none of the money voted in former loans will be taken to build this particular railway. I was not aware that in alluding to this matter I was transgressing the rules of the House, and if I have done so I am very sorry for it. I am glad the Government are going on again with a railway policy. The reason I mentioned these railways in my district and in that of the hon. member for Warwick is that in New South Wales they have started a line from Narrabri to Moree, towards Goondiwindi. They intend to come up to our border very smartly. Many men have gone from my district to work on this railway, and I am anxious that these men, who are some of the best men we had in Queensland, should be brought back to railway construction in this colony. This line in New South Wales is not very far from our southern border, and we ought to see that our trade is not taken away by the mother colony. Though at present it may not be expedient to construct that Warwick line, the time is not far distant when we shall be able to construct it, because money can now be borrowed so cheaply in the old country. We find that New South Wales can borrow at 3 per cent., and as our debentures are not much lower we could also get money to construct our railways at the same low rate. We should do so to keep our own trade and to bring our own produce through its legitimate port. Exception has been taken to the

lines initiated in my time, but I am proud of those lines. They were lines starting westward to Longreach and Hughenden, and before their construction there were only cattle on those magnificent prairies on which there are now sheep. That has increased the traffic on the railways and the labour required on the stations, as it is well known that a stockman and a couple of blackboys could manage a cattle station with 10,000 head of cattle. I am very pleased that those lines were initiated in my time. I need make an exception of only one line, and that is the Bundaberg to Mount Perry line, but when that line was projected copper was worth £90 a ton, and there was a large population at Mount Perry. No one could foretell at that time that very shortly after copper would fall in price, as it did to less than £40 a ton. I believe the time will come yet when that line will be a profitable line. I hope the House will sanction the approval of this line to North Rockhampton.

Question put and passed.

#### COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS, in moving—

1. That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed South and North Rockhampton Junction Railway to connect the Central and Emu Park lines, in length 2 miles 41 chains 31 links.

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 there were several reasons why they should build this line. In the first place, they had on the north side a line to Emu Park, which he regretted to say was a non-paying line, and the Commissioner thought that if the north and south lines were connected there would be a considerable increase of passenger traffic from Rockhampton to Emu Park. At present it cost as much to get from Rockhampton to the North Rockhampton station as it cost to go from the North Rockhampton station to Emu Park; and if the two lines were connected the line connecting the one railway in the Central district and such populous places as Rockhampton and Mount Morgan with the watering place should pay, and aid materially in making what was now a non-paying line into a paying line. But there was a greater reason why they should make this line. On the north side of the river, at Lake's Creek, they had the largest meat-preserving works and boiling-down establishment in the colony, if not in the colonies; and he believed the traffic over the river to those works would alone pay the interest on construction and working expenses of that extension. It would cost, according to the Commissioner's report, £53,000 for 2 miles and 41 chains of railway, and of that amount there would be £34,000 required for bridge work. It was not anticipated that the cost of resumption would be very heavy, as only 1 acre 1 rood of private freehold would require to be resumed, the other resumptions necessary being from public reserves and streets. The line would go through Denham street on the south side and through North street on the north side of the river. They might consider also the effect of the proposed extension from Emu Park line to Broadmount, as if that line was constructed they might say that the whole of the traffic on the Central Railway would go over those two lines. It might hardly be fair to urge the anticipated traffic through the construction of the Broadmount line as that line had not yet been submitted to Parliament, but the making of the line to Broadmount and the completion of the Bundaberg-Gladstone line were parts of the one scheme, and when they were completed it was anticipated that with the aid of a small steamer they would

have daily communication with Rockhampton, and that would be a very desirable thing, as the people of the Central district were at present more isolated than the people of Townsville, and people going by the Northern steamers rarely visited Rockhampton. They had also to consider the possibilities of the Central Railway through the discovery of coal. Coal had been discovered on the Central line in several places, though so far not in payable quantities, and the Lake's Creek works alone used from 15,000 to 20,000 tons per annum, and coal discovered on the Central line could only be conveyed to those works over the line they were considering. The railway authorities on the Northern and Central Railways had been trying to find coal, and though there was coal at Clermont, it was too far from Rockhampton to compete with the water carriage from Maryborough and Brisbane. He had every hope that coal would yet be found at a reasonable distance from Rockhampton, so that they might be able to supply the railways and Lake's Creek works. The Commissioner assured him that the traffic that would go to Lake's Creek would pay working expenses and the interest on the cost of construction of this line, and that would justify them in approving of it. He did not know that he would be in order in referring to some remarks which had been made in the House with respect to the method adopted for bringing forward those railways, but he should say that the Government did not intend to bring forward any railway which they did not intend should be gone on with, and for which the Treasurer could not find the money if the House desired that it should be found. The Government were not passing lines of railway simply to dangle them before the electorates, as was done in 1884. They now adopted the more straightforward and honest course of asking the House to consent to the plans of a railway being passed, before asking them to provide the money for the construction of a railway, and he hoped they should always continue to follow that course.

The HON. G. THORN did not know what was the practice in 1884, when Sir Samuel Griffith came down with his £10,000,000 loan, but he knew that in 1876, or thereabouts, what were called parliamentary surveys were made before the House was asked to vote the money for a railway; and those surveys were known to be very accurate. With regard to what the hon. member for Toowoomba had said respecting the Ipswich and Toowoomba line—

The CHAIRMAN: I must remind the hon. member that the question before the Committee is the approval of certain plans, and I must ask him to confine his remarks to that question.

The HON. G. THORN thought he should be allowed to answer the hon. member for Toowoomba. The Premier had said that formerly the cart was put before the horse. But in reference to one of those lines he might point out—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order in discussing other lines, and I trust he will confine his remarks to the question before the Committee—the approval of the plans of the proposed South and North Rockhampton Junction Railway.

The HON. G. THORN was talking about past lines, or rather one past line.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will not be in order unless he confines his remarks to the question before the Committee.

The HON. G. THORN wished to know whether the money required for that line would be taken from the appropriations made by Acts of Parliament in 1884 and 1890 for other railways.

The PREMIER replied that the hon. member ought to know perfectly well that whether that

line was passed or not the balances to the credit of the Drayton deviation and the *via recta*, or any other line, would remain the same in the Treasury ledgers.

Mr. POWERS believed, from what had been stated by the Secretary for Railways and from the report of the Commissioner, that the proposed line was a desirable one—that its construction would save expense—and he did not think any man was inclined to oppose its construction. He would support it because the Treasurer had shown in his Financial Statement that he had enough money for the work, and because he believed it was the most desirable of all the railways the Government were now submitting to Parliament. But at the same time he would like to know whether the Treasurer had enough money to complete the whole of that and the other lines for which plans had been prepared without going in for a new loan, or whether he had only sufficient to construct sections of the railways; and also where the money was to come from? The hon. gentleman had not shown that he had anything more than a very limited sum available, which would be absorbed if half the railway programme so far put forward was carried out. There was also an amount to be provided under the Sugar Works Guarantee Act, and altogether, taking the lowest estimate of the cost of the railways, they would require about £1,000,000. The passing of the plans was to a certain extent an approval of lines, and it would be a great mistake to pass the railways if they would not afterwards be justified in voting the money for their construction. When the Government brought down their proposals last session for the Port Alma and South Brisbane works, they showed, by an Appropriation Bill, the source from which the money was to come.

The PREMIER: This will be done in the same way.

Mr. POWERS insisted that, before any other plans came before them, they were entitled to know where the money was to come from for building the proposed lines. There might be enough money available for the current financial year, but the question arose whether it would not be necessary to float another loan to carry out the works in their entirety.

The PREMIER said he really thought the whole matter had been explained before the House went into committee. The hon. member complained that no ways and means had been provided for the construction of any of the proposed railways. Some time or other a Loan Bill must be brought forward for the purpose. What he had already stated ought to be sufficient to satisfy the hon. member that so far as the proposed railways were concerned, and so far as present financial engagements were concerned, he had quite sufficient money to meet all the expenditure that would be asked for. At present the Government were not asking for a single sixpence, but when the plans had been approved of he should make a financial statement showing exactly what money was available. Let the Committee say whether it approved of the railways; then they could decide how they were going to make them.

Mr. POWERS: After we have approved of them?

The PREMIER: Yes. When a man was going to build a house he would first approve of the design, and then find the money for the work.

Mr. DRAKE: He would first want to know where the money to build it was to come from.

The PREMIER said that was what he was telling the Committee now. Eventually the money must be obtained by a Loan Bill. In the meantime, they could go on with those railways without any loan.

Mr. DRAKE said any man of sense who was going to build a house would want to know what money was available before he began to build. According to the hon. gentleman, if a farmer wanted to build a house and to fence his land he would first design the house with all the conveniences he desired, then he would consider what fences he wanted, and the last thing to consider would be how much money he had available. A sensible man, if he approved of a design for his house, and could not afford to build the whole house, would probably have a part of it built. He would cut his coat according to his cloth; and that was what the hon. gentleman was not doing. The chief trouble was that the Premier would not take the Committee into his confidence. The hon. gentleman had no doubt an exact idea as to what railways he was going to construct, and how much money he was going to pay out of the loan fund for their construction; but he wanted the Committee to blindly approve of railways without any such information.

The PREMIER had no desire to keep back any information. With regard to the argument of the hon. member, if a man of business required appliances to extend it, he would first of all seek the most economical way, then he would decide whether the plans submitted would expand his business, and then he would provide the money. Of course he would not begin to build until he knew the money was there; and that was what he (Mr. Nelson) was arguing.

Mr. RAWLINGS was puzzled to understand the position the Premier took up. The hon. gentleman knew exactly where the money was to come from, and every hon. member knew where certain funds were available. According to the Auditor-General's report, the cash balance on the 30th June, 1895, in the Queensland National Bank in London and in Brisbane amounted to £496,084. On the 1st July was paid the first instalment of the money deposited in the Queensland National Bank, amounting to £166,674. There was also to the credit of the gold coin account £463,069, and the Treasurer some time back said that a portion of that would be available for public works. Of that sum there was at least £213,000 available to spend, leaving £250,000 of gold to back the Treasury notes. There was £50,000 in notes in the Queensland National Bank, making a total in cash available of £923,827. Again, the hon. gentleman had power to issue £606,000 in Treasury bills which could run for eight years, equal to a loan without coming to Parliament. Of that £606,000, £470,000 could be used for the construction of railways. £290,000 was to make good the deficit, and £180,000 for advances under the Public Depositors' Relief Act.

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. gentleman that he is in no way referring to the question before the Committee. He is speaking on the general question.

Mr. RAWLINGS said the Chairman had allowed the leader of the Opposition to ask questions on the subject of where the money was coming from.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must be aware that certain latitude is always allowed to the leader of the Opposition in replying to the Premier.

Mr. RAWLINGS said if the Chairman ruled he was out of order he would sit down.

The CHAIRMAN: I rule that the hon. gentleman must confine his remarks to the question before the Committee. I have ruled that before, when the hon. member for Fassifern was speaking.

Mr. McDONALD said the leader of the Opposition asked the Premier a question, and the hon. gentleman replied at considerable length. Other hon. members might feel inclined to reply to the Premier, and he was not aware

that according to the Standing Orders the Premier had privileges not accorded to other hon. members.

