

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 29 OCTOBER 1895**

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 29 OCTOBER, 1895.

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

QUESTIONS.

COLOURED LABOUR.

Mr. DRAKE asked the Premier—

1. Is it the intention of the Government to take any action (a) to restrict the employment of coloured labour in Queensland; or (b) to mitigate the evils resulting therefrom?

2. If so, what action?

The PREMIER (Hon. H. M. Nelson) replied—

It is the intention of the Government to administer the Acts dealing with this subject to the best of their ability.

The second part of the question requires no answer. Fresh regulations are in hand dealing with this subject, and will shortly be published and gazetted.

LATE DELIVERY OF MAILS.

Mr. DUNSFORD asked the Premier (for the Postmaster-General)—

1. Has his attention been called to the fact that the Australasian United Steam Navigation Company were twenty hours late in delivering the mail at Townsville last week?

2. In view of the fact of the repeated late delivery of mails by that company, is it his intention to determine the agreement between himself and the contracting company?

3. Is it the intention of the Government to take the necessary steps to prevent avoidable delay in the future?

The PREMIER replied—

1. Yes.
2. No.
3. Yes.

HUGHENDEN-WINTON 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 railway from Hughenden towards Winton.

Mr. ARCHER: Having laid the report of the select committee on this line on the table, hon. members might be surprised that I should get up now to oppose its construction; but I want most decidedly to deny certain statements which have been made in the Press and elsewhere as to the objection which Central members have to this line. The Central members have been accused of opposing the railway from Hughenden towards Winton simply because it is not an extension from Longreach towards Winton. We are not opposing this extension because it is not from Longreach towards Winton, but because it goes entirely in the wrong direction. I have not heard any Central member mention Longreach in this matter; and I do not know why the Press has suggested that we oppose this line because it is not an extension from Longreach, and not because we do not think it will be in the interests of the country at large. I go further, and say I object strongly to any railway being carried from Longreach to Winton. My idea is that the object of railway extension should be to open up new country, and not to run a railway through country that has already a certain amount of assistance from railways. We should as far as possible drive our railways into new territory, and give facilities to persons occupying it to better stock the country. My only objection to the Hughenden-Winton railway is that it is not one that will do the most good

for the money to be expended on its construction. I have not the slightest objection to what has been said over and over again, that the proposed line will pass through excellent country. No doubt it will pass through some of the finest country in Queensland. But I do say that it is a perfect absurdity to suppose that because a certain place will benefit by the extension of the railway, therefore the railway should be extended there, while other places which have not the benefit of such communication are entirely left out. My chief reason for saying that this railway is an utter mistake is that for the distance which it is to be carried—ultimately for 130 miles—it does not offer such benefit for the trade and the settlement of Queensland as it would if it was taken further west. The select committee on this line had before them, among others, the Commissioner for Railways, and he introduced a map which I dare say will be a surprise to the whole community, as it was to myself. That map shows lines of railway which I certainly never heard of before, and I doubt whether any member of this House, except perhaps the Secretary for Railways, was acquainted with them. It shows railways from Normanton down towards Cloncurry, from Cloncurry to Hughenden, from Hughenden to Winton, from Winton to Boulia, from Winton to Longreach, from Longreach to Windorah, and so on all over the country—a perfected scheme of railways which I suppose is accepted as the working plan of the Government which is now in power.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Government never said so.

Mr. ARCHER: At any rate it was introduced by the Commissioner, and it completely overturns all previously conceived ideas as to where our railways should be extended, and before anything like that is adopted it should be submitted to the country and seriously considered for some time to come. There is hardly anything on that map which coincides with the ideas we formerly entertained about the extension of our railways. There is a great deal that is new. As members have the map to refer to they will see the extraordinary number of criss-cross and crooked lines that are involved in the scheme. The construction of those lines of railways would be an entire mistake, and as this is the first time we have had the scheme before us, I certainly think we ought to consider before we take any steps in the construction of the first section of the scheme. The country ought to be initiated into the scheme which the Commissioner believes ought to be carried out. We have it in the Commissioner's evidence that he does not initiate railway proposals, but that he was requested to report upon them. I do not say that he may not, if he likes, suggest something, but he reported on this line at the request of the Government, and this map will be taken as the scheme which the Government intend to carry out.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I stated quite differently.

Mr. ARCHER: It may be, of course, that I am mistaken in that, but the map was introduced by the Commissioner, and he said this line was part of the system. The reason why I oppose the line from Hughenden to Winton is that it is not the line on which the money can be expended with the greatest good to the country—that, in fact, the money expended on it will be not so much for the good of Queensland as a whole as for the benefit of the parts locally affected by it; and that it will be extending the railway into places which are already sufficiently provided with railway communication. One reason why I suggested quite a different line is that we have

it in the Commissioner's evidence that sheep pay a great deal better than cattle. I asked the Commissioner—

“But still, even considering that you carry live stock from cattle-stations, with the immense trade of sheep-stations in carrying fencing wire, rations for the great number of hands employed, and the wool, everything else, sheep-stations would pay you better? A great deal better, but I am not sufficiently acquainted with the difference to tell you the amounts right off.”

That is to say that every time we replace cattle with sheep, by giving them railway communication, we not only benefit the people who hold that country, but we benefit the whole of the people of Queensland; and the very first point I take against this railway is that it will not perform that office at all. I do not deny that the railway would go through first-rate country, but it is country that is already occupied and stocked, and although the railway might have some influence on that country, and on the country to the west, in increasing the number of sheep carried, still it would not have nearly as much influence in that direction as a line carried more directly to the west. I shall prove from the evidence that such a line as I suggest, which would go further to the west, would pass through equally good sheep country—in fact, through sheep country as good as any in Queensland. I shall also prove from the evidence that about Winton artesian water cannot be obtained at anything like as reasonable a depth as along a line going west-south-west from Hughenden. Every mile along that route you will be cheapening the price at which artesian wells can be sunk. That is what a railway should be carried out for. It is not a question whether Winton, or any other particular small town, should have railway communication, but whether the railway will have the effect of altering the stocking of the country, and will the railway open up country that can be easily supplied with artesian water. Not only does the country derive a benefit from replacing cattle with sheep, but it finds employment for an enormous amount of labour. Not only is a greater amount of labour required to look after sheep, but there is the external fencing, and the dividing of the land into paddocks, which give employment to labour, to say nothing of that which is required for making all the other improvements on a sheep station; and then there is the shearing and the haulage. So that a sheep station employs at least fifty times as much labour as a cattle station of the same area. What labour does a cattle station employ? Sometimes only three or four white men and a few blacks. I insist that the Winton Railway will have no effect in this direction. But the greatest boon that a railway that is carried out in a proper manner can confer upon the country is preparing the way for grazing-farm settlement. Of course grazing farming is not what might be called close settlement, but it is close settlement in comparison with anything now existing in the Western country, and it is the first attempt to get what will ultimately result in closer settlement. One of the prime objects we should have in view, seeing that we are opening up such large areas to grazing-farm selection, is to consider whether a railway should not be carried out in a direction where grazing farming is likely to prove a success. I intend to prove from the evidence that a railway carried west-south-west from Hughenden would meet all these purposes better than the line from Hughenden to Winton. Of course, in what I am going to say, I have no wish to decry the country between Hughenden and Winton. I have seen a good deal of the Western country, and although I have not seen this particular country, from what I have heard of it from people who have been there, I have no

doubt that there is as good sheep country there as any to be found in the West. But the question is not only whether it is good sheep country, but whether it is also adapted for grazing farming. The probability is that from Hughenden to Winton the country is not adapted for grazing farming. Artesian water is an absolute necessity for grazing farming, if it is to be at all successful. Some hon. members may not have seen the effects of one of our droughts, but the great majority of hon. members have done so. I shall not attempt to draw a picture of the misery inflicted upon the country by one of these periodical droughts, but I have known a time when not one-tenth of the sheep on a large run, which in ordinary times would be considered well watered, have been gathered up after one of these dreadful droughts. I therefore insist that artesian water is an absolute necessity, and unless it is easily and cheaply procurable, the man who takes up a grazing farm may after years of prosperity find himself utterly ruined by one of these fearful droughts. I shall show from the evidence that along the line which I suggest artesian water is easily procurable. I shall refer to Mr. Jopp's evidence on page 17. Hon. members who have maps in their hands can imagine a line drawn from Hughenden west-south-west towards Boulia, and to the south of the watersheds of the Flinders and Diamantina. Here is the account given of the country by Mr. Jopp, who surveyed the country—

"Did the country give you the impression that it would be stocked by sheep if there were conveniences for carriage, or were there other reasons which prevented it being stocked with sheep? The cost of carriage prevented its being stocked with sheep when I was there.

"Was carriage exceedingly high? Yes; very high.

"Do you believe that if the railway was carried out to the west of that, from Hughenden, that it would go through a large quantity of good sheep country? If it was taken south of the dividing range it would pass through good sheep country."

In fact, the whole of Mr. Jopp's evidence goes to show that the country west-south-west of Hughenden goes through magnificent sheep lands, and another witness, Mr. Nutting, bears out his evidence on that point. On page 23 he is asked—

"By the Chairman: If the line were taken west-south-west, *vid* Kynuna, would it pass through a large amount of good sheep country? Yes; really good sheep country. There are sheep on Marathon, and Eulolo is good sheep country.

"By Mr. Philp: Is Nelia Ponds good sheep country? I think it has some sheep on it now. I have passed through it, but do not know it intimately. There is very fair sheep country about there. Marathon, Eulolo, Hamilton Downs, Maxwellton, and Eddington are tip-top sheep country. . . .

"At the same time, if the line were built in any direction from Hughenden it would conduce to closer settlement? Yes; there is a tremendous lot of good country, but it is better to the south than to the north."

Everyone who was examined as to the character of the country says that to the west-south-west no better country is to be found in Queensland. That is one great point, but it is by no means the whole point. We must look to see what evidence we have with regard to the probability of obtaining artesian water, and if we turn to the evidence of Mr. Maitland, on page 42, we shall see he was asked—

"By the Chairman: Can you, in connection with sinking artesian wells, arrive at something approaching a correct judgment as to the depth at which water is to be found in different districts of the colony? There is no evidence of the actual depth. You can go within certain limits.

"What is the deepest well in Queensland? The Winton. I think it is 4,010 feet deep.

"By Mr. Dickson: Is that true artesian water? Yes; it rises over the surface.

"By the Chairman: From the fact of it being so deep there you cannot reason what it will be 100 miles away? We can say that if a well is put down between Winton and the outcrop it will be more shallow, but we cannot say what the depth will be.

"Where is the outcrop in Western Queensland? A little to the west of Warena.

"What is the depth of the wells there? They vary from 60 feet to 777 feet."

We go then to the country west that would be brought into contact with the railway, which I insist ought to go west-south-west from Hughenden. We find a great many artesian wells already there. Tarbrax has one 1,800 feet deep, which gives 2,000,000 gallons per day. Mr. Maitland is asked—

"Then there is a probability that down along the line to west-south-west from Hughenden artesian water will be easily found? It will undoubtedly be found from Hughenden west to the western margin of the basin.

"Is that certain? Yes.

"Would you recommend a man to put down a bore without hesitation? Yes, anywhere within the limits of the basin."

And then he is asked as to the depth at which artesian water can be obtained.

"By Mr. Dickson: And south-west from Hughenden? The same remarks apply to south-west because the boundary runs practically in a south-westerly direction.

"There is every hope of finding water? Yes.

"By Mr. Murray: At what depth? That would depend upon the distance from the outcrop.

"By the Chairman: Cannot you judge, from the depth of the Winton and other bores, what would be the probable depth? We can reasonably expect water between 477 feet and 4,000 feet. Beyond that we cannot give any certain information.

"In a region like this it is probable the wells will not require to be very deep? Certainly not. If they are near the margin of the basin they will not require to be so deep."

He goes on to say how far the Western basin extends, and says that a good supply of artesian water would probably be struck at less than 1,000 feet. He is asked likewise by Mr. Phillips:

"Would you advise squatters along that line?"—that is, along the line west-south-west—"to put down their bores along the top of the divide," and he says: "I know of no geological reason why they should not." It is an absolute necessity, if grazing farms are to be successful, if they are to be able to get through a season of drought, that there should be an abundant supply of water which is independent of rain, and the only means of getting such a supply is by boring for artesian water. Here we have Mr. Jack's evidence that the artesian basin is inexhaustible; and we have the evidence of Mr. Maitland that as we go west from Hughenden the wells become shallower and shallower until in places they are only 150 feet deep, and in one case only 60 feet deep. It is said that if the Hughenden railway is extended towards Winton a large number of grazing farms will be taken up; but I would ask what grazing farmer is able to spend on a bore even one-half the amount expended on the Winton bore, which is 4,000 feet deep, and cost over £8,000? The probability is that any one boring for water near the route of the proposed line would have to go to about the same depth as the Winton bore, and I say, therefore, that the district is utterly unfitted to become thickly settled with grazing farmers. Of course the select committee took a great deal more evidence than I have read, and the report of the majority recommends the adoption of the plans, sections, and book of reference of this line. To that I certainly could not agree. Of course, if I had not known of a better route, I would have recommended this one, but I think there is an infinitely better one in another direction, and the evidence I have read will go largely to prove that I am right. The report which I brought

up, which was rejected by the majority, was to the following effect :—

“The evidence given your committee shows that the proposed line from Hughenden towards Winton will not, for its length, offer the greatest facilities for stocking what are now cattle stations with sheep, which, in the opinion of the Commissioner, is of the utmost importance.”

I wish to call attention to this fact. If the line is completed as far as Winton, 130 miles of construction will only carry the railway 72 miles further westward; but if a railway is made west-south-west from Hughenden in the direction recommended by the minority report, it would be carried 125 miles out to the west, and would bring another 125 miles within the region of railway communication. It would enable the settlers there to get rid of their cattle and put on sheep, and would result not only in largely increasing the railway traffic, but also in providing a great deal more employment. I therefore say most decidedly that the railway from Hughenden towards Winton is not one which will result in the benefit of the colony as a whole; and while I do not say that it will not have any effect at all on outlying stations, it cannot have the same effect as a west-south-west line would have in replacing cattle with sheep. There was some objection raised against the west-south-west line in view of the construction of a Gulf line. The Gulf line is not yet begun; but of course it will be built in time, and I ask what harm can a railway that will stock the country with sheep, and cause the settlement of hundreds of grazing farms, do to the Normanton line when it comes to be built? Instead of doing it harm, it will do an immense deal of good, and will greatly increase the traffic that will go by it. No doubt there are many other lines that will be built in time, and perhaps many members present will live to see the day when a man living in the south-western corner of Queensland will be able, without going to sea at all, to visit Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville, and Normanton; but before that time has come we should do what we can to improve the country, and we should spend our money in constructing railways to places that have no railway communication at present, so that we may completely alter the character of the stocking of the country to increase the traffic upon our lines. I can see no reason at all for the railway from Hughenden to Winton except that it will, of course, do an immense deal of good to Winton. We have it in evidence that the Commissioner is an adviser but never an originator, in spite of our having a commissioner outside the power of the Government. We give him a handsome salary as an officer outside political influence, but despite that he is only an adviser, and does nothing in the way of taking lines out of the hands of the Government and suggesting where, in the interests of the country, they should be built. I expect it will be very many years before we can look forward to the realisation of that, and leave such questions to a man who shall have studied what the railways of the country should do. From the evidence I have already referred to, hon. members will agree with me that, if this railway was to be built simply in the interests of Queensland as a whole, it would not go down to Winton at all. But it is not a railway for the benefit of the country. I am not going to expatiate upon the causes for this diversion of the Northern line, but I do say that a railway which only goes to the West 72 miles, in a length of 130 miles, is not a railway to carry to the West as rapidly as possible the benefits that railways should confer upon the country. This railway, therefore, is not one which the House should approve of. Of course there are members interested in this railway,

and there are reasons why many will vote for it, not because it is the best possible railway, but because it is the one which suits them best. I cannot help that, but this I do say, that putting aside all personal reasons for building the railway, and looking at it as a national undertaking, upon which the money ought to be expended for the benefit of the country alone, I insist that a railway run west-south-west from Hughenden into the country described by Mr. Jopp and others as some of the best pastoral country in Queensland, would return far better interest, and settle more people on the Western country, and do far more to improve it in every way than will this railway, if it is carried out. Therefore, I am perfectly justified in calling the attention of the House to it, and in saying that so far as in my power lies I will do all I can to prevent the construction of this line. I regret that for physical reasons I am unable to put the matter as fully before hon. members as I could wish, but I hope that others will take the trouble to give their views upon it, and, at all events, it will not be allowed to go simply as a matter of form, and without anyone taking the trouble to examine into the question as to whether this railway should go to Winton or not.

Mr. MURRAY: I regret that more interest is not taken in this question. I expected that the Secretary for Railways would have replied to the hon. member for Rockhampton.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: He could not. He has spoken.

Mr. MURRAY: I was a member of the committee appointed to inquire into and report upon this proposed extension, and I desire to say a few words in justification of the position I took up on that committee. I regret to say that the committee was very much and very unequally divided on the question. Five of its members signed a majority report favourable to the proposal of the Government, and only Mr. Archer and myself signed the minority report as holding views adverse to the construction of this line. My objection to the construction of this line is this: First of all, that it will come into direct competition with an existing line—the Central line at Longreach—and I look upon it as a waste of money to construct two lines where one would be sufficient to do the work. We have it in evidence from those most competent to form an opinion that the Northern line, if extended to Winton, will come into direct competition with the Central line, and we have the evidence of Mr. Gray, a late Railway Commissioner, and Mr. Thallon, the Traffic Manager, confirming that view. If hon. members will look at the map they will find that if the railway were extended in a west-south-west direction to Boulia, and if the Central line were extended in the same direction to Birdsville, the whole of the back country would be placed within reasonable railway communication, and we would avoid the construction of the loop-line due south from Hughenden to Winton, which the circumstances of the country at present do not warrant. I hold that with the Central line distant from the Northern line only 200 miles, and the residents in that area distant, therefore, only 100 miles from railway communication, they may be said to have reasonable railway communication at present. If the Northern line were extended in the direction I suggest, we have it on evidence that it would pass 80 miles to the north of Winton. This would put Winton and the whole of that district within 80 miles of railway communication on the North, and within 110 miles of the Central line, and I hold that any unbiassed person who will look at the map, and who knows the features of the country, will come to the conclusion that that would be the best direction to take the line in the general interests of the

country. I has been said that Winton is a centre of population, but I hold that if the line were extended in the direction I suggest a centre of population would spring up there, and possibly all along the railway. No matter what direction a railway goes centres of population naturally spring up along the line, and I cannot, therefore, see any justification for the Northern Railway being deviated from its course in order to reach Winton. I do not think that Winton is of sufficient importance to warrant a railway being brought down there; I look upon it as a mere wayside village. There are many other places with a public-house and a blacksmith's shop, and probably a store, of equal importance to Winton. I could name a dozen such places, and if a railway were extended to them it would pay equally as well and be more conducive to settlement than this proposed line.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What places do you refer to?

Mr. MURRAY: To such places as Blackall, Tambo, Isisford, Jundah, Windorah, and Aramac.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: All on the Central line.

Mr. MURRAY: Blackall is further from railway communication—that is, from Jericho—now than Winton would be if this line were extended in the direction I suggest. I hold that we are not in such a position that we can afford to construct branch lines of railway. When the Secretary for Railways was giving evidence before the committee, one of the first questions he was asked was whether he looked upon this extension as a branch line or a main line; and he replied that he was not in a position to say. Ultimately he concluded that it was a branch line.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: No, a main line.

Mr. MURRAY: The hon. member for Carpentaria questioned him on the subject, and putting words into his mouth, the hon. gentleman then came to the conclusion that the extension was a continuation of the main line. In reply to a question by Mr. Dickson the hon. gentleman stated that his reason for running the line from Hughenden to Winton was to avoid coming into contact with a possible line from Normanton to Cloncurry.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: One reason.

Mr. MURRAY: I think the primary reason. There is only a vague possibility of a line being constructed from Normanton to Cloncurry, and down towards Hughenden, and yet the Secretary for Railways thinks it desirable to deviate the Northern line from Hughenden to Winton for fear it might come into contact with an imaginary line, ignoring altogether the fact that it will come into competition with an existing line. I shall briefly draw attention to some of the evidence given before the committee, which will justify the minority report. I will waive that of the first witness, Mr. Lynett, as I do not think there is anything in it bearing on the question. I would inform the House that when the committee met there was hanging on the wall of the room a map compiled under the Meat and Dairy Produce Encouragement Act. The Surveyor-General, Mr. McDowall, was asked to give evidence with regard to that map. First of all he was asked—

“What districts does this map on the wall represent chiefly? That map was originally drawn to indicate the Northern, Central, and Southern financial districts. Then the meat and dairy districts were put on to it. They are shown by the brown lines.

“Have you any idea for what purpose those meat and dairy districts were formed? I suppose to encourage the exportation of meat and dairy produce.

“They would be districts conveniently located for the export of cattle or dead meat from the principal sea-

ports of those districts? I suppose so, but I had nothing to do with the drawing of the boundaries of the districts except giving a description.”

Then he was asked to particularise—

“Can you give the committee any idea what proportion of what is known as the Central meat and dairy district is nearer to Townsville than to Rockhampton? About two-thirds.

“Then two-thirds of what is known as the Central meat and dairy district is actually nearer to Townsville than to Rockhampton? Yes.”

Further on I asked him—

“Was not the object in defining the meat and dairy districts to define them according to the nearest port for each? Yes.

“Then, according to your statement, two-thirds of the Central meat and dairy district ought to be in the Northern district? Yes.

“Have you any calculation as to how much of the Southern district would be nearer to Rockhampton than to Brisbane? I find I have not made any such calculation; but you can see by the map that a very considerable part of the Southern meat and dairy district is nearer to Rockhampton than to Brisbane.

“I am sorry you did not extend your calculations to the Southern district.

“Witness: To tell you the truth, I did not think the Hughenden to Winton railway influence would reach so far South.”

I only allude to this because the hon. member for Carpentaria is considered an authority on surveying and engineering, and his opinions have considerable weight with the House. That hon. member is a member of the Meat and Dairy Board, and as such had a great deal to do with the compilation of that map. His great object in compiling that map was to give to each port the particular portion of the colony belonging naturally to that port; but, having drawn those lines with that object in view, we still find that two-thirds of the Central district is nearer Townsville than Rockhampton.

Mr. PHILLIPS: It is very hard to rectify an old blunder.

Mr. MURRAY: I only allude to this to show that the hon. member cannot be depended upon. If he had been acting on the Meat and Dairy Board in an impartial manner, he would have attempted to allot to each port that portion of the colony which belongs to it. He would have cut out more than half the Southern district and put it into the Rockhampton district; but his great and only object seems to have been to cut out the Central district. So much for the hon. member's surveying; and with regard to his engineering, I can only say that he has engineered the Carpentaria district altogether outside the provisions of the Meat and Dairy Produce Encouragement Act.

The SPEAKER: Order! I think the hon. member is going far away from the question when he discusses the Meat and Dairy Produce Encouragement Act.

Mr. MURRAY: I should not have mentioned the matter only that I thought it necessary to show that what the hon. member says has to be taken with a grain of salt. I shall now briefly refer to what Mr. Jopp says. He has been all over the country, and knows it well.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He has never been more than 25 miles north of the proposed line to Winton.

Mr. MURRAY: He says that a line west-south-west from Hughenden would pass through country equally as good as the line from Hughenden to Winton. On page 19, Mr. Dickson asked Mr. Jopp—

“Do I understand you to say that, supposing the line were extended to Winton, there would be great difficulties in extending it further westward? It would be a very difficult line to extend west from Winton. It could not be very well extended west from Winton; you would have to go down the Diamantina.”

This evidence is of some importance, inasmuch as it is the intention of the Railway Commissioner,

as shown on this map, to make the Northern and Central lines junction at Winton, and then run in a due westerly direction. From the evidence of Mr. Jopp, it appears there would be some engineering difficulties in the way of carrying out that proposal. On page 20, Mr. Jackson asked—

"I understood you to say that the extension from Hughenden towards Dagworth and Kynuna was preferable to the extension towards Winton. In answer to Mr. Morehead you have said that the country towards Winton is particularly good sheep country, and I would therefore like to know what your reasons are for preferring the extension towards Dagworth and Kynuna? That is the best route only if it is intended to take the railway on to tap the good sheep country about Boulia. If it is only intended to take it to Winton, I should think the extension towards Winton was the best line to construct at present."

The next witness examined was the Secretary for Railways. A great deal has been said about the importance of running a railway into sheep country in preference to cattle country, but I attach very little importance to that, because any change in the relative value of cattle and sheep will convert sheep country into cattle country or *vice versa* at any moment; so that the object to be kept in view in constructing railways should be not to open up sheep or cattle country, but to open up good country. On page 22, the Secretary for Railways was asked by myself—

"This proposed extension is to the 65-mile peg. Is it the intention of the Government to complete the line to Winton? Yes.

"What is the distance from Winton to Longreach? About 120 miles.

"You have already stated that you consider owners of properties would be well served if the railway came within a reasonable distance of them—say, 100 to 150 miles? Yes.

"When the line is completed to Winton, and there will be only some 60 miles between each point—Winton and Longreach—do you not think, as Secretary for Railways, that it will bring the Northern line into direct competition with the Central line? Not materially.

"To some extent? I only know of one station—Vindex—20 miles south of Winton, that would be affected. The trade from that station would go back again to Winton. Before the Central line was extended to Longreach, that station sent its produce to Hughenden.

"Looking at the interests of North Queensland as a whole, do you not think they would be better served by the extension of the line from Hughenden to Hamilton Downs? I think not. That part of the country would be better served by a line from Cloncurry.

Would it not be more central at Hamilton Downs? I hope to see a large amount of grazing farm settlement on the whole of this route. On looking up statistics I find that within 50 miles of Longreach there are over 1,000,000 acres taken up as grazing farms, producing £8,000 a year rent; and when the line is extended to Winton I look for the same result.

"Would not the same result be attained by taking the line to Kynuna? I think not. At Winton you have the Western railway, Wokingham Creek, and Mills Creek; at Kynuna you are on the heads of the Diamantina waters."

On the same page, Mr. Dickson asked the hon. gentleman—

"Your object at present is to avoid competition with the line already sanctioned by Parliament to Cloncurry? Yes."

It is a most extraordinary thing that the hon. gentleman should stand in such fear of coming into conflict with a railway that may or may not be built some day, but which certainly has no existence at present, while he is not afraid of coming into direct competition with a railway line already existing. That is what I object to. Mr. Nutting's evidence simply goes to confirm the evidence given by Mr. Surveyor Jopp with reference to the character of the country west-south-west from Hughenden. I must, however,

draw attention to this portion of his evidence, which will be found on page 24. Mr. Morehead asked him—

"Supposing the railway was your own property, would you extend it to Winton? Yes, certainly."

Further down I asked him—

"You were asked just now whether, if the Northern line were your own property, and you wanted to extend it, you would extend it from Hughenden to Winton, and you replied in the affirmative? Yes.

"Supposing both the Central and Northern lines belonged to you, what extension would you make then—from Hughenden to Winton? That is a large order. You have been asking me questions as to the extension of the railway from Hughenden, and I have shown how the country I know would be affected by such an extension. I have not looked at the matter from any other point of view.

"You replied to the question put by Mr. Morehead without taking into consideration the existence of the Central Railway? Yes.

"You are aware that there is a railway from Rockhampton to Longreach? Yes; I have often been on it.

"Recognising the fact that the Central line terminates at Longreach, would you recommend the extension of the Northern line from Hughenden to Winton? I would answer that question in this way: At the present moment you can get goods to Winton from the Northern line as cheaply as you can get goods to Longreach.

"That is not an answer to my question? I would like to answer it if I could; but I do not think I can give any other answer.

"By the Chairman: If you were the owner of both the Central and Northern lines, where would you make an extension? I would go out West, and have a jolly good think about it."

Now I would invite the attention of hon. gentlemen to page 26, where Mr. Thallon, the Traffic Manager, was examined—

"I ask you, as Traffic Manager, suppose the line was extended from Hughenden to Winton, would that have any effect on the traffic of the Central railway? Yes.

"What effect would it have? It would draw traffic to Hughenden which now goes to Longreach.

"By Mr. Philp: Did the extension of the line to Longreach draw traffic which at one time went to Hughenden? Yes; I believe it did.

"By Mr. Morehead: Then it would restore the traffic? Yes.

"By Mr. Murray: From Winton to Longreach is a distance of 120 miles? The distance reported to me is 110 miles."

Further down Mr. Philp asks him—

"Do you know to what extent the building of the Western line would affect the Central line? No; it would depend upon the seasons.

"By Mr. Murray: We have three trunk lines of railway; in what direction do you think these lines ought to run generally to afford the greatest benefit to the country? The making of railways is purely a political matter."

I draw the particular attention of hon. gentlemen to that last answer. He is further questioned by me as follows:—

"Rome was not built in a day, and Queensland will not be a network of railways for many years to come. In the present condition of the colony do you think these people are fairly well provided for? Yes, comparatively.

"By Mr. Dickson: Supposing the railway were extended to Winton, and an additional amount of traffic were carried over the line in consequence, would that additional amount of traffic be largely occasioned by tapping the Central traffic? I could not say. From wherever it went the railway station at Winton would get traffic that now goes to Longreach."

That is very important evidence. On page 27 I asked him—

"Supposing the Northern railway is extended to Winton, how much traffic directly to the south of Winton do you expect to get for that line? There is a very large traffic south of Winton. If you look at the map south of Winton you will see that between the 23rd and 24th parallels of latitude and 143 and 144 degrees of longitude there is a very large number of sheep compared with other squares round Winton.

"Does the trade from that country go to Winton or Longreach? Most of it goes to Longreach.

"That district immediately to the south of Winton is already supplied with railway communication to Longreach? Yes."

I would draw attention to this fact: That the railway line to Winton cannot possibly be expected to secure any traffic south of that place. At all events not more than 50 miles south. Between those two lines the traffic would be divided between Winton and Longreach, and viewing it in that light I do not think we are warranted in running the line to Winton. The evidence of Mr. Okeden, the Commissioner of Police, will be found on page 28. Mr. Phillips asks him—

“You were out in this district lately? At the close of last year.

“You were there as special magistrate for what was known as the ‘disturbed district.’ What did you regard as the centre of that district? Winton. I had to consider from which point my operations could best be carried on, and I decided upon Winton.

“Do you think that to assist in the pacification of that district, it would be advisable to extend railway communication to it? Of course it would be of assistance in such exceptional times as we had last year.”

I only draw attention to those questions to show the straits that the hon. member for Carpentaria was put to in order to justify the line to Winton. Now we come to Mr. Mathieson’s evidence—

“By the Chairman: As a general preliminary question, I would like to ask you, Mr. Mathieson, what are your powers and duties as Commissioner? The powers and duties of the Commissioner are to work the railways. I do not originate construction of new lines, but, on getting the instructions from the Government, supervise the construction and carry out the works in accordance with the Act.

“And your reports? All new lines originate with the Minister for Railways.

“And you simply give a report on those lines before being laid before Parliament? Simply give a report. In making my report on any line, I have to get my instructions before I do so, but the initiation of all new lines is with the Minister for Railways as far as the Commissioner is concerned.”

I have always supposed that the initiation of new lines was in a great measure out of the hands of the Minister for Railways, but we find that, as far as initiation is concerned, there is a likelihood, if indeed there is not direct evidence on the point, that there is as much logrolling now in that respect as there ever was, although I always supposed the Commissioner was appointed to prevent that very thing. If it is otherwise, then I believe if a motion was brought forward to affirm the re-engagement of the Commissioner at £3,000 a year the House would not agree to it. I will leave that aspect of the question, and draw hon. gentlemen’s attention to page 33, where I ask Mr. Mathieson—

“Do not you consider that if the Northern line were extended in the direction of Kynuna that the district about Winton would then be within reasonable distance of railway communication? It would be within about 100 miles.