The CHAIRMAN: I have ruled that hon. members must confine their remarks to the question before the Committee.

Mr. HARDACRE said if the Chairman's ruling was right—

The CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. member be seated? The 258th Standing Order says, "When a clause or amendment is under discussion, a member speaking shall confine himself to that clause or amendment."

Mr. RAWLINGS said he took it, in dealing with that question, if an hon. member on the Treasury benches did not give a satisfactory answer they were entitled to ask for information.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not now in order. I must ask him to confine his remarks to the question before the Committee.

Mr. HARDACRE said he wished to point out—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member for Woothakata is in possession of the Chair.

Mr. RAWLINGS said he had gone astray in not stating that he was showing reasons why that proposal should be accepted and where the money was to come from. He felt that the Treasurer was hardly dealing fairly with the Committee. As they were not allowed to speak on the financial question, it seemed to him that it would be advisable to amend the resolution by substituting the words "Cairns-Herberton" for "South and North Rockhampton Junction Railway."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Don't do that I would advise you not.

Mr. RAWLINGS: Very well.

Mr. CURTIS, as one of the Central members, quite approved of what had been said by the Secretary for Railways in reference to that proposal. He believed the Railway Commissioners reported in favour of that connection some considerable time ago, and there was no doubt that it would very largely increase the receipts of the Central trunk line as well as those of the Emu Park line. It was of special importance to the stockowners in the interior—because they would be able to truck their sheep and cattle direct to the Lake's Creek works instead of having to be taken out of the train at the terminus of the Central line, and driven through the streets at all hours of the night and across the Fitzroy Bridge. A strong argument in favour of the construction of a railway bridge over the Fitzroy was that the present bridge was in danger through the large mobs of cattle which passed over it. It certainly was never intended for anything of that kind, and the Government would do well to consider the advisability of constructing a railway bridge that would be available for ordinary traffic in the event of anything happening to the present bridge. He believed he was correct in saying that the Central members were in favour of the connection of these two lines. The railway bridge would enable the port of Broadmount to be utilised and brought into connection with the Central trunk line, which was a very important matter in the consideration of this question.

Mr. HARDING thought this would be one of the best paying lines in the colony, as it would place the people of the Western districts in direct communication with the works to which they sent their cattle—the largest works in the colony. At present the whole of the traffic had to go across the Fitzroy Bridge, which was not fit to carry it now, and would be utterly inadequate for the traffic in another year. The stock that came down the Central line was untrucked at Rockhampton, and had to stop there twenty-four hours with only a drink of water before they were taken across to the

works, and the loss in weight during that time was a very serious matter. This connection was one of the first steps towards giving Rockhampton a deep-water port, to which the Central division was as much entitled as the Northern and Southern divisions. It would also be the means of opening up the coalfields of the Central district.

Mr. SMITH thought they should facilitate in every possible way the meat trade of the colony, and as this connection was for that purpose he would give it his hearty support. The policy of the Government was to assist the industries of the colony in every direction, and place our products on the markets of the world. With regard to the combination bridge to which the hon. member for Rockhampton referred, that question had not been viewed with favour by previous Governments, and engineers connected with the department were opposed to combination bridges.

Mr. MURRAY complimented the Secretary for Railways on bringing forward this proposal. He did not look on it in a local light at all. It was a work in which the whole of the Central division were interested, and would benefit the Western people more than the people in the immediate neighbourhood of Rockhampton. It would be a great factor in the development of the district more than anything else. He saw it reported that the Commissioner for Railways had recommended that the bridge be constructed to provide for a double line of rail, and that was a very desirable thing, because he looked forward to the rapid progress of the district, and if provision were made for a single line only, it would be insufficient for the traffic in a few years. The traffic to Lake's Creek works on the connecting line would be sufficient to pay working expenses and a handsome profit to boot. Public opinion was somewhat divided on the question as to whether the line should be extended to deep water, but in the meantime he was pleased to support the present proposal. He asked whether it was intended to provide a double-line railway bridge?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS said it was the present intention not to build a double-line bridge.

Mr. MURRAY was very sorry to hear the Secretary for Railways say so. He would never think of building a single-line bridge across the Brisbane River. What was Brisbane thirty years ago? A single-line bridge would be a very great blunder. This line would have to carry not only the traffic between the interior and Lake's Creek, but it would be a suburban railway, and there would be an incessant traffic upon it. If they acted upon the recommendation of the Commissioner, they would build a double-line bridge.

Mr. PLUNKETT intended to give this proposal his hearty support. Rockhampton was the outlet of a most important district, and this work ought to be gone on with speedily.

Mr. HARDING said that the cost of a double-line bridge would be only £8,000 more than that of a single-line bridge, and the money might well be expended in that direction.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS said the estimated cost of the single-line bridge was £34,000, while that of a double-line bridge would be £26,000 more. That extra outlay would not be justifiable at present; but if in future they found the traffic increased so much they would be justified in building another bridge alongside of it.

Mr. MURRAY was surprised to hear the statement of the hon. gentleman, because the Chief Engineer had recently told him that £8,000 would be all the additional cost.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS said the Committee might take his assurance. The Commissioner told him that the engineer reported that it would take £26,000 more to build a double-line bridge.

Mr. HARDING contended that £40,000 would build a double-line bridge. Possibly it was meant that £26,000 would duplicate the whole line.

Mr. CROMBIE said he took great interest in this line, and would be very glad to have a double-line bridge constructed, but he was astonished to hear that it would cost £26,000 more. At all events it would cost a great deal more to duplicate the bridge in future than to do it now.

Mr. ARCHER regretted that the Government were only going to build a single-line bridge. The extra £26,000 must include a great deal more than merely the cost of duplicating the bridge.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS said he had heard the statement of the hon. member for Normanby, but he could assure the hon. member that the figures he had given were correct.

The HON. G. THORN said it had been found that it took about 18 per cent. more to build a double-line than a single-line bridge. If it would cost £26,000 more in this case, they might as well build another bridge.

Mr. AGNEW said, although no one would dispute the statement of the Secretary for Railways, still they knew that sometimes engineers made mistakes. He thought it would be a mistake to build a single-line bridge, considering the marvellous strides Rockhampton had made lately, and the Government would be doing a prudent thing to build a bridge that would carry a double line. He was sure that there had been an error in the calculations.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON did not want to throw any doubt upon the statement made by the Secretary for Railways, but thought the better plan might be for the hon. gentleman to reconsider the matter, and if the double-line bridge could be built for some £10,000 extra he should give it his favourable consideration. As a general rule they did not sufficiently take into consideration the future development of the colony in the construction of public works, and that was the direction in which mistakes had been made in the past. The railway under consideration must commend itself to everyone as a very proper work. The working of the North and South Rockhampton railway lines from one common centre must necessarily lead to economy in management, to say nothing of the line in connection with the future extension. The principle was a good one, and he hoped it would be adopted in other parts of the colony where similar conditions prevailed. He certainly gave the motion his support, and trusted that the Secretary for Railways would see if, by a moderate outlay, a double bridge could not be provided.

The PREMIER did not agree with the hon. member that mistakes in the past had been made in the direction of not making sufficient provision for the future. He thought they had discounted the future too much. It was true that many single lines had been constructed; but they were able to carry all the traffic up to the present. The proposal of the hon. member really was that the Government should withdraw the present plans and bring down others, because they could not duplicate the bridge in any other way. The Secretary for Railways could not take it upon himself to duplicate the bridge if Parliament did not authorise him to do so. There was nothing to be gained by the discussion unless the Committee was prepared to instruct the Government to bring down new plans.

Mr. MURRAY: Cannot we amend them?

The PREMIER: We could amend the plans; but we must approve of some plans.

Mr. POWERS admitted that nothing could be done unless Parliament authorised it, but it appeared strange that a bridge to carry a double line of rails should cost almost as much as if a second bridge were built. The single bridge would cost £34,000, while the bridge to carry a second line of rails would cost another £26,000. According to the Press, the Commissioner had put the additional cost down at £18,000, whilst the engineer had informed the hon. member for Normanby that the increased cost would be £8,000. The difficulty might be got over by calling for alternative tenders providing for the double and single bridges, and if it were found that the double bridge would not lead to the amount voted for the construction of the line being exceeded, the bridge might be built to carry the double line of rails.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS said that he had since ascertained that the single bridge would cost £34,000, the additional foundations would cost £12,000, and the double bridge £58,000. He did not think they were justified in spending such a large additional amount.

Mr. MURRAY said that they knew from experience what rapid progress was made by coastal towns like Rockhampton, whose exports at present were as large as those of Brisbane. It would be a matter of only a few days comparatively when a single-line bridge would be insufficient for the requirements of the district. He felt perfectly justified in holding out in regard to the question. The double bridge could be built at a comparatively small cost now with what it could be later on, when it would be like building another bridge. He had had the estimated cost given to him as £8,000, but now the Secretary for Railways said it would cost another £24,000, which was almost double the cost of the single bridge. He could hardly believe that the extra cost would be so much. He quite expected that within the next twenty-five years Rockhampton would be as large as Brisbane was now. Would the Premier contemplate putting a single railway bridge across the river Brisbane? Even twenty years ago he would not have done it, and he would no more think of doing it now than he would of flying. The line would have to carry not only the whole of the Central line traffic from the western border to the seaport, but it would also carry a large suburban traffic. Fancy any of the suburban lines about Brisbane carrying the traffic on a single line! The thing was too absurd. He hoped the Committee would take the matter into serious consideration, and provide for such a bridge as he had advocated.

Mr. CURTIS thought the hon. member for Normanby was perfectly right. In addition to the ordinary traffic of the trunk line they had to consider the suburban traffic. There were 800 or 900 men employed at Lake's Creek, and the majority of them lived on the south side of the river; the traffic along the Lake's Creek road was very large, and there would be a large amount of suburban traffic along the line between Lake's Creek and Gracemere. The increased cost, even of £24,000, was a mere bagatelle when they considered the large amount of business that would be done, and especially when they considered the value of the exports that were run over the Central line, which totalled in value the exports of Brisbane, Bundaberg, and Maryborough put together. When they considered those vast exports and the very large amount of surplus revenue which the Central district had contributed to the colony for many years past, they would regard that as a very small amount to vote for that district.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS did not think it a fair thing to ask that they should provide for the traffic they might get twenty or twenty-five years hence. The interest alone in fourteen years would exceed the cost of building the extra bridge.

Mr. MURRAY: You did not think of that in building the Indooroopilly Bridge.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: At the present time a single line over the Indooroopilly Bridge was working the traffic of the Southern and Western line, as the other line over the bridge was still held by the contractor for carrying stone, and it was much more difficult to work the Indooroopilly Bridge than it would be to work the bridge over the Fitzroy from the Rockhampton station. If a train went over the bridge every five minutes, look what an enormous traffic that would provide for. With a single-line bridge that could be done. The Central members should be satisfied with a fair thing at a time. The Government had only a limited amount of money and they were anxious to distribute it as fairly as possible over the colony.