“(To Mr. McDowall): Suppose the line ran from Hughenden to Kynuna, what would be the distance of the nearest point on that line from Winton? About 80 miles.”

Then Mr. Mathieson is again asked—

“Do not you think, taking the present circumstances of the colony into consideration, that Winton, being placed within 80 miles of the line to Kynuna, and within 110 miles of the line to Longreach, is remarkably well provided with railway communication? No, I could not say that. Winton is a centre, and it has a population of 700 people. Besides, if you are going to carry out an extension of the Western lines, we should endeavour to run them upon a basis that will be of mutual advantage not only to the Northern but to the Central district.

“Although Winton is a centre, I presume that if the line is extended to Kynuna or any other such place, a centre would spring up there? Yes; but they have it at Winton now.

“The new centre would be of equal importance? It would be.”

Further on I ask him—

“You have said that if the line is extended from Hughenden there will be a considerable development of the traffic? Yes.

“If it was extended 130 miles to Cloncurry, it would have an equally good effect? It would if the country was of a similar description.

“And if the line was extended from Longreach in a south-westerly direction, it would have a similar effect? Yes.

“Or from Jericho to Blackall? I believe it would.”

On the following day Mr. Mathieson was examined as follows:—

“You produce the map referred to in your evidence yesterday? I stated yesterday that I would produce a map this morning showing the Central and Northern lines connected near Winton, and thence running westward as one line to Boulia. I produce the map in question.”

I may remark that in my opinion those lines have been drawn on the map for the sole purpose of justifying the extension of the line from Hughenden to Winton, because, strange to say, they all meet at Winton. On page 39 Mr. Mathieson gave this evidence—

“Can that scheme shown upon that map be made to fit in with the extension from Hughenden to Winton, or *vice versa*? The fact is we had these lines shown on a map in connection with the land-grant system. We have had it in our minds that the Central people should have communication with Winton if the Northern people had it. I must say we have endeavoured to work that plan in to fit the Winton survey.

“The idea of meeting at Winton in a measure justifies the extension from Hughenden to Winton? I do not say that at all. I do not think there is anything in that.

“The whole system is being brought to Winton to justify this extension? It is simply brought to Winton because that is a fair point to start west from. It is not too far south. It was considered a good place for the land-grant lines to meet. A mere matter of 10 or 20 miles is not of any consequence.”

I would like to direct attention to this. The Railway Commissioner expresses considerable desire to benefit the people of the Central district by connecting that district generally with the Central line by extending it 110 miles from Longreach to Winton, and then due west. But that district would then be 170 miles nearer Townsville than Rockhampton, so that virtually no possible traffic would come from the West to Rockhampton. Then Mr. Mathieson gave the following evidence in reply to questions which I put to him:—

“As Winton is 170 miles nearer to Townsville than to Rockhampton, will not produce, once it reaches Winton, go on of necessity to Townsville rather than to Rockhampton *via* Longreach? The Winton people will have nothing to do with that. The produce will be consigned to a certain port from the start, and the selection of the port will depend upon the advantages offered by shippers in Townsville and Rockhampton. Rockhampton may be able to offer advantages quite equal to those offered by Townsville, and the difference in railway freight will only be about 11s. per ton. The fact is that the wool rates, like the coal rates, when you get to a certain distance rise only a fraction per ton per mile, and wool may be carried an additional 100 miles for a difference in freight of only 8s. 4d. per ton.

“I assume, and I think you must back me up in it, that if the lines are connected at Winton, and then run westward, on one line, the whole of the Western traffic will necessarily go into Townsville? Take the ordinary stores and rations, they have hitherto gone from Townsville, and I do not suppose the making of the railway will make any material difference in that respect; but you will do the Central district and Rockhampton a great injustice if you do not give them a chance to compete for the Western traffic.

“I do not see how they can compete when the Northern line will have an advantage of 170 miles? Well, I have already referred to the rates.

“My contention is that a line extended from Hughenden to Winton and then due west will drain all the country to the west of Longreach. Is that not so? I do not think that at all. I say that the making of the connection is simply to give Longreach a chance of getting the traffic, and the difference in the rates for wool and live stock is infinitesimal.”

Hon. members will see for themselves that there would be 235 miles of railway construction running almost due south from Hughenden to Longreach, and it would be very much more in

the interests of the country to split that, giving the Northern line 117 miles and the Central line 117 miles, because those lines would cover 200 miles of country, and the maximum distance from railway communication there would be 200 miles. The only thing I have to refer to now is the evidence of the Assistant Government Geologist, which goes to prove that if the line was run west-south-west from Hughenden direct to Boulia artesian water could be got at a less depth than towards Winton. Something has been said about the suitability of the country between Hughenden and Winton for grazing-farm selection, and we have it in evidence that there is no more natural water along that route than along the west-south-west route. Moreover, the expense incurred in procuring artesian water along the former route is to my mind altogether beyond the reach of the grazing farmer. I hope hon. members, in considering this question, will view it from a totally disinterested point of view, as I am endeavouring to do. It is not, to my mind, a question between North or Central or South Queensland at all; it is a question in which the interests of the whole colony are involved, and I think hon. members would not be warranted in supporting the proposal of the Government to construct a line from Hughenden to Winton for the reasons I have given, and in the face of the evidence I have quoted. I am convinced that the most conclusive and the most forcible arguments are in favour of the minority report, that it is not in the best interests of the country that the line should be run from Hughenden to Winton and from Winton to Longreach, but that it would be much better, as I have suggested, to split the difference and add 117 miles to each line. There is this plan which is brought forward here to show the desirability, it is said, of connecting all the railway systems in this way—

Mr. GLASSEY: Is it the real plan or is it only a sham plan?

Mr. FISHER: Does the Minister acknowledge it?

Mr. MURRAY: I would ask hon. members to judge this matter from their own standpoint, without referring to the Secretary for Railways. Looking at the map it will be found that a line running almost direct from Hughenden to Boulia in a south-west direction, and a line running direct from Longreach to Birdsville in the same direction, would avoid the necessity for the connection between Windorah and Charleville, and the connection between Longreach and Winton and Winton and Hughenden, and while we would save the whole of that railway construction, I contend that the interests of the country would then be more benefited than by the construction of the lines connecting the places I have mentioned. Then look at the absurdity of this: The Northern and Central lines starting from Townsville and Rockhampton, about 400 miles apart, are to join 350 miles inland from the point of departure. I ask hon. members if that is not absurd when they look at the country and see how much of the West is left without railway communication? Moreover, no consideration is shown for the people living south of Normanton and west of Hughenden and Longreach. They are to go without railway communication altogether in order that this line may be made from Hughenden down to Longreach. I hold that the people south of Normanton, and about Cloncurry and west of Hughenden and Longreach, should have railway communication, and it would be much better if these lines were extended in a west-south-west direction than to have a line running down almost due south from Hughenden to Charleville. I only hope that hon. members will take a disinterested view of this question and if possible avoid the construc-

tion of two lines where one would do the work. That is really the question before us at present. The country this line is supposed to benefit is already within reasonable and easy railway communication, and we can have no complaint on that score, and if, instead of joining these lines, we take both further west, it will be for the benefit of the country.

Mr. McDONALD: This line is started in the district I represent, and as one of those interested it is only right that I should say a word or two about it. I want it to be distinctly understood that the people of Hughenden recognise that some day the railway will go beyond that place towards Winton or west, and they are only desirous that the route taken for the extension shall be that which will most benefit themselves and the colony generally. Whichever way it goes the district about Hughenden will benefit, as the reports of the Agricultural Department show that in the near future there will be a big agricultural district there, and that within easy reach of the town itself there will be a very large number of grazing farms. That in itself will make Hughenden a very prosperous place, and whether the line goes west or towards Winton it will get an outlet for its products. Concerning this report from the select committee, I would like to say that it justifies the contention urged when the committee was asked for. There is not the slightest doubt that the Government saw that the committee was so appointed that it would bring up a report in a certain way, and I suppose that was correct from their standpoint. We have the report in exactly the form the Government required it before the railway was referred to the committee. The most startling thing in connection with the report is that the committee asked no questions as to the advantage of taking the line due west. We have it on the authority of the Secretary for Railways that the line to Winton will pay, and the Railway Commissioner thinks it will pay interest on the cost of construction and working expenses. The Secretary for Railways says it will pay from the jump, but he makes some very peculiar statements in his evidence. First of all, he asserts that if the line was taken due west from Hughenden instead of south-west it would pass through cattle stations; and he further stated that the only station of any importance there was Manfred Downs.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: On the north of the river, I said.

Mr. McDONALD: That is so; but the hon. gentleman must have forgotten that when he mentioned stations on the south of the river. He only mentions Tarbrax and Nelia Ponds, and as a matter of fact, within about 20 miles of Hughenden, there is Telemon, and then there is Marathon and as far as Clonnagh; and even from Manfred Downs the wool goes in to Hughenden. There are actually eleven sheep stations—namely, Telemon, Marathon, Cambridge Downs, Maxwellton, Cassillis, Toorak, Eulolo, Manfred, Bunda Bunda, and as far as Clonnagh. The map which has been supplied to hon. members by the Railway Department shows that, if this line were taken due west towards Cloncurry for the same distance as it is now proposed to go towards Winton, it would serve a large number of sheep and cattle stations. The extension to Winton will serve about 30,000 square miles of country, while a due west line would serve about 60,000 square miles. A little of that country, as you get into the Cloncurry district, may not be fitted for sheep, but the greater portion of it is good sheep country. I have had a fair experience of that country, having been over it during a time of drought when there was not a blade of grass to be seen, and in time of flood it is one of the

most beautiful seasons you could wish for; and I say that all that country, even if you go from Winton across to the Diamantina on to Dagworth and Kynuna, thence across to McKinlay, and from McKinlay to Eddington, is as good sheep country as you will find in any part of Australia. The 30,000 square miles of country which this extension would tap contains 1,720,000 sheep and 139,000 cattle, while the 60,000 square miles, which a line due west for the same distance would tap, contains only 1,250,000 sheep, but it also contains 512,000 cattle. There is a difference, roughly speaking, of 450,000 sheep in favour of the Winton route; and taking their value at 5s. per head, which is a fair value, the money difference would be £112,000. In favour of the due west route there is a difference of 350,000 cattle, and, taking them at £1 per head, we have a money difference of £350,000.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: You are talking nonsense.

Mr. McDONALD: Are cattle not worth £1 per head?

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: I doubt it.

Mr. McDONALD: Well, that is near enough for all practical purposes. I am informed that a short time ago a mob of cattle were refused by the meat works at Townsville at somewhere about 22s. per head, although they were a respectable class of cattle as regards condition, so that in valuing cattle at £1 per head I am fixing the price at a reasonable limit. Taking that value, the difference in the wealth of the two districts is about £238,000, and that is in favour of the due west route for the railway. According to the map there are about fifty-two bores in that district, while in the district which will be served by the proposed Winton extension there are only twelve. It is well known that in the Winton district boring for water is expensive on account of the enormous depth to which they have to go. The average depth of the artesian wells in that district is about 2,000 feet, while in the other district of which I am speaking it is not more than 900 or 1,000 feet. I maintain, therefore, that there would be a better prospect of close settlement if the railway were extended due west than there is on this extension to Winton, because all that country is practically useless unless you can obtain artesian water. From Hughenden to Winton there is no permanent water, or very little, and if the line is taken there those who take up grazing homesteads will not be in a position to work them successfully on account of the depth to which they will have to bore. The evidence of some of the witnesses examined by the select committee is hardly worth considering. There is the hon. member for Gregory. He is an interested party, and I do not think we can place much reliance on his evidence. The hon. member for North Rockhampton is also an interested party.

The PREMIER: The same thing would apply to yourself.

Mr. McDONALD: It does not apply to me, because I believe that a railway must be constructed from Hughenden. If I was advocating that the line should remain at Hughenden, then the hon. gentleman's remarks would apply to me.

The PREMIER: You are member for Flinders, not for Hughenden.

Mr. McDONALD: Just so; but I shall be here after the next election, in spite of all the money the hon. gentleman has spent there. There is also the evidence of Mr. Lynett, a store-keeper in Winton, who is therefore practically interested. Then the hon. member for Townsville, the Secretary for Railways, is also an interested party, as Townsville wants this railway; so that we have very little evidence that is of any real value. We have had a map sub-

mitted to us this afternoon which shows a national system of railways proposed by the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No.

Mr. McDONALD: Whose scheme is it then?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The author of the map is the Chief Engineer.

Mr. McDONALD: You will find a great deal more than these lines proposed by the Chief Engineer on that map.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The map was put in at the request of the chairman of the committee.

Mr. McDONALD: Why was not the other map submitted to the House?

The PREMIER: The chairman did not ask for it to be submitted.

Mr. McDONALD: I have one of those maps here, and I would like to give hon. members some idea of the various railway systems we are likely to have in vogue. When the question was put to the Railway Commissioner he said that he has nothing to do with proposing new railways; that he has merely to get out plans as directed by the Secretary for Railways for the time being. When the present Premier was Secretary for Railways in 1890 he submitted a long list of railways, which were at first unspecified, but which were afterwards submitted to the House by order, which the hon. gentleman stated the other night was not an official document. It seems strange that in 1890 there should have been submitted a long list of railways, the mileage of which, including those for which permanent surveys and parliamentary plans had been and were being prepared, amounted to 503½ miles, and the total cost of which was estimated at £2,377,958. After the hon. gentleman was had Sir T. McIlwraith as Secretary for Railways.

The SPEAKER: Order! I really fail to see what this has to do with the question before the House. The hon. member cannot go into the railway policy of this or past Ministries.

Mr. McDONALD: I submit that at the end of this report is an appendix, which contains a large number of these lines to which I am referring.

The SPEAKER: I would remind the hon. member that we are not discussing the report of the select committee. The hon. member is justified in quoting from the report either in favour of or against the motion now before the House, but we are not discussing the report.

Mr. McDONALD: This is a matter of such importance that I would like to have your ruling upon it, because I had intended to say something upon it. In the appendix to this report we have a long list of railways mentioned, with a total mileage of 4,418 miles. This scheme of railway construction has practically been submitted to us to show us that the line now under discussion is going to be one link in the connection of the whole railway system of Queensland. It is for that reason that I submit that I am perfectly in order in referring to these lines, because, practically, the whole system is brought before us in connection with this one proposal. Fortunately, I was able to get a copy of the other map that was submitted to the committee, and in a rough manner I have marked the proposed lines upon it. First of all, there are the lines proposed to be constructed under the land-grant system—

The SPEAKER: Order. I really think the hon. member is going beyond the question now before the House. He must confine himself to the question. He cannot go on discussing all the railway systems under cover of the motion now before the House.

Mr. McDONALD: I would like a definite ruling upon this matter. As the map was submitted to the committee, and is also contained

in Appendix B to the report, I would ask your ruling, Sir, as to whether we can discuss the lines mentioned in that appendix?

The SPEAKER: I do not think the hon. member can discuss those lines. As I said, we are not now discussing the report of the select committee. The hon. member can quote from the evidence taken before the select committee in favour of or against the railway now before the House, or on the question "That I do now leave the chair," but he cannot discuss other lines.

Mr. McDONALD: I submit, Mr. Speaker, that you have not yet given a definite ruling. You merely say you think I cannot discuss these other lines.

The SPEAKER: I will give the hon. member a definite ruling—that is that he cannot refer to those lines.

Mr. McDONALD: I am very sorry to have to take the course I am going to take, and that is, move that your ruling be disagreed with. I am very sorry, but I shall have to do it.

The PREMIER: We are going into committee after this.

Mr. McDONALD: The same rule will apply in committee.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. McDONALD: If I am given to understand that we can discuss it in detail in committee, I am prepared not to take the course I mentioned, and to finish at once. On the map there is a district marked in green, showing the country that would be benefited by the Hughenden-Winton line, but I see no reason for it to be marked at all, because the whole of the trade of that district goes to Townsville. Again we have been told that the line will afterwards be extended from Winton to Boulia. That will be simply a waste of public money, because it has been admitted by nearly everybody who has given evidence that sooner or later we shall have to construct a line from Normanton to Boulia to tap all that country, and when this line goes along there it will be practically useless. This line, therefore, is purely an experiment, and the House should take serious notice of that fact. If this line is constructed, then the system as shown in the maps before us must be carried out, or the line will remain a branch line. If the proposed system is not to be carried out, then there is no necessity for constructing this line, but instead of it a line should be carried in the direction of Kynuna. If that were done, equally good—if not better—country would be opened up, and it would not come into competition with any other line. It would also open up country better suited for agricultural settlement. Again, on the line from Hughenden to Winton there is very little water to be obtained.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: More than on the other.

Mr. McDONALD: I do not think the hon. gentleman knows what he is talking about. The route I suggest for adoption runs down along the Flinders, where there is always permanent water. No one can name me a place where by taking out a few spadeful of sand you cannot obtain water, but you cannot do that on the line from Hughenden to Winton. I maintain, therefore, that the line should go due west from Hughenden, and that faith should be kept with the people in that district who were promised railway communication along the Flinders years ago. I hope the Government will see their way to carry out that promise, and not indulge in a system of repudiation. Now that they have started to repudiate, I would remind them that there are one or two other matters coming on for consideration, and I hope hon gentlemen opposite will not then talk so much about repudiation after the example

they have set. The line down the river will undoubtedly do more for close settlement than this line, and therefore I shall oppose the proposal now before the House.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: As a member of the committee appointed to inquire into this matter, I have only a few words to say. I assume, in the first instance, that the gentlemen selected to sit on the committee were supposed to be men of fair intelligence, and men who had the confidence of this House. I do not think it can be said that those gentlemen neglected their duty, or that they did not call all the evidence that was wanted. They arrived at a certain decision—a decision that I, as one of the majority, thoroughly agree with. It seems to be an admitted fact that we should have communication with Winton, and the question relegated to us was from what starting point that communication should be made. The committee have brought up their report, and I think that the decision they arrived at was a wise one. I do not think any member of the committee had any purpose of his own to serve. What axe had I to grind? If I had any axe to grind, it would be in connection with Rockhampton, where I have a branch of my firm. All we had to do was to get the best evidence procurable; we did that, we have recommended the line to the House, and I believe the recommendation is one that should be accepted. Let anyone look at the evidence; I do not want to read it.

Mr. MURRAY: Quote the evidence in support of the line; I cannot see any.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: The hon. gentleman cannot see anything except through his own spectacles. The evidence shows clearly that it is desirable that the line should go in the direction proposed. I am sorry that the daughter of the horse leach can get nothing more out of this proposal.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Who is that?

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: Rockhampton.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about Brisbane?

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: I do not care what you call Brisbane, but I wish to point out that, whatever mistakes have been made in the past, I do not think we should perpetuate them. I do not see why the natural ports should be ignored, and as I believe the natural port in this case is Townsville, then to Townsville should the trade go. I do not believe that any member of this committee was actuated by any improper motive, although I must admit that, in looking over the division list, it looks as if Rockhampton had a hankering after ports, notwithstanding distances.

Mr. MURRAY: Rockhampton was never mentioned.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: I am quite able to deal with the hon. gentleman as he was very properly dealt with in the committee. The hon. gentleman was there as a special pleader and I was there as a pleader of no port.

Mr. CALLAN: For the Brisbane merchants.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: If I were a pleader for the Brisbane merchants my plea would have been for Rockhampton, because I have a branch of my business there and get a great deal of wool from that port. Brisbane gets no trade as far as I know from Townsville, and very little from Rockhampton. I believe the majority of the select committee went there to advocate the best course for the railway to be taken, while those opposed to the Government proposal may have had an axe to grind.

Mr. HARDING: Did not any of the others have an axe to grind?

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: I am not saying that any of them had; I am only saying

that they may have had. I went there with a perfectly unbiased mind. It was nothing to me what direction the line took, and I leave it to hon. members, after considering the evidence, to say whether the majority of the committee did not arrive at a correct decision.

Mr. MURRAY: Quote the evidence.

The HON. B. D. MOREHEAD: Quote it yourself.

The HON. G. THORN: I am one of those who was opposed to the consideration of these plans being relegated to a select committee, and I have no hesitation in saying that the line ought to be built, because it will pay 10 per cent. on the cost of construction after paying working expenses. The hon. member for Flinders opposed this line because he naturally wants the line in his own district to run along the heads of the Flinders, but I say it should not go along the Flinders waters. There are two or three valuable pastoral properties there—fairly good sheep properties—but how long will they remain sheep properties? I do not wish to say a word in disparagement of that country, but I remember the time when the Fitzroy and the Dawson, Mount Hutton and Juandah, were all magnificent sheep country—and what is it now? I know one or two of the best pastoral properties in Southern Queensland from which the wool is sent to Rockhampton. Landsdowne, which is close to Charleville, sends all its wool to Rockhampton, and Brisbane does not complain.

Mr. HARDING: They always did.

The HON. G. THORN: If hon. members will look at the map they will find that the line from Rockhampton is 120 or 130 miles west of Charleville; yet the Southern members never said a word when this line was going west to take their trade. They never dreamed that the Central people would advocate separation so strongly, and be so selfish; they believed that Queensland would consist of one homogeneous whole—one grand colony. The produce shipped from Rockhampton, more especially the wool, is equal to the amount shipped from Brisbane and from Townsville. Then why should the Central people want to filch country from others? They should not be so greedy. I think the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Curtis, should turn over a new leaf and go in for a little fair play, and let the whole colony be dealt with justly. A good deal has been said about the grazing farmers; but there are not many *bonâ fide* grazing farmers; and the few there are will be swept away by the first drought. Some hon. members know nothing about the droughts we have had in the colony; and there is no reason why we should not get just as severe droughts again. Then these grazing farmers with their 20,000 acres will be swept away, and the district will become one huge squattage. I am glad the hon. member for Normanby has at last woke up to the fact that the Commissioner for Railways is mortal like the rest of us; that he must obey the behests of the Secretary for Railways or the Premier for the time being. That has always been the case, and I was astonished therefore to hear the hon. member speak of the Commissioner as he did. The people of Rockhampton and the surrounding districts deserve credit for sending to the House wide-awake men well able to look after their interests, and it would be well for the people of the city of Brisbane if their representatives in the past had been as well—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is entirely digressing from the subject before the House.

The HON. G. THORN: I was merely referring to the people of Rockhampton always sending

good men to look after their interests, and I trust that Brisbane will also send able men to look after her railway interests.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must not go on in that way when I have called him to order for doing so.

The HON. G. THORN: I am very sorry if I have given offence. I was not aware that I did so. I am very pleased that Rockhampton is so well able to look after her own interests, and the Central members must not think that I am inimical to the interests of Rockhampton. There would be no railways, except for a short distance outside of Rockhampton, but for myself, but the Rockhampton people must remember that other people have eyes as well as themselves. They have already taken away some of the Southern districts in the Warrego, and they want to take another slice out of it by going down to Blackall. I hope they will be generous and allow this little bit of fair play to be given to the Northern part of the colony. This is only an extension "towards" Winton, and we do not know that the line will not be taken due west from the terminus of this section. I hope the House will do justice to the claims of Townsville in this matter. With regard to the evidence, I will not protract the debate by going into it. I knew what it would be when I saw the constitution of the committee. I was too old a bird not to know that. I am anxious that the debate should finish, and that these people should at once get their railway line to connect them with Townsville.

Mr. CURTIS: As one of the members representing the Central division, I rise to speak in opposition to this motion. I must say I was rather surprised that no member of the Government thought it worth while to say anything in reply to the speech delivered by the senior member for Rockhampton.

The PREMIER: We want to get into committee, that is all.

Mr. CURTIS: I understand that the Secretary for Railways was debarred from speaking again, but some other member of the Government might have deemed it worth his while to say something in reply to the hon. gentleman, bearing in mind the number of years he has been a member of the House; and I think he has been treated in this matter with but scant courtesy. For myself, and I think I can speak for other Central members on this side, we were very much surprised indeed to find that the Government brought forward a proposal to construct a railway line from Hughenden to Winton, because we were led to believe by our colleagues in the representation of the Central division on the other side that there was no cause for apprehension on the subject; that we need not bother our heads about it, as the Government did not intend to bring forward any proposal of the kind. We were accordingly lulled into a false state of security; and if those members, or any of them, had a pledge from the Premier or the Government on the subject that no such proposal would be brought forward this session, then there has been a distinct breach of faith. As to whether there was any intimation of the kind is a matter best known to themselves, and to the Premier, but I repeat that the Central members on this side of the House were led to understand that there was no cause for alarm, that their fears were not well-founded, and that, at all events during this session, no such proposal would be brought forward. Now, with regard to the report, the hon. member for Balonne said, "Let hon. members read the evidence." I am not a lawyer, and I have not had a legal training, but I am a business man of considerable experience, and I have read that evidence very carefully indeed,

and I say that from it the majority report is not justified, and the minority report is. When the Government insisted upon an alteration in the constitution of the committee proposed, and I saw what the alteration was, the verdict was a foregone conclusion to my mind. I protested against it at the time, and I am glad that I did so. I pointed out that it was distinctly unfair to the Central division, which was equally interested with the North, that they should have only two members on the committee, while the North was accorded three members. It was only natural to suppose that those three Northern members, believing that it would be conducive to the interests of the North to have that line constructed, would vote for the proposed extension, or, at any rate, that they should have a distinct bias in its favour, and it was equally natural that the two Central members should vote against it, believing that it would damage the interests of the Central division. I do not wish to impute motives in the matter, but I would point out that there are considerations involved in this proposal which seem to have been lost sight of. What would be thought if the Central division asked for an extension of the Central Railway from, say, Alpha, or the nearest point on the Central line, to Adavale in the Southern division, which is 120 miles nearer to Rockhampton than it is to Brisbane? Some members appear to have lost sight of this fact: That if the principle is established of one division of the colony extending its railways into any other division, either North or South, they must inevitably expect that the Central line will some day take away a large amount of the trade that comes to Brisbane. In the first instance I was astonished to hear that the Government proposed to build such a line, because it is in distinct contradiction to every principle they have enunciated with regard to trunk lines, and I declare that the proposition to bring down that Northern line into the Central division is a gross breach of faith with the Central people, as I shall be able to prove before I sit down. The Surveyor-General, Mr. McDowall, vouches in his evidence that the extension from Hughenden could be carried west-south-west about 120 miles before coming under the influence of a future Northern line from the Gulf, and that that line would go 60 or 70 miles north of Winton, and about the same distance from Richmond. That is a very strong argument in favour of the alternative line west-south-west from Hughenden running to Kynuna, because, as other witnesses showed, that country is equal to any other sheep country in the colony. At present it is under cattle, but the extension of the railway there would bring about a very large amount of settlement, and would develop more country than the extension to Winton, as the latter extension will serve country that is already settled with sheep. If the line were extended west-south-west it would lead to sheep displacing cattle in a large area of country, which would be a very great advantage, not only to that part of the country, but to the colony as a whole. Mr. Perse was asked by the chairman—

“Then it is reasonable to suppose that if they had railway communication within a fair distance cattle would dispossess sheep in that country? Not in all of it. But in the northern part of it, at places like Warena, if there was railway communication within an easy distance, sheep would certainly take the place of cattle. The country there is really good; but in the south-west corner it is not good country.”

Later on he was asked—

“What would you consider a fair distance from railway communication to induce people to change cattle for sheep—how many miles of carriage would you look upon as a thing that would not prevent people from utilising it as sheep country? I have had very little experience in sheep, in fact, almost none. I cannot

quite tell you that, because I really do not know what are the opinions of sheep men on the subject, but I should say about 250 or 300 miles.”

Then we come to the evidence of Mr. Jopp, who says that an extension west-south-west would be better than the proposed line, and that it would pass through very good country which is now without railway communication. Mr. Dickson asked him—

“Do I understand you to say that, supposing the line were extended to Winton, there would be great difficulties in extending it further westward? It would be a very difficult line to extend west from Winton; it could not be very well extended west from Winton; you would have to go down the Diamantina.”

That is a very strong argument against this extension from Hughenden. The Secretary for Railways in his evidence said that his object in proposing this extension was to prevent the proposed extension coming into competition with a possible line from the Gulf, and I assume that he is in favour of the suggested scheme for running a line from Winton to Boulia, although that place is 150 miles nearer to Normanton than to Townsville.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have no right to suppose that.

Mr. CURTIS: I find it here in this document as part of the system suggested by the Commissioner, and prepared by the Chief Engineer, so that it seems to have some official recognition; otherwise it would not be here. The hon. gentleman was asked—

“The question is whether the country which has already got railway convenience should have further railway convenience, or whether the more distant parts should have the convenience extended to them. You are aware that the distance is 400 miles from Hughenden to the western border, and that this line of 130 miles would only advance 60 miles to the West? I contend that Boulia and the West can be better served from Normanton than from Hughenden.”

If that is the case it is most extraordinary that any scheme should be suggested for the extension of the railway from Winton to Boulia. This does not fit in very well with the proposed new national scheme, seeing that Boulia is 150 miles nearer Normanton than it is to Townsville.

The Hon. G. THORN: I think the hon. member is out of order, Mr. Speaker, in talking about a line from Winton to Boulia.

Mr. CURTIS: It has a distinct bearing upon the question, because the Commissioner says that one of the reasons why he favours the extension from Hughenden to Winton is because it will fit in with this new national system; therefore I am perfectly in order in criticising it. If it will not fit in with this national scheme, that is one very strong argument against the proposed line from Hughenden to Winton. On page 22 the Secretary for Railways affirms that his object is to avoid competition with a line already sanctioned by Parliament to Cloncurry. That line is imaginary, and yet he is afraid of coming into competition with it, whilst he is not at all afraid of coming into competition with the Central line by extending the railway to Winton, and from there taking a combined line to Boulia. There is an apparent inconsistency in the evidence of the hon. gentleman. That this line must come into competition with the Central Railway is proved by the evidence. Mr. Gray, the Principal Under Secretary, affirmed that there would be a loss of revenue, and that it would bring the Northern line into competition with the Central Railway to a serious extent, and that it would mean a loss of revenue, because there would be less mileage on the Northern line. In addition to that there would be the interest to pay on the capital sunk in the line. The line is not going to benefit either the railway revenue or the general revenue, and it is to be built simply for

a few people in that district. On page 27, Mr. Thallon, the General Traffic Manager, admitted that the trade west of Winton, which now goes to Longreach, would be diverted from the Central Railway. On page 30, the Commissioner for Railways was asked—

“You do not suggest on that plan that a line should be carried south from Normanton? On that plan there is a line from Normanton down towards Hughenden, and above Cloncurry a branch strikes off and goes through Cloncurry on to Boulia, and it shows the extension from Hughenden to Boulia *via* Winton as well. The real reason for showing you that plan is that it shows a system of railways that could be adopted as a national undertaking.”

I do not wish to do the Commissioner an injustice, but, after carefully reading his evidence through more than once, I cannot help coming to the conclusion that his evidence was not that of an impartial and unbiased witness, but that he came there predisposed to say all that he could in favour of the proposed line to Winton, and to say as little as he could in favour of any alternative scheme. He professes his desire to protect the Central district. He is very anxious that it should have that connection lest it should lose some of its trade, while it is evident that, if his scheme is given effect to, it will divert the whole of the trade from the Western district to Townsville. The combined line from Winton to Boulia would be of no use to Rockhampton and the Central district, because the route to Townsville is so much shorter that all the trade would go there. I do not see why it should not, if Townsville is the nearer; but why does the Commissioner try to throw dust in the eyes of the people of the Central district? He seemed apprehensive that if the line were extended west from Hughenden we might have a line running common to both the Northern and the Gulf lines. Is not that the very thing that he proposes in reference to the Central line? What he seems to deprecate in the one case he advocates in the other. His whole evidence is one mass of inconsistencies. However, at last, on page 35 of the evidence, he does admit that the alternative line to the west-south-west to Kynuna would create a new centre. I would like to ask which is the better in the interests of the country as a whole—to expend money in building a line to a centre which is already established and to a country which is well stocked with sheep, and is within reasonable access of railway communication on both sides, or to expend money in extending railway communication to splendid sheep country which is at present stocked with cattle, and which would, according to the Commissioner's own evidence, be the means of creating a new centre and developing a large amount of settlement and trade? There can only be one answer to the question. Undoubtedly the money should be expended in taking the railway into country which has no railway facilities at present, and where the extension must result in the displacement of cattle in favour of sheep, thereby conferring a very great benefit not only upon that part of the country but upon the colony as a whole. Here is another thing that seems most extraordinary. He said one of his great objects was to connect the Central and Northern lines by means of this railway from Hughenden to Winton and Longreach to Winton. The chairman asked him why he could not do that by means of a direct line and save 30 miles of railway construction, and he said because it would leave out Winton, and it would necessitate two Western lines being built. Does it not seem an absurdity to say that because these two lines are connected by a straight line it would necessitate two lines instead of one? Could not a combined line be run from one point between the two?