Mr. HARDING thought the Central members were right in asking that the bridge should provide for a double line, and if, as had been said it would cost only £8,000 or £10,000 additional, it would be money well spent. They were looking to the interests of the district, and only desired that the money should be laid out to the best advantage.

Mr. PHILLIPS said the Committee on the plans could approve of a double line as well as of a single line, but the Commissioner's report accompanying the plans made special mention of a single line, and he did not at present see how that could be got over. He took rather a different view from that of most members who had already spoken, as he was not yet convinced that they would be justified in building a single-line bridge over that river. He hoped the Central members would not think that he denied the claims of Rockhampton to a deep-water port. Rockhampton was as much entitled to a deep-water port as any other exporting centre in the colony, and it was because he thought Rockhampton was entitled to a better deep-water port than those plans would lead up to that he now addressed the Committee. He was an unassuming man, but he did know something about railways, and though he would much prefer to hold his tongue on that question, he would feel himself a mean and contemptible fellow if he went home without having said clearly and distinctly what he thought on that matter. That line and the Broadmount line were halves of one whole, and if the Broadmount line had first been submitted and approved members would have at once been struck with the fact that the connecting link across the river was necessary. He was sorry therefore that the two lines had not been bracketed and submitted as one line. He intended to regard them as a whole, and he would refer therefore to the plans of the Broadmount line.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot do that. He must confine his remarks to the question before the Committee for the approval of the plans of this particular line.

Mr. PHILLIPS: That would be impossible, as a line from A to B was good or bad only as compared with some other line from A to B, or possibly with a line from C to B. For instance, on a proposal for the approval of plans for a line from Roma to St. George, the hon. member for Dalby would feel very much hampered in its consideration if he were not allowed to make reference to the advantages of a line from Dalby to St. George, and in the same way the hon. member for Warwick would desire to submit the advantages of a line from Warwick to St. George.

With all deference to the Chairman's ruling, he held it was impossible to discuss that question intelligently without reference to the Broadmount line, and there was support for his argument in the Commissioner's report on the Broadmount line. The Commissioner said, "In conjunction with the line from South to North Rockhampton (dealt with in a separate report), by which the separate systems Central and Emu Park lines will be united, this branch will be of immense service to the Central district." The Commissioner, in dealing with the Broadmount line, did not lose sight of the fact that the two branches were two halves of one whole. If the plans before the Committee were rejected, the Government would be justified in withdrawing the Broadmount plans, and, with all due deference to the Chairman's ruling, he thought he was entitled to refer to both railways.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member misunderstood me. I simply pointed out that the hon. member must not anticipate the discussion that will take place on other lines on the notice-paper.

Mr. PHILLIPS: Not only did the Commissioner say that the line now before the Committee would be a useful one in conjunction with the Broadmount branch, but the Chief Engineer, in his report on the alternative routes from Rockhampton to deep water, said: "As the utility of this scheme depends in a great measure upon the contemplated extension between South and North Rockhampton being carried out simultaneously, I have included the estimated cost of this work in the figures given below." With all due deference to the opinions of the Commissioner and the Minister, he very much doubted, whether that extension across the Fitzroy River was going to pay, though he would admit, in anticipation, that if the Junction railway and the Broadmount branch were both built the whole system would pay, because the whole of the traffic on the Central Railway, both upwards and downwards, would pass over that line to comparatively deep water. But whether the Junction branch would pay by itself he very much doubted. The loss last year on the traffic on the Emu Park branch amounted to £1,475—that was, the earnings failed to cover expenses by £1,475. But when they added 4 per cent. interest on the capital cost of the railway—namely, £6,562—they found that the total loss on the Emu Park Railway last year was £8,037. How that connecting link was going to convert a loss of £8,000 into a gain he could not understand, and he did not believe it would. He admitted that it would induce more passenger traffic, but that would not cover the cost of the line. He was also prepared to admit that, by the construction of that link the live stock traffic would be stimulated; but they must remember that the length of the line between South Rockhampton and Lake's Creek was only  $5\frac{1}{2}$  miles, or 1 per cent. of the total railway mileage in the Central district, and that to earn £2,000 additional, which was the interest on the proposed line, the Commissioners would have to make a charge equal to 6 per cent. on the present traffic. The actual receipts from live stock last year were £35,321, and 6 per cent. on that would be 4 per cent. on the admitted cost of the proposed branch. He believed that sooner than submit to that the people at Lake's Creek would drive their stock from the present terminus. As to the cost he unhesitatingly said that it was under-estimated. He came to that conclusion long before he had heard of the paragraph in that morning's paper, which he had not read, but only knew of from the references which had been made to it by hon. members. He believed the Commissioner had stated that it was

proposed to duplicate the bridge, but he based his argument on a single bridge. He would institute a comparison between that bridge and the Indooroopilly Bridge, where nature had convincingly proved that it was absolutely necessary to have a high-level bridge. The Brisbane River drained 5,012 square miles, and the Fitzroy River, according to Sir John Coode, drained 55,000, or eleven times the area drained by the Brisbane River. The proposed length of the bridge over the Fitzroy, as shown on the plans, was 790 feet. The length of the Albert Bridge, at Indooroopilly, which was the same now as formerly, was 680 feet. But the principal factor in the discharging capacity of a bridge was not its length, but its height; and in that respect the comparison between the two bridges was against the Fitzroy Bridge. The height, according to that section, from mean sea-level to the rails was 33 feet 8 inches; but the height from mean sea-level to the rails at Indooroopilly was 50 feet, or 50 per cent. higher, although it was one-sixth shorter, and drained only one-eleventh of the area. If a bridge of that height was necessary over the Brisbane—and nature had proved that it was necessary—the proposed bridge over the Fitzroy would be totally inadequate whenever a similar flood occurred in the Fitzroy as had occurred in the Brisbane. The mere fact that there had been no such flood at Rockhampton for forty or fifty years was no proof whatever. At Rome he had seen the section of every flood that had occurred in the Tiber for over 400 years. On a bridge built in the year 110 there was a gauge on which was recorded every flood for centuries past. The record showed that 400 years ago there were high floods in the Tiber; that during the next 200 years they got less and less; and that during the next 200 years they got higher and higher. The same thing would take place here. Again, the sectional area of the proposed bridge over the Fitzroy was 25,000 square feet, whereas the sectional area provided by the bridge at Indooroopilly was 29,180 square feet—or nearly 5,000 feet extra for a river that drained only one-eleventh of the area. It might be said that the break-away in the Fitzroy had saved Rockhampton in the past and would save it in the future. He would ask the members for Rockhampton whether that break-away—that safety-valve—behind the Athelstane Range carried away one-third of the flood waters that came down the Fitzroy River.

Mr. ARCHER: I should say considerably more than that.

Mr. PHILLIPS: If it carried away two-thirds of the flood waters, that would leave the drainage of 18,000 square miles to be carried away at the spot where that bridge was to be built, or very nearly four times the drainage area of the Brisbane River. Looking at the section, it was evident that there was a great deal of flooded ground for which the Chief Engineer had not provided on the plan; and he was satisfied that when the Chief Engineer came to prepare his plans in detail it would be seen that it would take twice £34,000 to build the bridge. It might be pertinent to ask whether the plans were based on a permanent survey, and whether borings had been made, but perhaps the Minister would supply that information later on. He submitted that the proposed bridge across the Fitzroy was only justifiable at present provided that Broadmount was the proper port for Rockhampton. In that case he would retract any opposition he had offered to it, except with regard to the bridge itself, which was a professional opinion that he would not retract. It appeared that Captain Almond was altogether in favour of Broadmount, saying that it possessed all the elements to make a good port; and the Chief Engineer, on the strength

of that report, said ditto to Captain Almond, although he supposed the Chief Engineer knew more about railways than the elements that went to make a good port. But the country would also be put to the expense of £11,000 or £12,000 in dredging, and after dredging for two miles what was the result? Sixteen feet at low water, which would make it a port equal to that of Brisbane.

Mr. ARCHER: Superior; the rise and fall of the tides being greater.

Mr. PHILLIPS: If the Rockhampton people were satisfied it was no great business of his. But he would remind the Committee that at Port Alma the erection of a wharf was commenced in 1882. In that connection he would read an extract from a report by Mr. Nisbet, who was at one time Engineer for Harbours and Rivers, and a very capable officer he believed him to have been. Mr. Nisbet's report, which was to be found in "Votes and Proceedings" for 1882, vol. ii., page 1081, stated:—[The hon. member here read an extract showing that the wharves would be 500 feet long by 60 wide, and the sheds 480 feet by 37½ feet by 15 feet high; that there would be a depth of 23 to 24 feet below low water alongside the wharves, and other particulars.] The total estimated cost of the wharves was £35,000. The actual cost, including depreciation on loan, was £38,634, and yet after a lapse of thirteen years it was seriously proposed to pull down that expensive structure and transfer it to the other side of the river. Why, the bulk of it would be unfit for anything else but the scrap heap. How would they ever get loose that diagonal and transverse bracing after the bolts and nuts had been in salt water for thirteen years? It was proposed to shift it from a place with a depth of 24 feet at low water and re-erect it at a spot where there was only 16 feet of water.

The PREMIER: Twenty-four feet.

Mr. PHILLIPS: But they had to go through two miles of 16 feet to get to it.

The PREMIER: What have you to go through to get to Port Alma?

Mr. PHILLIPS: If it could be shown that the wharves and Port Alma itself were no good, then he would retract every word he said; but the Chief Engineer had given no evidence, and in fact said nothing of Port Alma, except that he proposed to pull down the wharves and shift them. He did not say that the Port Alma wharf was a bad wharf.

The PREMIER: You have not read the report.

Mr. PHILLIPS said he had read every word of it, and if it could be shown that vessels drawing 24 feet of water could not get to Port Alma at every stage of the tide he would retract what he had said.

The PREMIER: How are you to get the goods away from Port Alma?