Mr. DAWSON: Did he not show the difference in the cost? One would cost £1,000,000, and the other £200,000.

Mr. CURTIS: That is too absurd. I say that the combined line would not have necessitated two lines, because a combined line could be run from any point between Longreach and Hughenden. It seems that according to this new national scheme there are going to be two railways to Boulia—one from Winton, and the other from the Gulf. On page 31, Mr. Dickson put this question—

“If this line be extended to Winton, do you think there will be additional traffic procured to it beyond that which finds its way now to both the Northern and Central lines? No; but if cattle are displaced by sheep there we may reasonably expect to get the increased traffic from them. I do not, however, anticipate any great increase of traffic further than that which is now taken by drays, which I believe will pay the interest on the cost of constructing the line and working expenses.”

What benefit will it be to the railway revenue if we do not gain anything in traffic as a consequence of spending all this money? It seems to me inevitable that the line is to be built for the benefit of a few persons—a few representatives of a few syndicates and a few monopolist firms.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Who are they?

Mr. CURTIS: That is my opinion, and the House can take it for what it is worth. I have a duty to perform to those whom I represent; I think I have a somewhat accurate comprehension of the subject, and it is my duty to say what I think. If I did not do that, I have no right to be here. On page 33 the Commissioner admits that there are many places in the colony the residents of which have far more than 100 miles to travel to a railway, and yet he seems very unwilling to admit that the district about Winton would be within reasonable distance of railway communication if the railway was brought within 100 miles. It is shown that a line west-south-west from Hughenden to Kynuna would bring Winton within 80 miles, and Richmond would be about the same distance. Surely the money should be spent in opening up and developing new centres! On page 34 we have more evidence from the Commissioner, in answer to Mr. Murray—

“Assuming that it is not desirable to extend the trunk lines westerly? I think you said that? No, I said it is most desirable.

“To extend them due west? I did not say due west. I said that at one time the opinion was that they should be extended due west, but from the later information we have we are extending the Southern line south-west to Cunnamulla. From later information, also, it is not found desirable to extend the Central line due west, because it would take it through country that would not pay for the working, far less for interest on cost.”

That seems another absurdity, to speak of the Cunnamulla extension being brought about in consequence of the “later information” which might affect the ultimate route which the trunk lines might take. I understood that that was not an extension of the Southern trunk line, but a branch line towards the New South Wales border in order to protect the Queensland trade. On page 34 he says—

“But I have said that the connection between Longreach and Winton is to save the country spending, may be, a million of money in extending the Central line due West when the western country can be reached by the Central line joining up with the Northern line at Winton.”

Such a western extension as that would be a very doubtful advantage to the Central division. When asked by Mr. Jackson, “Your objection to carrying this line west-south-west is that it would ultimately clash with the line from Hughenden to Cloncurry,” he replied “Yes.” It is admitted that the trade of all the stations round Winton goes through Hughenden to Townsville. If that is so the Northern Railway

will not get a bale more wool than it gets now, except that which it might attract from the Central line by reason of the extension, and this would be a positive loss to the Central Railway revenue and a loss to the general revenue as well, because the mileage of the Northern line is shorter than the mileage of the Central line. On page 37 Mr. Corfield is asked by Mr. Philp, "Do you think it would pay to carry wool 250 miles to a railway station now?" and he says, "I think so." If that is the case, Winton is very well supplied with railway communication, because it is within 120 miles of Longreach and 130 miles of Hughenden. Mr. Corfield was asked by Mr. Murray, "If the railway were extended from Hughenden to Kynuna, would not Winton be within a reasonable distance of railway communication?" and notwithstanding what he said about it paying to carry wool 250 miles to a railway station, he said "No; such a line would not benefit Winton at all." Yet that line going in a west-south-west direction would only be 70 miles from Winton. Then we have this evidence from Mr. Mathieson, in reply to Mr. Murray—

"I assume, and I think you must back me up in it, that if the lines are connected at Winton, and then run westward, on one line, the whole of the Western traffic will necessarily go into Townsville? Take the ordinary stores and rations, they have hitherto gone from Townsville, and I do not suppose the making of the railway will make any material difference in that respect; but you will do the Central district and Rockhampton a great injustice if you do not give them a chance to compete for the Western traffic."

First of all, they make out that the line should be built because it will enable producers to save so much in the cost of transit; then they say that after all it would not make much difference—that the difference is so small that the traffic may go on to Rockhampton after all—while Townsville is so much nearer that it must necessarily go that way. The absurdity of testimony of that kind must be transparent. Again asked by Mr. Murray—

"What is the distance from Hughenden to Longreach *via* Winton? Two hundred and thirty-five miles.

"That means 235 miles of railway construction? Yes.

"Would it not be better, in the interests of the country, to split that between the two places, and give an extension of 117 miles west-south-west from Hughenden, and another of 117 miles west-south-west from Longreach? I do not think it would. It is too big a question to answer in that way, as all that I have been saying should be taken into consideration, and what you suggest would give the Central district no connection whatever with Boulia. Perhaps you would say what distance you think there should be between the two parallel lines you suggest."

It seems to me that the Commissioner was hard set to make out a case for his new national scheme, of which the line from Hughenden to Winton forms a part; but this won't wash at all. Then on page 41 we get this evidence from Mr. Stanley—

"Mr. Mathieson presented a map showing a general scheme of railway construction all over Queensland. Who is the author of that map? I am; but I would like to explain to the committee that I prepared it more by way of suggestion than as a matured scheme and with the object of drawing attention to the desirability, when carrying out railways in the various parts of the country, of keeping in view a general scheme of railway construction, so as to make, if possible, all those district railways integral parts of the general scheme."

As a fact, it was not a matured scheme at all, but an imaginary thing, a mere suggestion, and we are now asked to sanction this extension of the Northern line partly because it will fit in with an immature scheme that has not been approved of yet. I say that is a strong argument in favour of delay. Let us hasten slowly in this matter. I do not think it right that the House should go behind the backs of the people, as I maintain they will do by approving of this extension

and committing the country to the initial step of a proposed new system which will completely revolutionise all that has gone before. This proposal is a radical departure from the fundamental principles laid down over and over again by the leaders of both political parties in the past—the McIlwraith and the Griffith parties—that as these lines were extended they should go as nearly as possible due west, because if they came into competition with one another that would be a great evil. In a debate on 12th August, 1879, the then Premier, Mr. McIlwraith, said the policy he brought forward was virtually the same as that which he had advocated when in opposition, and which had been endorsed by the party then in opposition, one of whom had been Premier and the other Attorney-General, and he quoted their speeches to bear out what he said. On the 25th of the same month, while the Loan Estimates were going through, Mr. Morehead, who was then, as now, member for Balonne, said that no greater injury could be done the pastoral tenant than to put a railway through his run or near his run, at all events within 200 miles of it, and no intelligent pastoral tenant wanted to see a railway nearer than that.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: I say so still.

Mr. CURTIS: At that rate Winton must be very well supplied with railways.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: No, read the context.

Mr. CURTIS: Winton has two railways—one 130 miles away on one side, and one on the other side 120 miles away. The hon. member for Bulimba, Mr. Dickson, speaking on the same occasion, complained that the Loan Estimates as framed would not bear investigation if viewed in the light of the Financial Districts Bill, and Mr. McIlwraith, in reply to him, said it was strange that though the hon. member advocated the principle of financial separation, he never brought down his own Loan Estimates framed on that principle. I draw particular attention to the next passage, as it shows this proposal to be most unjustifiable, and entirely opposed to the principle of financial separation, affirmed and reaffirmed by the Parliament of Queensland, and by almost every Government that has held office in Queensland for the last quarter of a century. The Premier said—

"The principle of the Bill was that the colony should be divided into certain districts, and each district was to pay the interest on its own loan; but there was no principle in the proposal because one district wished to prosecute public works, every other district should be obliged to do the same. It might be a good thing to have a number of branch lines in the Southern districts; but according to the principle of financial separation, the Northern districts would say, 'You shall borrow money for the lines you want and pay interest on it, and when we want lines we will borrow money and pay the interest on it.'"

The principle was that each division should have its trunk line of railway, and branches thereto within its own boundaries, and that when the trunk lines were extended to the West they should be connected by a grand trunk line from the Gulf to the junction with the Southern Railway at Charleville. That was the principle enunciated by Sir Samuel Griffith, and afterwards by Sir Thomas McIlwraith. Speaking on this subject on the 12th of August, 1879, Sir Samuel Griffith said—

"I may be reminded that we ourselves admitted that the trunk lines already authorised should be extended with the ultimate design of connecting them by a trunk line proper running from south to north."

There is something comprehensive and reasonable about a proposition of that kind, and I contend that if our trunk lines are eventually connected by a line running down from the Gulf, and also by a line running up the coast, we shall be pretty well served with railway communication;

and, as far as trunk lines are concerned, we shall not have much to complain of for many years to come. On the 25th of August, 1881, the then Premier, Sir Thomas McIlwraith, said that the railway policy which found favour with the House was "the extension of the three main lines of railway from Brisbane, Rockhampton, and Townsville due west." A proposal was then made to extend the Southern line from Roma to Tambo, and the hon. gentleman said that no reason had been given for such a change in our policy except that the land west of Rockhampton was so rich that the town of Rockhampton could well spare an area of it to feed the railways down South. The Premier designated that as a "miserable reason," and I say that the reason for this deflection of the Northern line is also a miserable reason. On the 24th of August, 1881, Mr. Walsh, who was once a distinguished member of the House, speaking on the proposed extension of the railway from Charters Towers to Hughenden, said—

"At the present time the extension of the Rockhampton line due westward, and the extension of the Northern line due westward without a bend to the south, would be more desirable than the extension of Hughenden line in a south-western direction, because it would come into contact with the Rockhampton line, and that was not at all desirable."

Mr. Walsh took exception to the deflection to Hughenden, because he said it would be injurious to another line which was the property of the State, and surely it cannot be in the interest of the State to build one line of railway to damage another which is also their own property. Certainly no private individual or individuals would pursue such a policy. On the 16th of December, 1884, the then Minister for Works, speaking on the railway from Bowen to Haughton's Gap, said that when the money for that railway was borrowed it never was intended to build the railway, or if it was, whoever made the proposition was fit for Woogaroo, as it would have been to build another line of railway 150 miles to compete with another railway which was already in existence. It is plain from the evidence I have adduced that it has always been the settled and recognised policy of all Administrations to extend the three trunk lines in such a way that they would not come into competition with each other. If it is really intended to effect this radical change in the policy of railway construction, it should not be done by this House, seeing that the question has never been submitted to the constituencies for consideration or approval. The country should be given an opportunity of considering whether such a change in the recognised policy shall be made, and then, if it is approved of, the next Parliament could take the matter into consideration. When the Bill under which the construction of railways by means of land grants was being discussed in the other House, the Hon. T. Macdonald Paterson expressed his views upon this very question. That hon. gentleman is one of the few members of Parliament who has travelled over this colony, and he has an intimate knowledge of the colony and our railway system. [The hon. member then read the speech delivered by the Hon. T. Macdonald-Paterson, expressing the opinion, when speaking of the proposal to construct railways under the provisions of that Bill from Charleville to Cunnamulla and Thargomindah, and from both Longreach and Hughenden to Winton, that in pastoral country it would not pay to construct two lines through pastoral country within 150 miles of each other. It was most unstatesmanlike to construct two lines which would compete with one another, and he was ashamed that the Government had proposed such an absurdity. He concluded by saying that the trunk lines

should be extended to the West, irrespective of the claims of Winton or Windorah, and then they might pause for five or ten years to see what was the effect of those lines to the South Australian border. Then would be the time to talk of joining the trunk lines by north and south lines.] I think I have succeeded in showing that the recognised principle that has been affirmed over and over again is that it is extremely undesirable in the interests of the whole colony that these trunk lines should be brought into competition with one another. I say that the Central people have a right to demand that nothing shall be done in a matter of such great importance to them until the constituencies have had an opportunity of considering the matter. Surely there is no reason why there should be such great hurry! There will be an election in the course of a few months, and surely it can be allowed to stand over until then. It will be argued, and it has been argued, that the conditions have changed owing to the discovery of an artesian water supply, and other matters. If they have changed, they may change again, and that is another reason in favour of hastening slowly, because we may in the course of a few years be committed to a grave blunder, and we may have to retrace our steps. Another argument against the construction of this line is that the money can be spent to much greater advantage elsewhere, and that I affirm most positively. I say by carrying out the line authorised in 1884, the surveys for which were made running from Hughenden to Richmond, or by adopting the alternative route west-south-west from Hughenden to Kynuna, the money could be spent with much greater advantage; and as pointed out by the hon. member for Flinders, water is found in more abundance and at much shallower depths in that direction than in the direction of Winton. My attention has been called to a letter appearing in the *Hughenden Observer*, dated 5th instant; it is signed by a gentleman who has no direct interest in this question, Mr. Lumley Hill, who at one time was a member of this House. He writes to the *Hughenden Observer* a long letter on the rival routes. [The hon. member here quoted the letter in question, which opposed the construction of the proposed line, as it was not likely to prove the most profitable, most conducive to closer settlement or the production of an increase in the wool clip. It pointed out that there was no natural permanent water on the proposed route, and sheep would not be substituted for cattle, as the country was already under sheep; There were no mineral possessions on the proposed route, while if the line was extended 150 miles due west it would pass through country where artesian water was easily obtainable and which would be readily taken up by grazing farmers.] Now, there is another reason why the Central district should protest against this line being carried on. The Central people will come to understand the question most thoroughly, and if I can contribute in any way to their understanding it I will do so. They will understand it to be an unjustifiable violation of those principles I have spoken of in reference to the Central line of railway, and in reference to other principles which have been laid down and affirmed; it will certainly create a bitter feeling between the people of the two divisions when they come to understand that they have been taken advantage of by a majority of the Parliament of Queensland who happen for the time being to have it in their power to do what is proposed to be done at the present time. It is very desirable that nothing should be done to disturb the good relations which should exist between the people of the great divisions of the colony. Any injustice done by one portion to

another may create a feeling the ill-effect of which may, perhaps, be felt for many a day to come. I protest against it, too, because it is a violation of the principles which have been affirmed over and over again since 1872 by almost every Government that has held office in the colony. I refer now to the proposals made for the financial division of the colony. In order to thoroughly explain this, I wish to refer to the proposal made in 1872 by the Palmer Administration to divide the colony into financial districts in order to avert territorial separation. A Bill was brought in affirming the principle that each financial district should be entitled to the full benefit of the revenue collected within its boundaries, and on the other hand each district was to be liable for the loan moneys expended therein, for the interest thereon, and for its share of the cost of the government of the colony, and after that any credit balance was to be available for expenditure in the division in which that credit balance existed. In 1875 the late Mr. Macrossan introduced a motion asking Parliament to affirm the principles embodied in the Bill of 1872, and the motion was carried. In 1877 a Royal Commission was appointed to consider the best means of giving effect to those principles, and a Bill was subsequently introduced by the then Colonial Treasurer, Mr. Dickson, based on the recommendations of that commission. The Bill was read a second time; thus the principle was again affirmed. The matter was then allowed to rest till 1887, when Sir Samuel Griffith brought in a Bill to divide the colony into three districts for financial purposes. That Bill also was read a second time, and, although it did not become law, instructions were given to the Government departments that the accounts were to be kept separately in accordance with its provisions—that is to say, each division was to be entitled to the benefit of the revenue derived within its boundaries. It is very clear that the Central people, on the basis of that Bill, have been held liable to the rest of the colony for the cost of the construction of the Central line and the payment of the interest. It is also clear that the interest is to be paid out of the earnings of the railway, and now it is proposed to make this deviation of the Northern line to compete with the Central line. Is that not unjust to the people of the Central district? I say most distinctly that it is. In 1889 another Government was in office, and when the revenue and expenditure accounts were under consideration Sir Samuel Griffith spoke on the matter, and I wish to show what he said, because it is clear from the way in which he expressed himself that Parliament and the Government had pledged themselves to the principles contained in the Financial Districts Bill. He challenged the action of the Government in appropriating a credit balance due to the North, and he evidently considered that the people of the North and Central districts were entitled to the revenue collected within their respective boundaries. And if any proposition had been made while he was in Parliament to extend a railway belonging to one division into another division, I am satisfied that he would never have countenanced such a thing, because it would have been a direct repudiation of those principles which had been affirmed over and over again. [The hon. member here quoted at length from a speech delivered by Sir S. W. Griffith on the 26th September, 1889, referring to the statement of accounts laid on the table in accordance with the Decentralisation Bill, and showing how each division of the colony was affected in the matter of general and local revenue and expenditure, under the principles of financial separation embodied in that Bill.] The boundaries of the

divisions, as embodied in those Decentralisation Bills, were recognised for years by Sir Samuel Griffith and other leading statesmen as the best and fairest that could be devised. There is no doubt that a great injustice will be done to any one of those divisions if its surplus revenue is appropriated by any of the others, or if anything is done by the others that will materially reduce its revenue. At that time several Northern members, who are now followers of the present Government, were in Opposition, and they followed Sir Samuel Griffith and showed that the case was very much worse than what he had made out. At that time they alleged that the North was being robbed. We do not hear that sort of talk now from those hon. gentlemen. Precisely the same state of affairs now exists with regard to the Central district, according to the accounts of revenue and expenditure under the Financial Districts Bills laid on the table of the House the other day. They show a surplus of £112,000 due to Central Queensland, though the whole surplus is much more, as the accounts do not show the Customs duties collected in Brisbane on goods afterwards transhipped to the Central division and which should be credited to that division. All Queensland is liable for the interest and cost of construction of the Central line, and by this proposal all Queensland is asked to consent to a loss on the Central Railway system, not to benefit the colony, because the colony cannot benefit by the loss, but to benefit a few persons and this particular district. On the 26th of July, 1892, when the Queensland Constitution Bill was under discussion, the then Premier, Sir Samuel Griffith, said—

“We have three railway systems which, if run in competition with one another, might result in serious injury to each.”

And I venture to express the opinion that if that gentleman were here now this proposition would not be countenanced by him. Another reason why I oppose the proposal is that it has a sinister appearance, and I think my suspicions on this point are justified. This appears to be, not a question of building a railway to give conveniences to a number of people at Winton and that part of the country, but it is proposed with the ulterior object of endeavouring to detach that part of the country from Central Queensland, to be eventually incorporated within the boundaries of a future Northern colony. I may be mistaken in that suspicion, but I do not think I am, bearing in mind that on the 11th of October, 1892, when the boundaries of the provinces that were proposed to be constituted were under consideration, a proposal was brought forward by the Northern members to alter the boundaries of the Northern province, so as to take in a large extent of country down to the 23rd parallel in the interior, and down to the 22nd parallel on the coast. Sir Samuel Griffith, Sir Thomas McIlwraith, and other leading members opposed the proposition, which was considered unreasonable and unjustifiable. If adopted, a distinct injury would have been done to the Central division, and I think it is a very fair assumption, in view of those circumstances, that the intention now is to annex the territory *de facto* by means of this railway, and eventually to annex it *de jure*. Sir Samuel Griffith, speaking on the proposal to alter the boundaries, said the boundaries in the Bill were those adopted between what was called the Northern province and the Central since 1887, and that it was on the basis of those boundaries that all the accounts had been kept, that the Real Property Act had been passed, and separate registries of titles established. He further said that the argument of the hon. member who proposed the change was like saying that Broken Hill should be

annexed to Adelaide. Mr. Dickson deprecated any attempt to bring the boundary line any further south than was shown by the line which ran along the dividing range. I therefore venture to say that my suspicion as to the object of this proposed extension is justified, and I am sure Southern members would view a proposal to connect places in the Southern division with the Central Railway simply because they happened to be nearer to Rockhampton than to Brisbane, in a different light from that in which they regard this proposition. If this line is extended as proposed it will establish a precedent and a principle, and the people of Central Queensland will have a right to demand, and they will demand, the extension of the Central line to the south-west, in order that Rockhampton may have the full benefit of its geographical position. There are other questions to be considered besides mere proximity. If this principle is to be adopted in every case, it is plain that the whole of Australia will have to be remapped. The Riverina district will have to be handed over to Victoria, for it is nearer to Melbourne than to Sydney; the Broken Hill district will have to be handed over to South Australia; and the Clarence River district will have to be attached to Southern Queensland. It is to late to talk of altering the policy of extending our trunk lines due west. Large vested interests have been created, and people have settled in the country, and we cannot lightly disturb those interests and those people. The Central members want fair play. We only number ten in a House of seventy-two, or, in other words, while we contribute about one-fourth of the trade and commerce of the country, we have only about one-seventh of the representation in this House. It is now a question of Central Queensland *versus* Northern Queensland, as was acknowledged by the hon. member for Kennedy the other evening. If we are left to the tender mercies of the North, then we shall go down. The matter rests with the Southern members, and we ask them to see that justice is done. I do not think there is a single instance in the history of the world where an interested majority has guarded or considered the rights of a minority, but I hope that, when a division is taken on the present proposal, the members for Southern Queensland will show a notable exception to that rule, although it can hardly be said that they are interested or can benefit by the proposed line. Is there any immediate necessity for this line? Cannot it lie over for a few months until the people of the colony have an opportunity of expressing their opinion upon the matter? The construction of this railway will violate the fundamental principle of the Financial Districts Bill. The only way the people of the Central division can pay the interest on the cost of construction of the Central Railway, for which they are liable to the rest of the colony, is from the earnings upon that line, and if this railway is constructed it will render the people of the Central district less able to pay that interest, owing to the loss of traffic on the Central Railway. There is one question I would like to put to the House, and it is this: How is it that we have heard nothing about the question of Northern separation for so long? How is it we do not see Northern members getting up, as they did a few years ago, and denouncing the Government and asserting that the North has been wronged?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot raise that question, as it is entirely foreign to the question under consideration.

Mr. CURTIS: It may appear somewhat irrelevant, but I think I shall be able to show that it bears upon the question. Rumour has it that the North wants to secure the railway to Winton

before they revive the separation boom. That is the common rumour.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not in the North.

Mr. BROWNE: There are 3,000 golden reasons against it on the other side.

Mr. CURTIS: This question of the railway merely masks another question. I feel it my duty, as a Central member, to speak as I have done to-night. It may, perhaps, throw some light upon the subject, and enable Southern members to more clearly see the real meaning of the proposal. We do not want to take anything to which Northern Queensland or Southern Queensland is entitled. All we want is what we are entitled to, and we ask that those principles which have been enunciated over and over again in this House by both political parties in the State shall be respected. If they are respected, this railway will not be built—in the meantime, at all events. Has there been any demand for this railway in either Central or Northern Queensland? Have there been any large public meetings asking for its construction? I say, No. The demand, rumour has it again, has proceeded from a few interested persons, and, on the face of it, that is a fair assumption.

Mr. GLASSEY: Encumbered estates want financial relief.

Mr. CURTIS: From the approval in 1864 of the first section of the Central Railway up to the time of its completion to Longreach in 1892, and the commencement of the Northern Railway in 1877 to its completion to Hughenden in 1887, there was no mention made of any deviation from the due west course. On the contrary, in 1884, £300,000 was voted for the extension of the railway from Hughenden to Richmond.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No.

Mr. CURTIS: At all events in that direction, and in 1890 the present Commissioner said the plans were ready for carrying out the work, but the money was not available. So far, therefore, from there being any intention of defecting the Northern line, the intention was to carry it in a due westerly direction. There is no doubt that one reason why the Northern men support this line is because they see affairs are in such a position that they are able to command this extension, and having once got it they can, if separation comes about, extend the line to Richmond whenever they wish. That is the rumour at all events, and it bears probability on its face.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Where do these rumours come from?

Mr. OGDEN: Did you hear that outside of Rockhampton?

Mr. CURTIS: If the position could be reversed, I have no doubt the people of the South would take exactly the same view that I take. Surely it cannot be a crime that we should endeavour to protect ourselves from what we consider to be the perpetration of an act of injustice upon us! The hon. member for Fassifern talked about the Central division having been unduly favoured with railway extension, but that is not so. We have 559 miles of railway against 1,273 in the South, and the Central system pays better than either the Northern or Southern systems. I say, therefore, that the system that pays the country best deserves the most consideration.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Hear, hear! I agree with you.

Mr. CURTIS: I am glad to hear the hon. gentleman endorse that remark.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is why we are building this line.

Mr. CURTIS: I would remind the House that under the Constitution Bill dividing the colony into two provinces, each province was to have control of its railway systems, but they

were not to be allowed to come into competition with one another. That is to say, each province was to confine extensions within its own borders, and the Winton district being part of the South it was never contemplated that the North should extend a railway into it. I remind the House again that in this matter the Central division is in the hands of the Southern members. The Northern members will vote for the line because it is to their interest to do so; the Central members oppose it because they believe it to be a great injustice to their division. The Northern members may believe it is a right and equitable proposal; we believe that it is unjust and inequitable. If the three trunk lines are to be connected, that should be done by means of a line coming down from the Gulf and junctioning with the Southern line at about Charleville, and in the meantime extensions which are to be made should be in the direction of pushing out the trunk lines and building those lines which will be of most advantage to settlement. It has been shown by the evidence that the district of Winton is reasonably provided with railway communication, but that the country to the west-south-west from Hughenden is not reasonably provided. Therefore there can be no question that the money can be much better expended in that direction. I do not think it is necessary to take up the time of the House any further, but when we get into committee I shall have something further to say on the question.

Mr. CORFIELD: At one time the wrongs of Ireland were the topic of everyday discussion throughout the civilised world; but after what we have heard to-night I am inclined to think they were but trifling when compared with the wrongs of Central Queensland, which have been so eloquently, but misleadingly, expatiated upon by the junior member for Rockhampton. One would imagine, after what he has said, that it was intended to rob Central Queensland of a certain trade for the aggrandisement of another district, and without any consideration for the interests of the country, which, I take it, should be paramount to any local or district interest, or the interests of the rival ports of Townsville and Rockhampton. If the Central district, which should be known by the more appropriate name of Rockhampton, possessed a trade which it would lose by this deviation, I am prepared to admit that such, though not a robbery, would be an injustice. But the fact is that not since 1884, when the Hughenden road was first opened for traffic by the construction of tanks for water conservation, with the sole exception of Vindex, 25 miles east of Winton, has any trade been done with the Central line by any station or district north of the 23rd parallel of south latitude only when the Hughenden road was closed to traffic for a short period during the last drought. This closure was due to the fact that the Government tanks were allowed to fall into bad order, so that very little water was conserved. At the time I mention—1884—carriage from the Central Railway terminus to Winton was from £35 to £40 a ton in addition to railway charges. The moment the Hughenden road was open and the residents around the Winton district could avail themselves of the shortest route, carriage dropped until it is now down to a very low rate, and the advantage gained by its natural position has been retained by Townsville ever since, even though the Rockhampton merchants for some years undersold their Northern rivals, and did a very extensive trade until a comparatively recent date. Perhaps they do now, and as a business man, if I could land goods at Winton cheaper from Rockhampton than from Townsville, I would be prepared to deal there. I must explain that it has been found cheaper to land goods at Winton by shipping them from

Rockhampton to Townsville, and then taking them along the Northern line, than by bringing them along the Central line. I have done it in connection with my own firm in many instances, and when this is an actual fact, how can it be said by the people of Rockhampton that the trade of the Winton district belongs of right to Rockhampton? We who are responsible repudiate ownership in the best possible way to show our repudiation, and decline to accept the dictum of the so-called Central district in regard to what it fancifully calls its rightful possession. I admit that there is a Central district continually advertised as determined to assert its rights, even to accepting the advice of a certain eminent British statesman to the men of the North of Ireland. But I assert that this Central division is comprised within the wire fences of the Central Railway, and even there a large number recognise the fact of the shorter line to Townsville being the natural route for traffic, and decline to support the absurdity which this agitation against the extension of the Northern Railway from Hughenden to Winton is. In support of this contention I will read a telegram which appeared in the *Winton Herald* of 19th June. [The telegram was dated Barcardine, 14th June, and stated that a letter was read from the secretary of the Rockhampton Democratic Association asking the divisional board to protest against the construction of the Hughenden-Winton railway; but the board declined to take any action, as they believed the railway would do good in opening up the country and providing work.] Here is another telegram from Longreach, dated 3rd October. [The telegram was to the effect that a great majority of the people had no sympathy with the Rockhampton people in their attempt to block the railway.] This opinion of the natural route is borne out by men who have taken a prominent part in Central separation from the first. The late Hon. W. Miles, who was Minister for Railways in 1886, in reply to a deputation of representatives from the Central district, said that the separation of North Queensland was certain, and the Government were thinking of deviating the Central Railway northward from Barcardine to Winton so as to deprive the new Northern colony of the Winton district trade. Shortly after this, in October, 1886, the Hon. J. Ferguson, who then represented Rockhampton, used these words, which will be found in *Hansard*, page 1550. [The quotation was to the effect that nobody in the Central district wanted the deviation, and that he had never heard a voice in its favour except, perhaps, from one or two residents of Winton.] Then the late Mr. F. R. Murphy, who at that time represented Barcoo, spoke as follows:—[The hon. member quoted from *Hansard*, page 1551, to the effect that the deviation from Barcardine to Winton was not necessary, and that it would be impossible for a railway from Winton to Rockhampton to compete with a line from Winton to Townsville.] Then on page 1552 it will be found that Mr. Lumley Hill, then member for Cook, said it would be most unjustifiable to attempt to draw the trade of Winton to Rockhampton, when Cleveland Bay was something like 200 miles nearer. And Mr. John Stevenson, then member for Clermont, said the deviation was most undesirable, and would do no good whatever to that part of the country. On page 1554 it will be found that the Hon. W. Pattison used these words—

“Winton properly belongs to the North district, and the residents of the Central district have no desire to enter into a contest with the North district, and try to take away the trade of a township that properly belongs to the North district.”

Those are the opinions of prominent Central members and separationists, who spoke with a

knowledge of the country, and with a sense of justice and judgment which appears to have disappeared from them lately. As to how the construction of this line will affect Central separation, is a matter of no more interest to the people of Western Queensland than the question of Central separation itself, and I will therefore not allow that visionary subject to enter into anything I have to say. I simply propose to deal with the line on its merits. Is the extension of the Northern line from Hughenden necessary; if so, in what direction; and if towards Winton, will it pay; and how is it likely to interfere with the revenue derived from the Central Railway? The extension of the Northern Railway from Hughenden is generally accepted to be necessary so as to open up our valuable Western lands to settlement, and to retain for this colony its own trade, which is now seriously encroached upon by South Australia. It is well known that Adelaide had for years a monopoly of the Western trade to such an extent that its flour and other products were supplied to stations some hundreds of miles within the Queensland border, on the Diamantina, Georgina, Mulligan, and Bourke Rivers. It still does a considerable trade with stations in the extreme south-west, and also with some stations in my district which I can name. They are Cluny, Glengyle, St. Albans, Dubbo Downs, Sandringham, and Bidouri.

Mr. LEAHY: This year?