Mr. PHILLIPS said he would come to that. Very strong reasons should be given for the departure from a proposal which Parliament thirteen years ago thought a good one. Up to the present date they had expended on the North Coast railway £2,170,000, and were within a measurable distance of Rockhampton. At the present time there was a gap between Gladstone and Bundaberg, but tenders had been called for the construction of part of that line, and he ventured to say unless the Government altered their minds, in three years the line would be completed to Gladstone. There would then only remain a distance of sixty-five miles between Gladstone and Rockhampton; and although he believed the Central members and the people of Rockhampton would like to isolate themselves from the rest of the colony,

the people of the colony would stand no such thing. There would be an overwhelming demand for the extension of the line to Rockhampton, and the Central people would not be able to resist it. They would like, no doubt, to extend their narrow bit of territory to the western boundary of the colony, but his constituents would refuse to be cut off from the rest of the colony and the populous parts of Australia. They would not let a twopenny-halfpenny place like Rockhampton interfere with their undoubted rights. Rockhampton might be a very important place, but there were other places in Queensland which in twenty-five years would be very much more important, and there would be an overwhelming demand for a right-of-way across that strip of territory. It was inevitable, and Mrs. Partington with her broom might just as well attempt to stem the Atlantic as the Rockhampton people attempt to resist that idea. What would be the position when that came about? They would have the iron horse running daily within a few miles of Port Alma, and they would have the merchants at Rockhampton with their tidal port at Broadmount in direct competition with a deep and good port at Gladstone, and when that occurred the demand for the Port Alma railway would spring into life again. The Chief Engineer had entirely failed to give credit for that 19½ miles of railway which he (Mr. Phillips) had proved must be built from Rockhampton towards Gladstone. That officer showed that it was going to cost more to build a line to Port Alma than to Broadmount, but according to his own figures it would cost considerably less. He (Mr. Phillips) had shown already that the railway from Gladstone to Rockhampton was an absolute necessity, and a branch line to Port Alma, according to the showing of the Chief Engineer, would only cost £82,852; but the branch line to Broadmount, plus the line they were now considering, which was a portion of the scheme, plus the pulling down and re-erection of the wharf, plus the necessary dredging of two miles of channel, would cost £139,000, according to the showing of the Chief Engineer. That showed a saving of £56,000 in favour of the Port Alma line. But supposing they passed the plans to-night, and the railway was built, there still remained £3,000 saving in favour of the branch to Port Alma as against the branch to Broadmount. The Chief Engineer's report was not worth the paper on which it was printed. It was a garbled, one-sided report. He was sure there was a reason lying behind it, and perhaps the people of Lake's Creek would discover that reason later on. The Chief Engineer said it was almost a practical impossibility to build a railway across a saltpan, but he had driven heavily loaded drays and galloped his horse lots of times over saltpan. He had piloted the Chief Commissioner on horseback over many miles of saltpan at Normanton, and that gentleman on horseback exerted a far greater pressure on the surface than a railway embankment would. Taking an embankment 6 feet high the pressure per square foot was about 600 lb., 100 lb. per cubic foot, or about 4 lb. to the square inch. Even a baby's perambulator would exert a greater pressure to the square inch. The statement was absurd, especially in the light of the fact that railways had been built over saltpan. The Cairns line crossed a piece of mud flat, and the Cooktown line also went over a mile of mud flat, which was infinitely worse than saltpan. As a railway engineer he scoffed at the idea that a railway could not be built over saltpan. Only the other day the mayor of Rockhampton told him that he drove his buggy almost within sight of Port Alma, and he would undertake to make a railway where a buggy could be driven. It was urged that there was no fresh water at

Port Alma. That was a drawback, but fresh water was not an absolute necessity in order to make a port workable. The primary necessity of a good port was depth of water. He would like to see every place have a decent port, but he was satisfied that sufficient evidence had not been adduced to convince him that Broadmount was a better port than Port Alma.

Mr. ARCHER said that when the time came for connecting Rockhampton with Gladstone the Central members would be found voting for the scheme. The harbour at Broadmount was not such a harbour as the one at Port Alma, but if it had deep water it would be just as good, because it was perfectly sheltered. There was only from 13 to 15 feet in the channel at low tide, and it would have to be deepened to 16 feet or 17 feet at low tide. The tide in Keppel Bay rose some 5 feet higher than it did in Brisbane at spring tides. He looked upon Port Alma as, without exception, the best harbour on the coast of Queensland, as a vessel drawing 27 feet could come in at low water springs, and the current there would not prevent them doing everything necessary. Neither was there any difficulty in lighters lying alongside. He wished to dispose of the idea that the Central members would oppose a line from Rockhampton to Gladstone. The hon. member for Carpentaria gave a very interesting account of the quantity of water that passed under the bridge here, and pointed out that the watershed of the Fitzroy was eleven times as large as that of the Brisbane. In the latter case the watershed was only some 60 miles away, so that the river at Brisbane would be in full flood twenty-four hours after there had been a heavy fall of rain. In the case of the Fitzroy one of its heads was not far from Dalby, while another was north of Mackay, and the third was about 300 miles West. The result was that the rains had ceased long before the flood waters reached Rockhampton, and the river only rose slowly. Besides that, it was very seldom that all these rivers were in flood at the same time, although he had seen that happen. He remembered coming up the Brisbane on 13th March, 1890, when the river was in flood, and they had to anchor at the Hamilton, and come up to town in a smaller vessel. He was here for nearly a week, and then went to Rockhampton, where he found that, although they had had the same rains, and the river had been running for some days, still the town had not suffered. If the watershed were as steep at Rockhampton as it was at Brisbane it would not be possible for people to live there. An hon. member had mentioned that south of Rockhampton there was a bywash formed for the Fitzroy, and he would explain what it was. About three-quarters of a mile at the back of Rockhampton was Athelstane Range, and from it to Gracemere there was a flat about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles wide, where the flood water broke over the bank and flowed away behind the town. In flood time there would be from 8 to 10 feet of water over that flat, and it flowed with a steady current of about 4 miles an hour. If the hon. member calculated the amount of water that escaped in that way he would see how it was that Rockhampton had never been flooded. That would always save Rockhampton from such damage as was sustained in Brisbane. He did not consider Broadmount as good a harbour as Port Alma, but the approaches to the former from the town were infinitely easier. However, he would discuss that matter when that particular line came before them. He had no doubt the traffic on the line under discussion would be enough to prevent it being any cost to the Government, and he should support the proposal. High as the floods in the Fitzroy had been, he would not say that they

might not be higher, and therefore he hoped the line would not be built any lower than the present bridge.

Mr. CURTIS said that the hon. member for Carpentaria had endeavoured to make it appear that the connection of the Central line with the Emu Park line should be contingent upon the extension of the Emu Park line to Broadmount. That was a great mistake, because there was not the least doubt that the two lines should be connected quite irrespective of the extension to Broadmount. The Railway Commissioners some seven years ago recommended the connection of the two lines, and at that time there was no question of building a railway to Broadmount. In other words, it was desirable that the two lines should be connected whether the line was built to Broadmount or not. The hon. member was also wrong in his supposition that the increased traffic would not pay the amount of interest mentioned in the Commissioner's report. He believed that it would do that and a great deal more, because, in addition to the increased stock traffic, there would be a very large amount of passenger traffic upon the suburban lines. He confirmed all that had been said by the senior member for Rockhampton in regard to the assertion of the hon. member for Carpentaria that the people of Rockhampton desired to remain in an isolated position. Their desire was quite the reverse. They were very desirous of extending the railway to deep water, so that they might be brought into closer communication with the outside world. It was some years since a deputation from the Rockhampton Chamber of Commerce had waited on the Minister and advocated the early extension of a railway from Gladstone to Rockhampton, and he could assure the Committee that the people of Rockhampton were desirous that that line should be completed as soon as possible.

Mr. BOLES supported all that had been said by the last speaker. This proposal had nothing to do with the extension from the Emu Park line to Broadmount. He knew from experience that the Government were acting wisely in proposing to connect the two lines, altogether apart from the question of the Broadmount extension. Like the hon. member for Carpentaria, he did not favour the Broadmount extension. The time had gone by when they should spend money in building railways to so-called ports, which would require dredging. The amount required for dredging at Broadmount, according to the Commissioner's estimate, was £12,000, but it might mean £100,000. They had the deep-water ports of Port Alma and Gladstone, which were quite capable of accommodating all the shipping. He should have a great deal to say on the question when the Broadmount line was under consideration. His idea was that the line to deep water should follow the route already surveyed, with the altered branch to Port Alma, and eventually going on to Gladstone. That would give the people of the Central district three ports instead of one. They would then have Rockhampton, Port Alma, and Gladstone, besides connecting the two railway systems. If the railway were built to Port Alma, people would buy up and reclaim the mud flats that were supposed to be unfit to live on. There were other parts of the world where towns had been built in quite as low positions as Port Alma. In justice to the people of the colony, he did not wish to see a jetty that had cost £40,000 or £50,000 removed from a port that was capable of accommodating vessels of the greatest draught and sent to a port requiring a great deal of dredging. In regard to the supposed antipathy of the people of Rockhampton to the connection with Gladstone, he could say that he had had many conversations with public men in

Rockhampton, and they had always expressed their desire to see the railway extended from Gladstone to Rockhampton. He had heard a great deal about the line being the ruination of Rockhampton, but he had never been able to see it. He did not think it would do Gladstone any harm. It would give the Central people a good port, and it would give the Western squatters an opportunity of sending their stock to the meat works at Gladstone, where they could get a better price than at Lake's Creek. He looked upon the Broadmount line more as a line to accommodate Lake's Creek than the producers of the Western part of the colony.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; and the resolutions as reported were agreed to.

### SUPPLY.

#### RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE. SURVEY OF LAND.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS moved that £19,710 be granted for survey of land. The big discrepancy which hon. members would notice in the vote as compared with the vote for the same purpose last year was due to the project to charge survey fees to a suspense account, and therefore the fees to licensed surveyors would be taken out of the revenue accounts. The increases in the vote were neither considerable nor important, but he would be glad to give any information desired.

Mr. DANIELS asked if it was still the hon. gentleman's intention to bring in a Bill extending the payment of survey fees over ten years?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said it was the intention of the Government to make provision for a deferred payment of survey fees. The exact term he could not state.

Mr. BELL congratulated the Secretary for Lands upon having come to that determination which would be of considerable benefit to all selectors, and especially to selectors of small areas. He knew that in his own district the payment straight off of survey fees had to a large extent deterred selection.

Mr. STEVENS said that if the survey fees were too heavy they would have the effect of preventing selection. Under the Act of 1876 the survey fees were less than they were at present. At that time the maximum fee for a 160-acre selection was £6 14s., while at present it ran from £9 to £17 10s., according to the nature of the country; and for 240 acres the survey fees ran from £10 7s. to £23. In rough country a good deal of the work was done by computation and at very little expense to the surveyors. In one instance he knew a selector had been charged the full fees for a 160-acre selection, though it was found that the selection ended in an abrupt precipice and contained only 90 acres. He understood that the surveyors were paid a fair profit on what it cost them to survey the land, but surveying did not cost nearly as much now as it did some years ago, and there were many surveyors who would be only too glad to get employment in doing the work for a smaller sum than was now charged. If the hon. gentleman would take the matter into consideration he would see that the present survey fees were excessive, and a reasonable reduction in the fees would largely increase selection.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said the matter had been very fully considered, and the survey fees were not any more than their cost to the Government. Hon. members must be aware that it cost proportionately more to survey a small area than to survey a large area. In connection with the larger surveys they were subject to readjustment, which involved sometimes a refund and sometimes a surcharge.

Mr. STEVENS had been credibly informed that in some cases the areas had been more or less computed. He had heard of no case in which there had been a rebate, and he understood that the full charge per acre had had to be paid without any allowance being made for work which had simply been done by computation.

Mr. MORGAN asked what were the intentions of the Government with regard to the leave obtained from the House the other day to introduce a Bill to amend the Crown Lands Act in several particulars, notably to deal with the land comprised in leases within the settled districts, the terms of which expired some months ago?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS replied that the intentions of the Government would be apparent in a few days.

Mr. MORGAN said that meant that if they waited long enough they would know what the Government proposed to do. There was no record in "Votes and Proceedings" of the Bill having been introduced, and he asked the question because the matter was one of urgent importance to the district he represented, as well as to others, where the people were desirous of taking up land comprised in those leases. He hoped the Minister would give them some information on the subject.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS replied that it was rather unfair to ask him to discuss legislation on the Estimates. In a very short time members would be aware of the intentions of the Government by their being put into effect.