Mr. CORFIELD: Yes. I can assure hon. members that Mr. Field, the owner of Sandringham, who was in Brisbane less than three months ago, gave me the names of those stations as dealing with Adelaide; he said he dealt with Adelaide himself, and told me that by the construction of this railway that trade would all be retained for Queensland. As South Australia is advancing her railway system closer to our border, it is certain that that colony will still further extend the area of her influence in Queensland, unless steps are taken to counteract it by the extension of our own railway system. This being accepted, there is no doubt that the proper thing to do is to extend the Northern Railway from Hughenden to Winton, because Townsville is the nearest eastern seaport for that portion of the Gregory district which obtains its supplies from and does its trade generally with Adelaide. I want to explain that in connection with the question of Northern separation the people of the northern portion of the district have not laid any claim to that portion of the district south of the 23rd parallel of latitude, yet if distances are to be taken into consideration, the whole of Western Queensland might fairly be claimed by Townsville as within the sphere of its influence. Taking Birdsville, in the extreme south-west, as a centre, the distance from Normanton is 650 miles; from Adelaide, 750 miles; from Townsville, 780 miles; and from Rockhampton, 850 miles; and yet we are told by Rockhampton that the trade of that district belongs of right to it, when, as a matter of fact, that place is completely out of it, and the whole of Western Queensland is in reality the back country of Normanton, Adelaide, and Townsville. As the lower cost of transport is dependent upon the shorter distance to the port, I am with the hon. member for Normanby in his contention, when, speaking on the extension of the Southern Railway from Charleville to Cunnamulla, he said he had very little sympathy with running lines to take the produce of the country anywhere else than to the nearest market. While on this subject I should like to refer to a speech made by Mr. Burns, of Messrs. Burns and Twigg, at a meeting held on the 29th of May last. In moving a resolution against this

line he is reported by the Rockhampton *Bulletin* to have said that it was the duty of the Government not to consider the interests of the people of Brisbane and Townsville only, but how the people of the West might get to the nearest market at as reasonable a cost as possible. That is likewise the contention of the people of the West; but as Mr. Burns did not mention Rockhampton, I assume that he intended that the interests of Rockhampton only should be considered. The people of that city, while protesting against what they say is taking their trade, are quite indifferent as to how the interests of other places are to be affected. The contention at that meeting was that the Northern line should be extended due west from Hughenden, and it is now demanded that it should be extended west-south-west to Kynuna, when a glance at the map will show any unprejudiced person that a line running down the Flinders towards Richmond, or west-south-west to Kynuna, immediately encroaches upon the interests of the Gulf ports, and would give the people of those ports a far better cause for complaint than the people of Rockhampton have ever had. Even the chairman of the select committee, Mr. Archer, admits this, although he does his best to gloss it over, because he says in one of his questions to the Secretary for Railways, at page 20 of the report, that everyone must acknowledge that it will not be very long before a line will be built from Normanton to the South. On page 32 Mr. Mathieson says, in reply to the suggestion that a connection with the Central line might be made by taking a west-south-west direction, that if the line suggested were built we would be practically going through the same country as the railway which will go to Cloncurry. The first meeting held in Rockhampton against this line was held by the chamber of commerce there, and the same Mr. Burns, of Burns and Twigg, said that by extending the Townsville-Hughenden line westerly it would serve Ayrshire Downs and other stations that were now occupied by cattle, and they would immediately go in for sheep. He was reminded by Mr. Clewett that they have sheep at Ayrshire Downs now, and that their woolshed was burned down the other day, and then he said there were a good many stations beyond Hughenden in the direction of Richmond that would carry many more sheep than they did now, if they were brought into communication with the coast by railway. He told the meeting that the Winton district was sheep country at present, and therefore it would be more profitable to take the line westerly. Mr. Hartley then said, "You must mean Brighton Downs," and Mr. Burns said, "That is it." I would like to explain that Ayrshire Downs is situated 40 miles north-west of Winton, and has had sheep on it for the last eighteen years. Brighton Downs is situated 150 miles south-west of Hughenden, and has had cattle on it as long as I have known it, that is for the last eighteen years, although it is beautiful sheep country, but I have every reason to believe if this extension is built sheep will be put on that station. Of course when people are so well up in the geography of Queensland as to make the mistake that a line running west from Hughenden would materially benefit Ayrshire Downs and Brighton Downs, such a piece of absurdity is only to be expected. As the Rockhampton people are so fond of looking into the distant future, when they will have separation with Rockhampton as the capital and port of that part of the colony, I would suggest to them that they should unselfishly look ahead and see how the line they advise would affect the line from Normanton to Cloncurry, and the extension from Georgetown to the Etheridge, both of which lines will become realities long before the dream of Rockhampton

governing the Central district does. I submit that this extension will in no way affect either of those two lines; and that it will not seriously affect the Central line I now propose to show. Returns which I have received from those stations situated in that part of the Gregory district which we wish to have included in the proposed Northern colony, show that for years past they have obtained their supplies from, and transmitted their produce to, Townsville. Those stations are Sesbania, Werna, Ayrshire Downs, Manuka, Afton Downs, Oondooroo, Warrnambool Downs, Elderslie, Kynuna, Dagworth, Llanrheidol, Cork, Katandra, Tooleybuck, Eulolo, Strathfield, Beadesert, Goodwood, Warenda, Fort William, Chatsworth, Brighton Downs, Davenport Downs, Glenormiston, Lucknow, Mount Merlin, Roxborough Downs, Herbert Downs, Coorabulka, Happy Valley, Marion Downs, Rochdale, Rangers Valley, and Strathearn. I have a few figures which I will give to the House to show that this line will pay. There will be 1,076 tons of up loading from Hughenden to Winton for stations, which at 45s. per ton will amount to £2,421.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: Where did you get the figures from?

Mr. CORFIELD: From the stations.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: Did you get any figures from Roxborough Downs?

Mr. CORFIELD: Yes. There will be 1,601 tons of wool from Winton to Hughenden, which, at 14s. 6d. per ton, is £1,161 14s. 6d.; 190 tons of up loading from Hughenden to Oondooroo, at 40s., £180; 370 tons of wool from Oondooroo to Hughenden, at 13s., £240 10s.; 60 tons of up loading from Hughenden to Manuka, at 30s., £90 10s.; 270 tons of wool from Manuka to Hughenden, at 10s., £135; 125 tons of up loading from Hughenden to Sesbania and Werna, at 26s. 6d., £165 12s. 6d.; 450 tons of wool from Sesbania and Werna to Hughenden, at 8s. 6d., £189 11s.; 156 tons of up loading from Hughenden to Katandra, at 25s., £195; 374 tons of wool from Katandra to Hughenden, at 8s., £149 12s.; 100 tons of up loading from Hughenden to Afton Downs, at 7s. 6d., £37 10s.; 330 tons of wool from Afton Downs to Hughenden, at 2s. 6d., £41 5s.; 850 tons of storekeepers' loading to Winton, Boulia, and Kynuna, at 55s., £2,337 10s.; say 60 tons for cattle stations on the Diamantina, Georgina, and Burke rivers, at 45s., £135. Then it is reasonable to suppose that there will be a boiling down works at Winton, and I have put down 100,000 sheep to be boiled down. If these give an average of 15 lb. of tallow each, that will amount to 670 tons, which, at 31s., gives £1,038 10s.; and 100,000 skins, averaging 8 lb. each, will weigh 350 tons, which, at 31s. a ton, is £832 10s. Then there will be cattle products such as tallow and hides, which I estimate at £1,400; passengers and horses, £2,000; stock truckings, £2,500; and the saving of the subsidy to Cobb and Co. on the Hughenden and Longreach lines to Winton, £800. These figures totalled up amount to £16,050 15s. Taking the whole length of this extension at 130 miles, the cost at £2,009 per mile will be £261,171, and 4 per cent. interest on that is £10,446 15s., which leaves a balance of £6,604 for maintenance. I have not included Vindex in the above figures, though it will come under this line. The up loading for Vindex would be 73 tons, which, at 45s. per ton, is £164 5s.; the down loading would be 348 tons, at 14s. 6d., or £324 16s.; total, £489 1s. Adding this to the total as given above, we have a grand total balance for maintenance of £7,093. An ounce of truth is worth a ton of assertion, or even of the suggestion made by the junior member for Rockhampton when he told his listeners at a meeting at Rock-

hampton that they would have been perfectly justified in using force to prevent the removal of the lightship. I notice that the hon. member did not use the first person plural, and no doubt his listeners were sufficiently discreet to choose not to use force. It is well known that a great deal of the opposition to this proposed line is due, not to its policy or to the way it would affect any particular district, but rather to the fact that it would be a good peg on which to hang the Government. I admit the right of every hon. member to say that to throw out the Government, irrespective of the question as to whether their measures are good for the country, is the duty of, we will say, the ten Central members. Some of these have consentingly, and no doubt with good intentions, pursued that policy, but there are one or two others who have not done so, and I cannot but feel that if they accept instructions from a small and by no means representative meeting they will be acting with a due regard to the interests of the country, but simply for the imaginary interests of Rockhampton. It has been argued in opposition to this line that Vindex sent its wool this year to Rockhampton, but that statement is discounted by the fact that it is 169 miles from Vindex to Hughenden by road as against 100 miles to Longreach, which brings the cost of transit from that station to port to about the same by each route under the rates which have been in force within the last month or two. But Mr. Chirnside, the managing partner of Vindex, informed me that if the rates of last year had continued he would have sent his wool to Townsville, for these reasons: On Vindex they have a scouring plant, and they dump their own wool. The railway freight from Hughenden to Townsville for clean dumped wool is £4 6s. 11d., and the carriage by drays £3, which makes £7 6s. 11d. from the station to Townsville. The railway freight from Longreach to Rockhampton for the same class of goods was £6 per ton, so that the carriage to Longreach—100 miles—would have to be done for £1 6s. 11d., which would not pay the carriers. I would like to explain that, although railfare from Hughenden to Townsville is 189 miles shorter than that from Longreach to Rockhampton, yet, owing to the differential rates on the Central line, the charges for clean dumped wool over the longer distance are only £1 13s. 1d. more than over the shorter line. Thus, although it costs £4 6s. 11d. to carry this class of goods from Hughenden to Townsville—a distance of 236 miles, it only costs £1 13s. 1d. more to cover the cost of the additional 189 miles on the Central line. Another thing I would like to call attention to is that the distances given to Townsville are in reality to deep water, as large sea-going vessels can now lie alongside the railway trucks inside the breakwater, whereas, as regards the Central line, the distances are given to Rockhampton, which means some 25 miles more to deep water at Broadmount, when the line is built there. Therefore, the distances will stand as follows, when corrected—Winton to deep water at Townsville, 365 miles, as against Longreach to Broadmount, 450 miles, plus 121 miles of road carriage, leaving the distance in favour of the Northern line of 206 miles in round numbers. I have taken Winton as the objective point, because it is so situated at the edge of the stretch of inferior and mountainous country which lies back from the Diamantina and to the south of Winton that all the traffic to and from the west passes through Winton. I ask, is it possible for the people of Rockhampton to prove their assertion that the trade of that district belongs of right to them? Winton being 206 miles nearer to Townsville than to Rockhampton, is it fair or honest to tax the Western settlers, who are heavily enough handicapped by long

distance and the risks of flood, drought, and other troubles, in deference to the interests or sentiments of certain people, or because they think that a certain understanding existed in the past, but whose existence they are unable to prove? I assert that Rockhampton interests alone have been considered. With the exception of Longreach, which protests, with good reason, against any extension of the Central Railway, no other place in the Central district has protested. The *Hughenden Observer* of 5th September, 1894, says—

"As the extension of the Northern line in some direction is bound to be brought about sooner or later, we unhesitatingly say, let it be carried to Winton in preference to Richmond."

I have some letters here from some of the stations scattered over the district in regard to this railway, and I shall only read a few short paragraphs from some of them. The first is from Mr. John E. Bostock, Sesbania, and is addressed to the hon. secretary of the Winton Railway Extension League—

"The railway, if made, will of course increase the facilities for improvements of properties by reducing cost of present carriage, and I hope your committee will soon be successful in their endeavours to get this line commenced."

"Sunny Hills, 10th October, 1894."

"Re the extension of the railway from Hughenden to Winton, I need hardly tell you how hearty my co-operation and support, as I feel confident it will be of great advantage to the district of Winton, and will enable many, including myself, to improve their runs, and put five times the number of stock they have on at present, thereby increasing the quantity of down and up loading."

That is signed by J. Kennedy. The next is addressed by Mr. Chirnside, of Vindex, to myself—

"From what I can learn there appears to be some doubt as to whether I am in favour of the Hughenden-Winton railway. Needless to say, I am most decidedly in favour of that line. Townsville is our natural port, and our loading ought to go there."

The next is from Warena, and is of importance. It is addressed by Mr. Wienholt to the hon. secretary of the Winton Railway Extension League—

"I am in receipt of your circular, and am happy to be able to express my entire sympathy with its object. Should the railway be extended to Winton, there is a possibility of the owners putting sheep on, which will, of course, materially increase both our in and out loading. A trial of the respective routes for procuring stores, from Rockhampton and Townsville, has convinced me of the superior economy and convenience of the latter route, and there can be no doubt that its extension to Winton would be of great benefit to the district."

All the others are in the same strain. Here is one written by Charles B. Fisher, junr., Warrnambool Downs, another from Mr. Fraser, of Manuka, another from Mr. Glissan, of Cork Station, another from Boulia, and here is one from Mr. Dalrymple, of Llanrheidol, another from Mr. McCowan, of Kynuna, and one from Mr. Caldwell, of Happy Valley. I have heard a great deal about the policy of constructing the trunk lines due west, but that policy does not seem to have been adhered to even in years gone by. So far as I can ascertain, the principle has no existence, and seems to have emanated from Rockhampton. If it ever did exist, it is evident that the interests of the colony induced a departure from it in the case of the Southern and Northern lines; and if the Central line had not gone due west, but had been extended with regard to the capabilities of the country for settlement, it would have been taken to the magnificent country lying to the north or to the south of the line. By going either towards the north or the south from Emerald, it could have reached very rich country instead of having to run for some hundreds of miles through inferior country until it reaches the edge of good country

at Barealdine. As to the value of the country which I am speaking in favour of for close settlement, I can only sum up in the words of a disinterested party—the representative of the *Brisbane Courier*—who stated in one of his letters that, in his search for good land, it was impossible for a poor man to go wrong. I am sorry to have detained the House so long, but there has been so much misrepresentation and sentiment over this proposed railway that I deemed it my duty to detain hon. members longer than I usually do. I would ask the House to consider the line upon its merits, and its bearing upon existing trunk lines and without any reference to Central separation, which it is very probable will remain as it is now, as only a dream. And as I ask hon. members not to view it from a Rockhampton or a Townsville point of view, so I would ask them to consider not the interests of Winton but solely the interests of the whole colony, of which this great Western district, which is destined to carry a large and prosperous population, is but a part. If hon. members will only look at the line in this light, and rise superior to class and party prejudices, I feel sanguine that neither threats nor reproaches will prevent them passing a line that will materially assist in developing the resources of Western Queensland, and so add to the general prosperity of the colony.

Mr. DRAKE: I quite agree with the concluding remarks of the hon. member for Gregory that this should be looked at not from the point of view of Winton, but from the point of view of the whole colony. I desire that it should be distinctly understood that that was the purpose for which the select committee was specially appointed; but the hon. member for Balonne confessed very candidly that his impression was that it had been appointed to decide whether the line should go from Winton in one direction or in another direction. That distinctly was not the purpose for which the committee was appointed.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: I said from Hughenden, not from Winton.