Mr. MORGAN could only hope that the Government intended to go on with the measure, as it was one of very great importance.

Mr. BOLES hoped the Government would deal with the matter as early as possible as there were a number of persons in his district who were waiting to take up land comprised in those leases which would shortly expire. They would have taken up land before, but they were waiting in order to secure a better class of land from the leased areas which they expected would soon be available.

Mr. PLUNKETT noticed that last year £18,000 was voted for fees to licensed surveyors, but that nothing was asked for that purpose this year. Were district surveyors included in that vote?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS explained that district surveyors were Government officers, and that ordinary licensed surveyors were called in when wanted.

Mr. PLUNKETT: From what vote are district surveyors paid?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: They appeared in that vote under the heading of "District and Staff Surveyors."

Mr. DANIELS would like to know for certain whether the Minister was going to bring in the Bill he had previously referred to, because at present a great injustice was done in connection with survey fees. A man who took up a selection in good open country was not charged as much for surveying as another who selected a bit of mountain or scrub land, and he thought that, as a matter of justice, there should be a certain charge for a block of a certain size.

Mr. HARDACRE said that last session he made some remarks with reference to a certain area of land that was unsurveyed on the Drummond Range, near Bogantungan. He would like to know whether that land was unsurveyed, and, if so, whether it would be granted to the person who discovered it to be so?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS replied that there were only three ways of priority under the Act—under occupation license, grazing homesteads, and agricultural farms of 160 acres

and under—and there was no provision to give priority to anybody who “discovered” unoccupied country.

Mr. HARDACRE was afraid an injustice was going to be done in connection with that matter. A person in the locality of the Drummond Ranges discovered that there was a very large quantity of land on a run there unsurveyed, and pointed it out to the department. A survey of the country had proved the correctness of his statement, and now it was rumoured that that land was to be handed over to the pastoral lessee as excess area of his run. He had the information on very credible authority, and he should be glad to know from the Minister whether it had any foundation or not, because an injustice would be done to that man to allow the land to be handed back to the pastoral lessee.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said he had no personal knowledge of the matter, but would have it inquired into.

Mr. GLASSEY said he had a number of reductions to propose in the estimate. The first was with regard to the Surveyor-General, whose salary was put down at £750. No doubt that officer had also a considerable amount for travelling expenses, but with that he did not quarrel. However, he thought the salary too high, and proposed to reduce it by £100. The salary of the chief clerk, £450, he proposed to reduce by £50. With regard to the district and staff surveyors, the Committee might be of opinion, looking at the estimate alone, that their salaries were not too high, but on referring to page 40 of the schedule it would be seen that the district surveyor, Maryborough, had, in addition to his salary of £400, an allowance of £200 in lieu of horses, forage, equipment, instruments, etc. The same was the case with the district surveyor, Townsville. The first-class surveyor at Charleville received a salary of £350, and a similar allowance of £200, and the second-class staff surveyors, Darling Downs and Moreton districts, each received a salary of £300 and an allowance of £200. He proposed that in each case the salary be reduced by £50, making a total on the whole vote of £450.

Question—That £19,260 only be granted—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 17.

Messrs. Glassey, Reid, Fisher, Kerr, Hardacre, Cross, Wilkinson, Rawlings, Daniels, Ogdon, Dawson, Browne, W. Thorn, Dunsford, McDonald, King, and Jackson.

NOES, 36.

Messrs. Nelson, Barlow, Byrnes, Groom, Drake, Bell, Dalrymple, Philp, Dickson, Morgan, Turley, Stevens, Chataway, Hamilton, Plunkett, Leahy, Murray, Corfield, McMaster, O'Connell, Lord, Phillips, Smyth, Armstrong, Grimes, Crombie, Cameron, Callan, Boles, Smith, Duffy, Fogarty, Watson, Allan, Midson, and Harding.

Resolved in the negative; and original question put and passed.

#### TRIGONOMETRICAL SURVEY.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS moved that £200 be granted for the trigonometrical survey. The vote was the same as last year, and the survey could not be gone on with on account of the present state of the funds.

Question put and passed.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS moved that £21,240 be granted for miscellaneous services. There was an increase of £6,000 for wire-netting. The grant of £5,000 to the rabbit boards had been superseded by legislation under which they received £10,000 a year. The amount was distributed according to the rates levied.

Mr. FISHER asked for additional information in reference to the large increase in the vote for wire-netting. Did the hon. gentleman contemplate spending a larger sum than £20,000 if it was found necessary?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said the increase was caused by increased activity on the part of the rabbit boards.

Mr. LEAHY: This vote is not half enough.

Mr. GLASSEY: The hon. member for Bulloo said the vote was not half enough, and doubtless he was in possession of information which induced him to make that interjection. He (Mr. Glassey) thought the amount asked for excessive, and he took his stand on the reports of the Under Secretary for Lands, who year after year reported that there was no danger to be apprehended from the rabbits. Unless there was some justification for the vote he should be inclined to move a very substantial reduction, but he should like to have some reliable information. He trusted the hon. member for Bulloo would supply the Committee with any information he had in his possession as to whether, in his opinion, the vote was justifiable or not.

Mr. LEAHY said he was not in charge of the Estimates, and it was not his place to give information, but if the hon. member had been in the House during the last three or four days he would have heard the rabbit question discussed at an earlier stage of the Minister's Estimates. He (Mr. Leahy) had then given some information on the subject, and he did not feel justified in taking up time by repeating it. He gave the hon. member for Burke more credit for sincerity than some hon. members did, and he believed the hon. gentleman was actuated by motives which would lead him to do his best for all parts of the colony, but the reduction of the vote would benefit no one. He would ask the hon. gentleman if he had read the Surveyor-General's report on the rabbit question—a report by a gentleman who was thoroughly to be relied on because he was in every way disinterested. If the hon. member had not read the report he should do so. Any testimony that he required short of a sworn declaration he would find in Thursday's debates in *Hansard*, and in the report of the Surveyor-General. He was sorry to see the hon. member for Burke opposing the vote, because, holding the responsible position he did, he ought to make himself conversant with these reports before coming to a conclusion.

Mr. GLASSEY said he was not present on Thursday during the time this question was being discussed, and he had not had time to read the *Hansard* report of the discussion. He had not yet come to any conclusion on the question, and he wanted information to enable him to do so. He had not read the report of the Surveyor-General, but he had read the report of the Under Secretary for Lands, and unless he had tangible proof that the reports hitherto made by the Under Secretary were untrue he preferred to take the report of the head of the department before that of a subordinate official. He looked upon the invasion of rabbits as a national question, and wanted to act conscientiously in the matter, but he wanted the fullest possible light before giving his vote.

Mr. STEVENS said the hon. member was perhaps not aware, or had perhaps forgotten, that the Surveyor-General was sent out specially to report upon this particular question, and that his report came in subsequent to that of the Under Secretary for Lands. The one coming in later had a stronger bearing on the question than the other. He had not spoken on this question for three or four years, but before then he took a keen, practical interest in the matter because he was member for the district threatened with the invasion. If the House had taken warning at the time he brought it under notice, Queensland would not have been suffering so much at present from the rabbits, nor would it have cost the country anything like the sum that had been spent. It was a most serious question, because

the evil was increasing in spite of the efforts to keep the pest out. Those efforts had been partially successful; but to deal with this course in a thoroughly effectual manner still greater exertions must be made. Wire-netting must be largely used, and he was inclined to think with the hon. member for Bulloo that double the amount put down on the Estimates would be required.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS explained that there was an available balance of £6,000 last year in addition to the amount voted, so that the amount asked for this year was the same as that spent last year.

Mr. LEAHY said that when the Under Secretary for Lands compiled his report he had not received any information from the Surveyor-General, but he was wiser now than he was two or three months ago. If he was not, the Minister was. He asked the hon. member for Burke to take a practical view of the matter. The wire-netting which the boards got from the Government cost £19 a mile, but by the time it was erected it cost £70 a mile. Did the hon. member suppose they would tax themselves to the highest limit, and spend £51 a mile on fencing just in order to get netting from the Government, unless it was necessary to keep out the rabbits? The Warrego board had borrowed £13,000 from the Government, and had applied for £8,000 more at 5 per cent. for the purpose of dealing with this pest. Was not that a guarantee that the money was required? This wire fence cost 75 per cent. more to erect than ordinary fences for cattle and sheep. The best test of sincerity was when people were prepared to put their hands into their own pockets, and that was being done to an extraordinary degree. The people had also borrowed all that the Government would lend them, and had pledged their own credit.

Mr. W. THORN did not altogether agree with what the hon. member had said, as there were many people who considered this tax a very heavy burden. There was no doubt it was an unjust tax upon small men, who were crying out on account of the wallabies, but got no assistance. He considered wire-netting useless to keep out rabbits, because if they could climb 8 feet up trees they would easily get over the fence. The Government would have to get some other plan for exterminating them, and adopt stricter measures than they had.

Mr. HAMILTON said wire fences were not useless, although they were not a perfect defence, but some other means would have to be adopted. He had a conversation recently with a man who had been occupied in keeping down rabbits in New South Wales, and who told him that he had seen a rabbit jump a 4 feet wire fence. He had also read the same thing in the Sydney newspapers. The fences were a very desirable precaution, but it was necessary to try something else.

Mr. PLUNKETT asked if the squatters in the South-western districts who had received extensions of their leases had complied with the conditions regarding wire fencing?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said if they did not comply with the conditions they did not get their extensions. The extension was conditional upon the fencing being put up.

Mr. SMITH asked if the experiments in the direction of exterminating rabbits had been a success?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS replied that they had not yet been entered upon; but arrangements were in progress.

Mr. LEAHY said some hon. members had asked how it was, if rabbits could climb trees 8 feet or 10 feet, they did not climb fences. They could climb the fences, but they did not

because there was nothing to eat on top. They only climbed trees in bad seasons, when every vestige of grass was gone. Whether they would develop into climbing animals he did not know.

Question put and passed.

#### DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS moved that £11,223 be granted for the Department of Agriculture. The term of engagement of Instructor in Meat Preserving had expired, and only a small proportion of his salary was asked. The Colonial Botanist and the entomologist had received the increases that they undoubtedly deserved, and the amount for wages and miscellaneous services was increased by £500, in consequence of the greater activity that had prevailed in the department.

Mr. GRIMES asked what were the intentions of the Government in reference to a matter that had been brought under the notice of the Secretary for Lands by a deputation from the Farmers' Union? The hon. member was kind enough to say that he would urge the matter upon his colleagues, and ask them to take decided action. The matter occupied the attention of a large number of people in the colony, because they saw there was not likely to be any permanent prosperity unless it was based upon the development of the agricultural interest. They had no wish to speak disparagingly of other interests, but they urged that something should be done to induce people to settle upon the soil by demonstrating to them that it was a profitable occupation. The matter had been a long time before the department. They had had it several times appearing on the Estimates, and it was due to the industry that some definite information one way or the other should be given. If they got a definite answer, they should know what to expect, especially as a general election was looming in the distance. The question would come up at the next election. It had been brought up at the last, and at that time fair promises had been made, but up to the present there had only been promises. It was no use any longer holding that before the farmers as a bunch of carrots. Unless something was done by the Ministry, they would lose the confidence of a vast portion of the farming community.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS supposed the hon. gentleman referred to the latest development of the Agricultural Department—the experimental farms. He (Mr. Barlow) had brought the matter under the notice of the Government, and he had been asked to get all particulars together, and he had requested the Under Secretary to assist him. He could not say at present that anything definite had been done, but the hon. member might rely upon it that the matter would not be allowed to slip. He could not say what would be done, or whether it would be done that month, but the matter was under the immediate consideration of the Government. He quite appreciated the importance of all that the hon. member had said.

Mr. GRIMES said that nothing could be done without the expenditure of money. Was it the intention of the Minister to place a sum on the Supplementary Estimates for that purpose?

Mr. STEVENS said the subject would have to be dealt with on a far wider basis than that indicated by the hon. member for Oxley. The Agricultural Department should be reorganised and placed under the control of a Minister appointed expressly for that purpose, with an under secretary and other officers under him, just like any other State department. That had been done in other colonies with marked success. He did not say that with any idea of disparaging the present Secretary for Lands, who was as capable a Secretary for Lands as any they had ever had;

but it required a separate Minister, with officers who should control the management of agricultural schools in connection with experimental farms. It was a wonder that something of that kind had not been tried many years ago. In some of the older countries of the world it had been in existence for nearly a century. The first agricultural school had been instituted in Switzerland in 1806, and in thirty years 3,000 pupils had been educated there. In France, Germany, and Russia there were large numbers of schools and model farms supported by the State, and the movement had been very successful. In Ireland great success had attended the movement. According to the last returns there were 205 farm schools, divided into two or three classes. In the first class were 169 ordinary national agricultural schools, where the children had to cultivate gardens and very small holdings. In the second class were 36 agricultural schools—16 under local management and 20 under the Board of Agriculture exclusively—dealing with the cottar farms attached to the agricultural schools up to the highest establishment of the kind at Glasnevin, where 180 acres were worked by sixty pupils. The practice in all those schools was to alternate lectures and lessons in the schools with work on the experimental farms. It might be thought that the establishment of such a system would require a great deal of expense, but the initiatory expense would not be very great. If there was more than one college—and he thought it advisable that there should be—they might be endowed with a fair area of land. There should be councils, as in Canada and parts of the United States, in connection with the department, which might gather statistics and give the most valuable advice to the officers of the department. In Canada the system was carried on to a very large extent, experimental farms dealing with all subjects of interest to farmers. They dealt with the distribution of seed grain to farmers, they tested various seeds and fertilisers, and dealt with the breeding of swine, horticulture, and poultry breeding, both for the table and for egg production. Then there was a chemical branch, conducted by men of the highest scientific attainments, who analysed soils, water, etc. The farms also were used for experimenting in various breeds and crosses in cattle, honey, and apiculture, and that industry was largely fostered by the department. One-third of the honey imported by England came from Canada, the import amounting to 1,300,000 lb. per annum from Canada. The export of cheese had increased enormously—40 per cent. in three years. In 1890 export was 94,260,187 lb., whilst it had risen to 133,946,365 lb. in 1893, which had been largely contributed to by the system in vogue. There were a great many other subjects connected with the vote which he would like to go into fully, but, as an hon. member had given notice of motion dealing with the subject at length, he had no wish to forestall him. He would not have said as much as he had said but for the fact that the day set apart for the discussion of that motion had been devoted to something else, and there was no telling when it would come on; and if they did not get a chance to discuss that motion, and the present Estimates were passed, the opportunity for dealing with the subject would be gone. There was not much wonder that the subject was exciting interest when the people saw in the Press how much was being done to foster agriculture in Victoria. They very naturally asked why the Government of Queensland did not do something of the kind. Sooner or later the people would force the Government to do those things, and it was better that they should do them without being forced. The farmers of the colony looked upon

the matter as one of great importance; and if their wishes, loudly expressed, were not attended to, they would take some more forcible way of obtaining a measure of relief.

Mr. MURRAY said the matter had been brought up and thrashed out every year since he had been a member, but they had not got any further with it. Only a few days ago a deputation of members representing the Central district had waited on the Secretary for Lands to submit a scheme for setting apart not less than 20,000 acres of suitable land there for the establishment of an experimental farm. The Farmers' and Selectors' Association at Rockhampton had repeatedly brought the matter before the Chamber of Commerce, who had brought it before the members for the district. He had been communicated with two or three times to urge the matter on. He was of opinion that the youth of the colony would derive as much benefit from learning the management of sheep and cattle as from learning agriculture alone, and any experimental farm established should embrace training in both matters. The Secretary for Lands had promised the deputation that the land commissioners in the Central district would be instructed to inspect and report upon any land suitable for the purpose; and he would like the hon. gentleman to say whether any action in that direction had been taken?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS believed they had been requested to report, but he did not know whether any report had yet been received. He would stir the matter up.

Mr. PLUNKETT endorsed what had been said as to the necessity for the establishment of experimental farms. He hoped that what was expected of them would be realised, though that there were many difficulties in the way went without saying. The plan suggested by the hon. member for Normanby of reserving suitable areas for the purpose was a capital one, and it should have been adopted in the Southern districts long ago. They could not establish such farms without money, and it would be a graceful thing for the Government to place a sum on the Supplementary Estimates for the establishment of one, two, or three of them. He would like to know whether any fresh agreement had been entered into to retain the services of Professor Shelton, who, he thought, should be retained for another three years. The vote of £200 for the destruction of noxious weeds, he understood, was for the destruction of noxious weeds on Crown lands, but it was altogether inadequate. It would take £2,000 to clear the lantana, Bathurst burr, Noogoora burr, and Scotch thistle in the upper portion of his electorate alone. The matter was one of great importance, as those weeds were tending greatly to destroy the prospects of success in the farming districts. He would like to see the vote largely increased or dropped out altogether, and he hoped to see an increased vote on Supplementary Estimates.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said the Instructor in Agriculture had accepted an engagement for twelve months certain at his present salary, and after that he would remain in the Government service on a reasonably short notice on either side.

The PREMIER said the discussion on the establishment of experimental farms or agricultural colleges was useful, but he held the opinion now that he held last year—that the placing of a vote on the Estimates or the Supplementary Estimates was not the proper course to pursue. The vote would only last till the end of the financial year, and they did not know whether the next Parliament would renew it or not. If they spent money on an object of that sort, they ought to do it in a way that would

secure permanency. If they did anything at all—and he thought the sooner they did do something the better—a Bill ought to be introduced by the Secretary for Lands providing for the establishment of those farms, and providing also the money required for their initial cost and maintenance. That would put the matter on a much better footing than merely voting a specific sum for one year on the Estimates. An hon. member had mentioned that this was particularly a pastoral country. No doubt it was, but he took it that the rearing of stock was a branch of farming, and that it would come in under experimental farms. He would suggest that the whole subject should be fully discussed on the motion of the hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Chataway, and he would give a Government day for the discussion. Members on both sides of the House would then have an opportunity of expressing their views on the subject, and the information thus obtained might be useful to the Secretary for Lands in afterwards preparing a Bill on the subject. He thought that was a proper course to pursue.

Mr. GROOM did not think a Bill was necessary. When they established agricultural colleges in Victoria they passed a Bill, but that was because the colleges were endowed with large areas of Crown lands—160,000 acres each, he thought. But in the present case members had abandoned the more pretentious idea of an agricultural college, and had suggested that in lieu thereof experimental farms should be established, and he really did not think it required a Bill to establish experimental farms. The Government had in their possession all the officers that were required, and all that was needed was to set apart the necessary land and provide the money for working expenses. The question of establishing agricultural colleges had been before the House for a great number of years, and had been brought forward nearly every session. On one occasion he brought forward the subject, and the matter was debated a whole evening. The House then refused to grant a single penny in aid of a college, but recommended the Secretary for Lands to set apart areas of land in certain localities as endowments for future agricultural colleges. That resolution had remained a dead letter from the time it was passed until the present moment. At one time they had £5,000 put down on the Estimates for an agricultural college, but it had not been spent, and the vote had since disappeared from the Estimates. The predecessor of the present Secretary for Lands and the Instructor in Agriculture went over different districts, and picked out sites which they said were admirably suited for the purpose. The Hon. J. D. Macansh had offered a grant of 500 acres if the Government would establish an agricultural college on Canning Downs, and the Messrs. Gore had also offered 500 acres on Yandilla on similar conditions. No one would have objected if either of those sites had been accepted, because with the diversity of climatic conditions which existed in the colony more than one college would be necessary. Still nothing had been done in the matter. They had £11,223 put down for the Department of Agriculture, but there were various items in the vote which had nothing whatever to do with the promotion of agriculture—for instance, £750 for the National Agricultural and Industrial Association, which was an endowment to that body for surrendering certain lands to the Acclimatisation Society. Beyond the salaries paid to the officers there was nothing whatever in the vote for the promotion of agriculture. According to the "Statesman's Year Book" the last vote proposed by the Prussian Government in aid of agriculture was £250,000, and that was supposed to be one of the

poorest countries, as far as land was concerned, in all Europe. The Agricultural Department in New South Wales were so satisfied with the three experimental farms they had established at Armidale, Wagga Wagga, and Bathurst that they had instructed their officers to organise a dozen of those farms in various districts; they were not waiting for any Bill, but the necessary provision would be made on the Estimates. Whatever discussion took place he did not think the Minister would get any more information to enable him to frame the Bill required than he had obtained already. All that was needed was to consult with the officers of the department as to the course to be pursued, and to place a sum of money on the Supplementary Estimates to carry it out; and there was nothing to prevent the farms being in practical operation within the next three or four months. He might mention that Mr. H. V. King, of Gowrie Station, who was a perfect enthusiast in all matters relating to agriculture, recently got out an expert from America. At first the surrounding farmers were inclined to laugh at what they considered the expert's new-fangled notions, but such had been the marvellous success of agriculture on that station, that they were all anxious to know how to work their farms in like manner. Wherever experimental farms were formed, provided the instructors were capable of giving good practical information, the farmers would be glad to obtain it. As he had said, there was no necessity for a Bill. It might not pass, or it might be encumbered with perfectly unnecessary conditions; whereas if the Minister was allowed a free hand, and given the money with which to commence practical operations, the project might be got under way in a very short time. A great many farmers thought they knew everything connected with farming, and declined to take the advice tendered by the present Instructor in Agriculture, believing that his teaching was more theory than practice. He was convinced that if Professor Shelton had half a dozen experimental farms under his control in various parts of the colony, where he could give practical information on the land itself, he would do a much greater amount of good to the farmers than he was doing at present. They had talked about the matter long enough. The time had now come for determined action. Let the Government formulate a scheme, place a sufficient sum on the Estimates for the purpose, and employ the officers of the department to carry it out.

Mr. CHATAWAY did not altogether agree with the hon. member for Toowoomba as to the non-necessity for a Bill. It was impossible to judge of the value of a Bill until they saw it. Instead of containing all sorts of cumbersome provisions, it might be an extremely simple Bill and one that would work without difficulty. The best plan would be to accept the very generous offer of the Premier that he would set apart a Government day for the discussion of the question, and postpone further debate upon it until that occasion. Every hon. member would thank the Secretary for Lands on the increase he had been able to allow to the Colonial Botanist and to the entomologist, who had now been reinstated into something like the positions they occupied before the reductions of 1893.

Mr. ARMSTRONG regarded the Premier's offer as a very satisfactory one from every point of view. If a day were set apart for a discussion of questions relating to agriculture they would be more likely to arrive at a sound conclusion as to what shape the project should take, than from any discussion on the Estimates. The hon. member for Toowoomba was of opinion that a sum of money for the formation of experimental farms should be left entirely to the

discretion of the Minister to expend. That hon. member would be one of the first to quarrel with such a course if it were adopted. In a general debate on the subject the farming members might give a good deal of information to the Minister as to the course that might be adopted with the greatest advantage. He would far prefer to trust to the wisdom of Parliament than allow any Minister a free hand in the formulation of a scheme and the expenditure of the money to carry it out. With regard to the Instructor in Agriculture, he hoped that his re-engagement would be successful; but Professor Shelton would never be able to prove his worth to the colony until he could give practical information on the land itself. Unfortunately he had been hampered. If anything in the shape of experimental farms came about, that gentleman might be able to do something within the next twelve months. He was glad to see that the Instructor in Meat Preserving was only provided for for three months, because he never had a high opinion of that gentleman's capacity, and thought the bargain was a bad one. Last year he had called attention to the fact that there was only one travelling dairy at work, and the Minister had said that he would start the other, but, although he made application for it to visit the Lockyer district in August, it did not arrive until the following July. The travelling dairy had done an immense amount of good, but the second dairy was required to go round and complete Mr. Mahon's instruction, because there were some details which people forgot if they only had one course of lessons, and a second visit would complete and consolidate their information. He hoped the Minister would see his way to having the second dairy put into active operation. Unfortunately it was difficult to get the dairy at the time when milk was very largely produced in some districts, and it would not visit a district unless a certain amount of milk was guaranteed. If the second dairy was in operation that difficulty would be overcome. He endorsed the remarks of the hon. member for Logan as to the very inadequate vote for the destruction of noxious weeds. If more active steps were not taken in the destruction of those plants, it would in future take thousands of pounds to exterminate them. On one creek alone in his district the vote could be exhausted; and that being so, how could it be expected that any appreciable impression could be made by expending only £200? Divisional boards had power to destroy noxious weeds on Crown lands, but when they sent in their vouchers they were often told that the vote was exhausted. The matter was of great importance, and he should like to see further attention paid to it.

Mr. STEVENS was glad to hear what fell from the Premier. As far as he went the hon. gentleman was quite right, but the department should be extended still further. The hon. member for Toowoomba said that a vote on the Estimates would be sufficient, and that there were officers enough to carry out the work efficiently, but he had proved that was hardly the case by pointing out that Mr. King had imported an expert at his own expense and effected a great deal more than the Agricultural Department did. That alone proved that something more was wanted, and a field day for discussing the subject would be productive of great good. Last year he had spoken of the necessity of obtaining information from Denmark in regard to their improved methods of butter-making, and he understood the Minister to say that he would not object to importing an expert. That, however, was not quite what he (Mr. Stevens) meant. He thought they should send one of their own experts to Denmark, because if an expert was brought here to an unfamiliar climate he would have a great

deal to unlearn before he could begin to teach. On the other hand, the information obtained by one of their own experts would be immediately available on his return to the colony.

Mr. ALLAN had a great deal to say on the vote, but would reserve his remarks until the day to be set apart for debating the subject. He was of opinion that it would be very much better to bring in a Bill, and have some finality to the subject, but there was not very much time left this session. The Premier had said that a great deal would depend upon the debate on the motion of the hon. member for Mackay, and that he would be very glad to see the subject debated and a Bill brought in embodying the ideas of hon. members. He (Mr. Allan) had taken an interest in that matter for many years, and it was very sickening to have to go back to his constituents time after time, and have to acknowledge that he had been able to do nothing in regard to the vote for £5,000 which had been on the Estimates for so long. Only a fortnight ago he went over a large experimental farm at Wagga Wagga, where he took a good many notes; and he would be glad to give the information he had obtained to the House for what it was worth.

Mr. MORGAN, referring to the Premier's promise that a Government day should be set apart for the discussion of the motion of the hon. member for Mackay, said the hon. gentleman had very effectively spiked the guns of hon. members opposite. It was rather singular that there had been no offer to set apart Government time for that motion until trouble was made on the vote for the Department of Agriculture. He might tell those who accepted the compromise that nothing would come of it, that they would get nothing, while the Premier would gain everything from it. He would like to recall the experience of past years in connection with this experimental farm. Last year the Minister got up, and in the fewest possible words submitted the vote. Some trouble was made about the absence of reference to this question, and the Minister said he was prepared to bring down a Bill next day to authorise the erection of an agricultural college. He brought down the Bill, and his speech in moving the second reading was immediately followed by one of his supporters getting up and moving the adjournment of the debate. Nothing came of the Bill, nothing was expected to come of it; and he believed the hon. gentleman at the head of the department had as little intention of doing anything now in the matter as he had twelve months ago.

The PREMIER: I suppose you know everybody's motives.

Mr. MORGAN was expressing his belief. He had not the least intention of being discourteous, but it was proper to be frank, and he frankly told the hon. gentleman that he doubted his sincerity upon this subject. He did not think the hon. gentleman believed any good would result from the establishment of an experimental farm. If he was convinced that an experimental farm was desirable in the interests of the community, surely he would have been able to infect his colleagues with his belief, and induce them to take such action as would bring about its establishment. He had said he did not believe the hon. gentleman proposed to do anything in the matter, and he thought the hon. gentleman might have pursued that policy of frankness for which he claimed credit last year and the year before, when he said the Government had no intention of going on with this business. Having got authorisation for the expenditure of the money, the Government carefully refrained from spending it, because they said the country could not agree as to the site for the farm. It was not the business of the country to make the choice of

site; it was the business of Ministers, who were apparently unwilling to incur the petty ill-will of certain communities by deciding against their claims to be made the site for the institution. The Minister refrained from doing a plain administrative duty. He did not know whether it was because he did not like to incur local ill-will, but votes had been allowed to lapse twice, and now the Government refrained from asking for the appropriation on account. He hoped the hon. gentleman would soon have got together sufficient information to enable him to take action. The information upon which other countries had started these institutions was at his command, and really the excuses the hon. member offered were so utterly inadequate that he was warranted in saying that he was wanting in earnestness.

The PREMIER said the hon. member had delivered a most ungenerous speech. It was most unworthy for a member of his long experience in the House to attribute such unworthy motives to the Secretary for Lands, which were in no way deserved. The hon. member was altogether wrong in his facts, because the present Secretary for Lands had never allowed any vote to lapse. Anyone would think from reading the speech of the hon. member that the Secretary for Lands had refused to spend the money voted by Parliament; but they had not to look far around to find the motives of the hon. member and the hon. member for Toowoomba. They knew that to bring this matter to a finality was the last thing they desired, because their occupation would then be gone; they would be politically dead, and their newspapers would have nothing to write about. If they could not discuss this matter every year they might as well retire from political life. Everybody knew that if an experimental farm were started at Killarney the constituents of the hon. member for Toowoomba would be up in arms saying that they had as much right to it as the Warwick people, and that they had been defrauded of their just rights. The proper course was to deal with the whole matter by a Bill, instead of by annual appropriations.

Mr. MORGAN said the hon. member, after accusing him of attributing unworthy motives, immediately set about committing the same offence himself. He was sure the hon. member would see, upon reflection, that he was not justified in taking up that position. He did not want to say anything that would wound the Secretary for Lands or the Premier, but just to speak his mind. As for the hon. member saying that if the Government started this institution it would take away his occupation, and that of the hon. member for Toowoomba, that was the veriest fudge.

The PREMIER: I honestly believe it.

Mr. MORGAN: If that were the case the hon. member's intelligence had sustained a severe drop in his estimation, as he did not know upon what he based his belief. He had not the least personal interest in the question, and if he wanted to make political capital out of it, why should he urge the Government to do a thing that, according to the Premier, would deprive him of his occupation? He thought the Secretary for Lands should make up his mind to take action in the matter. It was not a very serious thing to decide where this institution should be placed; that was a matter of no great consequence. They only wanted it in such a place that the instructor, and the experts in connection with the department, instead of saying "Do as we say" could go on the land and say "Do as we do." They should be able to impart to others the knowledge they themselves possessed, and they were not in a position to do that now. Under existing conditions neither the agricul-

turists nor the people generally were receiving anything like an adequate return for the money spent in the maintenance of the Agricultural Department. It was in the power of the political head of that department to make it a real live institution of practical use to the industry whose interests it was called into existence to watch. It was their duty to make that change, and holding that view, he would never hesitate about emphasising it. He might be accused of nursing a grievance against the Government, and of trying to popularise himself with the farmers, but there were very few farmers in his electorate. He was simply trying to convert the Secretary for Lands to his view upon a question of great importance to an industry of the first importance to the colony. The hon. gentleman had the power to help that industry, and he asked him to use that power.

Mr. DAWSON said the hon. member for Warwick had hardly put the case fairly. The Secretary for Lands had introduced a Bill dealing with the establishment of schools of agriculture, on similar lines to the Bill dealing with schools of mines, which was now on the statute-book. The Secretary for Mines had received the unanimous support of mining members, whilst farming members had assumed a very hostile attitude to the Bill introduced by the Secretary for Lands. There was a very wide difference of opinion among farming members. It was pointed out at the time that it would be much better if members representing agricultural constituencies first of all agreed upon what they wanted before introducing a Bill. He believed it was possible that if the Secretary for Lands introduced a similar Bill this session, it would meet with a better fate than the Bill of last session. Farming members seemed to be more of a happy family this session, and the Farmers' Union might assist the Secretary for Lands. He was quite satisfied that if the mining members had treated the Bill dealing with the establishment of schools of mines in the same way that the farming members had treated the Bill for the establishment of schools of agriculture, it would not have been placed on the statute-book. The farming members had themselves largely to blame.

Mr. SMYTH said that there was this difference between the two industries: that those interested in the schools of mines had to put their hands into their pockets, whereas in the case of schools of agriculture they had not to do so.

Mr. JACKSON was rather surprised at the hon. member for Warwick refusing to give the Government any credit for a desire to found experimental farms or agricultural colleges. He believed the Government were now more sincere on the subject than they were twelve months before, because they were getting near a general election, and were therefore more likely to do something in the matter. Although he represented principally a mining constituency, he took a great interest in agriculture, as did most hon. members on that side. Some time ago the Agricultural Department had been described as a fossilised museum, and to-night the hon. member for Logan had expressed the belief that it ought to be expanded into a separate department, with a separate Minister and staff of officers. He agreed with the hon. member; but, considering the amount of money at their disposal, the department had done good work. A good deal of the money put down for the department was not expended on agricultural purposes. The whole expense of the department only came to about £11,000. The reports of the various officers were a credit to the department, and they formed the most interesting reports published by any of the departments. The experiments in wheat-growing were particularly interesting. The Instructor in Agriculture, in speaking of the

experiments made in the Central district, spoke of the fact that the experiments had proved the capability of hundreds of thousands of acres of grazing country for wheat-growing, which might find profitable employment for young Queensland. He pointed out that there was no servile labour employed in the industry, and alluded to the fact that Queensland imported four-fifths of the wheat she consumed. He also had a very fine passage upon the establishment of schools of agriculture. Then Mr. Mahon, in his report, spoke of the necessity for the inspection of dairy cattle in order to preserve the health of the community. That gentleman did not seem to be aware that under the law at present in operation he had power to inspect cattle and to order those afflicted with such diseases as cancer and tuberculosis to be destroyed. He had directed attention to the necessity of inspecting cattle during the debate on the Financial Statement, and he hoped something would be done before the session closed. At any rate Mr. Mahon ought to have that Act pointed out to him so that he might take action himself.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said the Inspector of Stock came under the Colonial Secretary's Department; but he would make inquiries into the matter.

The PREMIER said he had a Bill ready to provide for the inspection of meat and produce intended for export.

Mr. STEVENS asked whether the Government proposed to assist in the International Exhibition proposed to be held on the National Association's ground, by a grant of money or a guarantee of any kind?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said that nothing had come before him on the subject.

Mr. RAWLINGS considered the vote of £300 every year for the Government Domain was a great waste of money. It was a valuable property which they could put a drive round and which might be opened to the public, and it was used only to feed two or three cows and horses and for an occasional review.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS thought the £300 covered the care of the gardens around Government House as well.

Mr. RAWLINGS said it would be well if the Governor's residence was shifted, and the present Government House could be turned into a museum and art gallery.

Mr. OGDEN asked what was the nature of the request of the Brisbane Municipal Council for assistance for the reserves around Brisbane?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS did not remember any such request.

Mr. McMASTER: They never made any such request.

Mr. OGDEN: They are reported to have done so.

Mr. MURRAY asked how the vote of £200 for the destruction of noxious weeds was expended? The spread of noxious weeds and especially of the prickly pear was, next to the rabbits, the greatest pest they were threatened with. His experience of prickly pear was that it would take about £100 an acre to eradicate it. He thought the subject should receive more attention than it did, and he would like to know if the local authorities had taken any action in the matter?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said that money was disbursed through the local authorities.

Mr. BOLES would like to know what came under the term "noxious weeds." The spread of the lantana, or berry bush, in the coast districts was becoming so great a nuisance that in a short time Parliament would be called upon to deal with it. Birds and cattle assisted to spread it, and in the Central division there were

acres of the best land covered with it. From £12 to £15 a year had to be spent to keep it cleared off one reserve of 150 acres.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said that divisional boards had power to declare any plant to be a noxious weed. There used to be thickets of lantana around Brisbane that a horse could not get through.

Mr. BOLES said that one municipality had brought the matter under the notice of the Government, and asked them to declare the lantana a noxious weed, but the Government had declined to do so.

Mr. BELL said the matter was one which should be dealt with in an amendment of the Land Bill, and he might possibly undertake to deal with it. It was of very great importance to the Lands Department, as there was a very large area of Crown lands being daily depreciated in value by the increasing prevalence of the prickly pear, which he knew only two ways of exterminating. One way was to let out the land on a clearance lease, and the other was to put the unemployed to work to clear it off. If the department was aware of the spread of the prickly pear, it had neglected its duty in adopting no means to grapple with it.

Mr. RAWLINGS understood that some time ago a promise had been made that a drive would be put round the domain. Was there any intention to open the domain for public purposes?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said the matter had been considered. A deputation had come to see him upon the subject, but he was not aware that anything definite had been determined upon.

The PREMIER: There is a proposal to make a drive around it.

Mr. RAWLINGS: Is that going to be done?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: It is not settled yet.

Mr. HAMILTON said they had been told that the £300 was spent on the gardens around Government House, but the domain was the vacant land around those gardens, and as there was some doubt on the subject he would like to know whether the domain was open to the public.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: So far as he knew it was a kind of paddock to Government House. He was not aware that it was a public resort in any sense of the word, but it was used by the military as a review ground.

Mr. GLASSEY asked whether there was any intention on the part of the Government to dispose of that land with the view of buying certain land occupied by a distinguished person in this colony for the purpose of building a new Government House?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS replied that he had never heard anything about such a proposal.

Mr. HAMILTON thought it was a pity that Government House Domain should not be devoted to the use of the public, as he was perfectly certain that they would highly appreciate the privilege of using the ground.

Mr. JACKSON said his idea was that the walk facing the river in the Botanic Gardens should be carried right round Government House Domain, and that it should be available for the use of the public at night. If it was lit up in the same way as Musgrave Park in South Brisbane, no harm would result from it being open to the public.

Mr. BOLES asked whether municipal councils as well as divisional boards had the power to make by-laws in reference to noxious weeds?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: No.

Mr. MORGAN asked whether the item of £750 was paid over to the National Association

or held against the interest and redemption due on account of the advance made to the association?

The PREMIER replied that the amount was paid by the association to the Acclimatisation Society in the way of rent. Not a shilling of interest or principal had ever been paid by the association on the £30,000 they had borrowed from the Government.

Mr. MORGAN would like to know whether the hon. gentleman proposed to take any action in regard to that heavy debt owing by the association? If the Government stood idly by and allowed that default to go on, and the interest and redemption to accumulate, a very bad example would be set by the metropolis to other debtors to the Government, upon whom their responsibilities did not appear to sit so lightly.

Mr. CHATAWAY: Let them off.

Mr. MORGAN: He would sooner see the frontages of the property sold to realise the amount of the debt than let them off, if they did not stand up to their responsibilities. The matter was certainly one that required the attention of the Government, not so much on account of the amount involved, as to guard against an extremely bad example.

The PREMIER quite agreed with the hon. member, but the difficulty was to know what to do. He could take possession, of course, but what would that involve? It would not do for the Treasurer to become showman and manage the whole business, and it would not be a profitable transaction to foreclose and sell at the present time. He really did not know how to deal with the matter. It was a mistake lending the money in the first instance. He certainly thought that an association calling themselves a National Association, and being connected with the capital, would show more spirit than to allow the debt to go on.

Mr. FISHER asked why the Government did not put down the vote to the Acclimatisation Society instead of to the National Association?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS: Because it would not be correct. It is not a grant to the Acclimatisation Society.

Mr. FISHER thought that the Treasurer was entitled to receive the money and hold it, seeing that the association was indebted to the Government.

The PREMIER: This loan was not given in the ordinary way of loans to local authorities, but was granted under special Act of Parliament.

Mr. FISHER thought that even so, they might have held the money. The hon. gentleman would not pay over money to a corporation that was indebted to the Government.

Mr. DUNSFORD said there was a reduction in the salaries of four clerks from £500 to £460, or at the rate of £10 each, and the messenger's salary had been reduced from £46 to £39. Such reductions did not seem altogether right in view of the fact that many of the better-paid officers in the department had received increases.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said the persons receiving the salaries were not the same. The messenger had been promoted to be a clerk, and there had been a general move-up.

Mr. MORGAN hoped the Premier would see that the insurance premium on the building on the National Association's ground was kept up as some measure of protection to the Treasury.

The PREMIER: I believe it is.

Question put and passed.

#### STATE NURSERIES.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS moved that £1,150 be granted for State nurseries. The increase of £150 was caused by the increased demand for cane.

Mr. GLASSEY said there was a good deal of dissatisfaction with regard to the vote; it seemed to be believed that the return did not justify the expenditure, and that there was a great deal of unnecessary expense. If that opinion was a wrong one, a brief statement by the hon. gentleman could easily dispel it.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS replied that all the information on the subject was contained in the report of the Department of Agriculture, and he could not say any more than was stated there.

Mr. OGDEN said that if both the State nurseries were conducted like the one he had visited there was very little to grumble about. He had not seen better work anywhere.

Question put and passed.

#### BOTANIC GARDENS.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS moved that £2,134 be granted for the Botanic Gardens. The amount was the same that was voted last year.

Mr. FISHER would repeat what he had urged in a previous session with regard to the utilisation of the curator as a public lecturer. He had received letters from various parts of the colony on the subject. He was aware that Mr. MacMahon, who was a most efficient officer, delivered lectures in Brisbane, but there was no reason why his services in that direction should not be given to other parts of the colony.

Mr. SMYTH said he might inform his hon. colleague that Mr. MacMahon, with the consent of the Secretary for Lands, was to lecture at Gympie on Thursday night.

Mr. OGDEN objected to the State paying for the Botanic Gardens, while the municipality of Brisbane allowed the parks and reserves in their charge to go to rack and ruin.

Mr. FISHER said he was aware a week ago that Mr. MacMahon was to lecture at Gympie, but he was referring to the colony as a whole. While speaking on the subject, he thought that a residence for the curator ought to be erected in the gardens.

Mr. McMASTER wished to inform the hon. member for Townsville that every park and reserve under the control of the municipal council of Brisbane was kept in excellent repair.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said that lecturing was no part of Mr. MacMahon's duties—he had taken it up himself. One objection to the curator lecturing all over the colony was that during his long absences the gardens would suffer. He explained that last year on the vote. According to an old saying, a master's eyes would do more work than both his hands.

Mr. HAMILTON said one reduction had been made in that vote which had not been noted. One of the attractions of the gardens was the wild ducks, and he could state authoritatively that last year their rations had been reduced through motives of economy. As officials had had their 10 per cent. reductions restored, he hoped the ducks would receive similar consideration, and get their rations restored.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said he had given instructions that the ducks should be properly fed.

Mr. DUNSFORD said that vote did not represent the amount of money spent in the gardens. There were men employed there constantly who came under the department of the Colonial Secretary. He alluded to the so-called unemployed. He also protested against that amount being paid out of the consolidated revenue. He thought the local authorities of Brisbane should support their own reserve. Brisbane should have no privileges that other towns had not.

Mr. JACKSON said the Secretary for Lands had given no answer in reference to the curator's residence. He understood Mr. MacMahon offered to build a house out of a supply of granite which was available, and consideration should be given to the request. Mr. MacMahon also mentioned in his report that during the last flood he not only lost his house, but all his furniture and books, and that he had received no compensation. It seemed to him (Mr. Jackson) rather a hard case. He must bear testimony to Mr. MacMahon's ability as a lecturer. He was an able and popular man, and he (Mr. Jackson) had received testimony to the good he did by visiting the schools and lecturing.

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said the question of the erection of a curator's residence out of granite, the labour to be supplied by the unemployed, had been referred to the Works Department, who reported against it because they considered it would be very expensive. As Mr. MacMahon was a bachelor, there was no immediate urgency.

Mr. OGDEN asked what was the value of the rations supplied to the unemployed who worked in the gardens?

The SECRETARY FOR LANDS said that was in the Colonial Secretary's Department.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

The House adjourned at sixteen minutes past 11 o'clock.