Mr. DRAKE: I understood the hon. member to say—of course he can see from *Hansard* whether he did or not—that it was decided that Winton should have railway communication, and that the question was whether it should go from Winton in one direction or in the other. At all events, I think there was a strong tendency in the House, before the committee was appointed, to commit the committee to the consideration of which direction a line from Winton should take. In the few words I spoke I deprecated the inquiry taking that form at all, and suggested that the form it should take should be the consideration in which direction the Northern line could be most profitably extended. On reading the report of the committee I came to the conclusion, strangely enough, that if this amount of money is available for railway construction in the North it would be most profitably employed in making a railway in the direction of Richmond Downs; and I notice that Mr. Mathieson says that 87 miles of that line could be made for about the same amount that would be expended over the shorter line proposed. It would seem to me that the line that has been suggested to Kynuna would be just as profitable and beneficial to the colony as the line from Hughenden to Winton from the point of view of settlement. If that is so, there must be some special reason for proposing the line to be taken from Hughenden to Winton. I am surprised that expressions of incredulity should have come from the Treasury bench when the hon. member, Mr. Curtis, suggested that after this railway had been made there would be a demand for Northern separation to include

Winton and Boulia. It seems perfectly clear that this proposal to make a railway to Winton is simply the continuation of the attempt that was made in 1892 to separate the Northern portion of the colony, and to give the Northern division a boundary which would include Winton and Boulia. I am very much surprised that hon. members, in speaking on the subject, have not drawn attention to the debate that took place in 1892. I tried hard to get a copy of the map which was presented to the House by the present Secretary for Railways, but I could not get it, showing the boundary he proposed. It may be remembered that three different proposals were made to alter the southern boundary of the proposed Northern province. The one I particularly refer to, which was proposed by the present Secretary for Railways, took either the 21st or the 22nd parallel, going westward to about the 146th meridian, then striking off south in a slanting direction to the 23rd parallel, and following that parallel to the South Australian border. That proposal of course would take in Winton and Boulia. The hon. gentleman spoke strongly and forcibly in favour of it, and also of the other proposal he made for altering the boundary which was not in that direction; but he and the present Secretary for Public Instruction, and another gentleman intimately connected with the Northern separation movement who is not now in the House, strongly advocated the altering of the southern boundary of the Northern province with a view of its coming down more to the South. The Chief Secretary at that time had to take up the position of defending the Southern portion of Queensland against this intended raid from the North. [The hon. member here read an extract from a speech of Sir T. McIlwraith—*Hansard*, vol. lxviii., page 1508—in which he stated that with the proposed alteration of boundary the Central province would simply be a ribbon—the Central Railway with a strip of land less than 100 miles on either side of it.] The hon. gentleman very strongly opposed this attempt to bring the Northern boundary into Southern Queensland, and all the proposals at that time to do so were defeated. There were nine members in favour of altering the boundary, and there were twelve on the other side, and those gentlemen were mostly those who represented the Northern separation movement. We have lately not heard much of Northern separation, and I think it is because the separationists, through the present Government, are getting almost as much as they could get if the colony were separated, but at that time they were not so strongly represented in the Government, and therefore outside they were endeavouring to get the northern boundary extended south. Now, there being three representatives of Northern Queensland in the Cabinet, the proposal comes to make a railway down to Winton, which will as effectually hand over Winton and Boulia to Northern Queensland for all time. The proposal, as shown on the map, to make a line from Longreach to Winton, in order to satisfy Central Queensland, seems wholly fallacious. It would simply be a waste of money to make that line, and would ensure nothing for the Central people, because as soon as the Northern separation movement is again raised, if the railway has been sanctioned or made, the boundary then must be the boundary which was proposed by the Secretary for Railways in 1892. I would ask the Southern members to particularly remember that they are as much interested in this question as they were interested in a similar question in 1892 when they voted by 28 against 9. I want members to bear in mind that this southern boundary of the Northern province will discard this line from Winton to Longreach, and when the Northern province has got the separation

which it has been agitating for, what will there be to prevent them putting on an export border duty.

Mr. OGDEN: Federation.

Mr. DRAKE: If at that time there is a federal government sufficiently strong to prevent that being done, then my argument would not apply, but if there is not, and possibly the Northern separationists may again agitate for separation before there is such a federal government, then it will be competent for them to put on a border duty, as we put on a southern border duty in 1893, and thus they will shut off the whole of the Western traffic from going to Longreach. So that the Northern separationists will have succeeded in the object nearest to their hearts—that is, in making Townsville their capital, and running their territory as far as they can into Southern Queensland. I am very much surprised that the hon. member for Carpentaria, in the part he took in this committee, did not stand up a little more for the rights of his constituents.

The PREMIER: He knows more than you do about it.

Mr. DRAKE: Very likely. Perhaps the hon. gentleman is not going back to Carpentaria. It appears to me that it would have been more profitable to have expended this money in extending a line south from Normanton; but the hon. member for Carpentaria does not appear to have done anything in the way of advancing the interests of that line as against the line that is being proposed by the Government. No doubt the hon. gentleman thought that some time or other, if he helped the people of Townsville to get their extension to Winton, they would help him in getting his line from Normanton in the direction of Richmond Downs; but perhaps he may find when that time comes that Townsville will be just as little merciful towards the Gulf as it has been towards the Centre.

Mr. KINGSBURY: I rise to a point of order. Is it in order to debate the interests of imaginary provinces instead of discussing the question as it applies to the interests of Queensland as a whole?

The SPEAKER: I think the hon. member is going rather wide of the mark. It appears to me that as there are no divisions of the colony, the subject should be debated as it affects the interests of Queensland as a whole.

Mr. DRAKE: Nearly every member who has addressed himself to the question has referred to the question of separation. I have been referring to a Bill which passed this Chamber in 1892.

The PREMIER: No, resolution.

Mr. DRAKE: I wish the chairman of the political association would go and look after his roll-stuffing. In 1892 this Chamber passed the Queensland Constitution Bill No. 2, and by it this colony was divided into three provinces. I submit I am not out of order, especially after so many other hon. members have done the same, in referring to what might happen at some future time if separation should come about.

Mr. KINGSBURY: Tell us something about Miss Shaw.

Mr. DRAKE: I will come to that directly. This little digression reminds me that I wish to refer to some remarks made in 1892 in the same debate by two hon. members of this House. One is the hon. member for Balonne, from whom I do not expect any consistency, of course. This is on page 1511 of *Hansard*, the subject being this proposal on the part of the North to come down into South Queensland. [The quotation was to the effect that the Hon. Mr. Morehead would not consent to any boundary being fixed between the Northern and Southern provinces which would prevent the Central district in years to come from becoming a separate province.] The other hon. member to whose

remarks I wish to refer is the Hon. J. R. Dickson, and the remarks will be found on page 1512. [They were to the effect that in the Hon. Mr. Dickson's opinion a proposal to come down to the 23rd parallel and encroach upon the Central and Southern portion of Queensland was not a fair proposition.]

Mr. KINGSBURY: I rise to a point of order. Did I understand you to give a ruling that the discussion of Northern and Central separation was not a subject connected with the railway under consideration?

The SPEAKER: I did not give a ruling. The hon. gentleman states that he is using the argument in anticipation of the separation question being revived; and I think in that he is justified in doing so.

Mr. DRAKE: I take the same view as the hon. member for Bulimba did then; I regard this as unjustifiable encroachment which would be used afterwards no doubt to enable the Northern separation party as a reason for bringing the boundary down into Southern Queensland. The hon. member for North Brisbane is anxious to know what Miss Shaw thinks about this. I say again that I do not attach very great importance to what is said by any ordinary person who comes to the colony and tours round for a few weeks and then goes away; but I do attach great importance to the utterances of Miss Shaw, because while she was here she was in the confidence of a great many of our leading men, who were glad to converse with an educated lady who was also correspondent of the great London *Times*, and they told her their most secret hopes and desires in connection with the colony, and she went home and told all the world.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Hon. H. Tozer): She was a carpet-bagger, like yourself.

Mr. DRAKE: That is the rudest thing I have heard about that lady.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: To apply it similarly to you.

Mr. DRAKE: I should consider it a great compliment if the hon. gentleman attributed to me anything like the ability of that lady. She says it is scarcely possible to escape the conclusion that if North Queensland attains a political separation, the nucleus of the development of a tropical Australia will have been formed, and the creation of other tropical colonies in which the habits of thought, the aims and the traditions would differ widely from those of the existing Australian communities will be only a question of time. If that is so it means that when this Northern separation is to take place there will be in this continent two incompatible forms of government—an aristocratic form with servile labour, and a democratic form with white labour—and what we are discussing to-night is where the boundary line is to be. If we are to have this division at any future time I should like to see the boundary as far North as possible, and I will not assist in any way to have it brought towards the South.

Mr. CALLAN: I regret that the Premier is not in his place; but the few remarks I have to make on what I may call the misunderstanding that took place between us will be heard by his colleagues, and that will probably do as well. I would not have referred to the matter, but the hon. member for Rockhampton alluded to it. Immediately after the speech delivered by the Secretary for Railways in Townsville, I interviewed the Premier, and spoke to him about this railway, and he told me distinctly that it would not be brought before this House this session. The hon. member, Mr. Curtis, has brought the matter up again to-night, and I told the hon. member the statement made to me in the presence of the hon. member for Cunningham, Mr. Allan, and I am perfectly certain the

Premier will not deny that he made that statement to me. But while he made that statement I do not question the hon. gentleman's veracity, because at the time he made it the hon. gentleman certainly believed what he stated. Other things have occurred since which have altered his views; but I do say this, and I am sorry the Premier is not present to hear me, that I think he misled me in not telling me at the time he changed his views. I will not go into all the statements made by the hon. member for Gregory, but if they are all like one he made he has just doubled everything in his own favour. In giving the distances from Longreach and Hughenden to Broadmount and Townsville he said the distance from Rockhampton to Broadmount was 25 miles, while the plans laid on the table show that it is only 13 miles.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: No, no! That is to the connection with the Emu Park line.

Mr. CALLAN: Possibly I may have made a mistake in that, but I have not made any mistake in this: He told us that the people of Longreach are in favour of the line to Winton. I hold in my hand a telegram signed by Mr. George Meacham, a man of considerable importance in Longreach, and he says: "Protest was sent to Mr. Cameron against line. People here strongly opposed to it. Letter following." That is certainly against the statement made by the hon. member. I cannot enter into all the statements, but with respect to his remarks as to the produce that would be sent by the line I may say that when this question was so unexpectedly brought on I wrote to Mr. E. Reid, of Walter Reid and Co., of Rockhampton, asking him to forward me all the particulars he could possibly obtain as to the produce now coming down to the Central Railway at Longreach that would, if the Winton line was constructed, go to the Northern line. I take upon myself the fullest responsibility for the accuracy of the information he supplies. He mentions nine stations—Bowen Downs, Corona, Darr River Downs, Evesham, Maneroo, Silsoe, Strathdarr, Sunny Hills, and Vindex; and he tells me—

"All these stations at present draw their supplies from Rockhampton, and all of them send their wool to this port. Since the 1st of January of the present year"—

The returns given in this letter are for nine months only—

"the total quantity of wool received in Rockhampton from these stations was 11,127 bales, as shown by the reports of the agents. With the exception of Sunny Hills, all the above stations sent sheep this year to Rockhampton, the total number of their consignments being 241,000. In addition to the stations there are a considerable number of grazing farms on these runs, which also draw all their supplies from, and send all their wool to, Rockhampton. It is believed that if the railway is built from Hughenden to Winton all the foregoing stations will deal in future with Townsville."

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is only his opinion.

Mr. CALLAN: These are the facts, and Mr. Philp, of Burns, Philp, and Co., cannot deny them. I challenge the hon. gentleman to repudiate these statements. The cattle stations affected are Brighton Downs, Diamantina Lakes, Davenport Downs, Fernoy, Goodwood, Headingly, Marion Downs, Monkira, Mount Cornish, Springvale, Vergemont, Warena, and Woodstock. Mr. Reid tells me that—

"Of the above cattle stations twelve are known to draw their supplies from Rockhampton. During the current year cattle have been received from eight of them, the total number being 18,500. If the railway from Hughenden to Winton is built, all these stations, it is believed, will in future trade with Townsville."

Mr. Reid adds that some of the stations which he marked, but which I have not read, occasionally get supplies or send their produce to Townsville, but I point out that, in the case of

'such stations as Diamantina Lakes, the Winton Divisional Board have taken care to make a good road in that direction, and thus induce some of the traffic to go from Winton to Diamantina Lakes. I thought that argument would be used, and a day or two ago I noticed that the *Courier* correspondent at Winton, writing under date 3rd October, stated—

"A mob of 500 bullocks from Elderslie passed last Saturday for Lake's Creek. The other 500 purchased are not fit for the works yet, and will have to be paddocked for three months. Riley Bros. report having sold to the C.Q.M.E. Company, Limited, on account of Messrs. Chirnside, Riley, and Co., of Vindex, 22,000 fat wethers in the wool. Mr. F. W. Riley, on behalf of Lake's Creek, has just started 1,200 fats from Brighton Downs, being the first draft of those purchased by C.Q.M.E. Company."

It appears most absurd that the country that is calling out for this railway should not send their stock to Townsville where they have two meat works, instead of to Rockhampton. As for the railway itself, I have read the evidence taken by the select committee very carefully, and I do not think there is much in it. The evidence of the manager, or acting manager, of the Union Mortgage Company cannot be taken for very much, as he would simply study the interests of his company, and not the general interests of the colony. Mr. Thallon, the Traffic Manager, stated that the railways were purely political, and the Commissioner tells us that he has no control over the way railways are to go, and when a line is laid down all he has to do is to carry it out the best way he can. I was under the impression that when we got commissioners to manage our railways we should to a certain extent be rid of the anomalies and corruptions which have occurred in other countries, but when I see the Minister bringing forward a railway like this, and we are informed that the Commissioner has nothing whatever to do with the direction in which railways have to go, I can only say that I wish I had known that before the Commissioner's salary came before the House. I believe I was regularly swindled in voting that £23,000 for his salary, and if I had known as much then as I do now I should not have voted a single penny of that salary.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is now going outside the question before the House.

Mr. CALLAN: If I had known as much then as I know now, I should not have voted a single penny.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in making that statement.

Mr. CALLAN: I presume that I am in order in saying that the Traffic Manager stated in his evidence that the railways are purely political. If they are purely political, then the Minister has the dictation of what railways are to be made, and he is responsible for the direction of this line from Hughenden to Winton. There is a celebrated firm in Queensland known as Burns, Philp, and Co. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman is now a member of that firm, and I do not want to say a single word against the hon. gentleman. He is a man I have the greatest respect for, and I do not wish to impute anything whatever to him, but I do say that it is very strange that this railway will bring a large trade to the principal town in which that firm does business. If this railway is constructed, it will be better than putting £10,000 into that firm's pocket.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is now imputing personal motives, and is not in order in doing so.

Mr. CALLAN: I am not at all imputing personal motives. I told the hon. gentleman that I did not impute any motives.

The SPEAKER: Still the hon. member does it; and I must ask him not to do so.

Mr. CALLAN: Then I will say that this railway is brought down with the purest of motives. When we get this line constructed, what will be the next thing? What a lovely production this map is. It shows a railway from Hughenden to Winton and another from Longreach to Winton, and I suppose that after this extension is constructed we shall be asked to build a railway north-west from Charleville, so as to take away the whole of the Central traffic. Would that be a fair thing? There are only ten or eleven members for the Central district, and what are they in this House? They have no power in this House. The greed of the Southern members is exemplified by what the hon. member for Balonne said to-night. He told us that Rockhampton was the daughter of the horse-leech, and wanted everything. I do not think that Rockhampton wants more than she is entitled to, and it does no good to sling dirt of that kind. We can do no good by continuing this discussion, because I am satisfied that if the present Ministry remain in power—I trust they will not—they will smash the Central district. I regret that there is no consolidated party on the other side to whom we can apply for assistance, but the strongest supporters the Government have got are the members of the Labour party, who come over here and vote with the Government on every possible occasion.

Mr. W. THORN: I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I think it is early enough to finish this debate this evening. It is certainly the first discussion we have had on any of the railways proposed with the Speaker in the chair. In the case of the other nine lines, the debate took place in committee, and as the Central members have chosen to take the debate on this line with the Speaker in the chair, I think we might finish it to-night. A good deal of extraneous matter has been introduced into the debate. We have wandered from Normanton to Broken Hill, and from separation to federation, and a great many other topics have been introduced into this proposal. The hon. member for Fitzroy stated that he would not impute motives, and he then imputed motives to me in bringing this railway forward. I think I am justified in replying to what the hon. member said.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member will remember that I stopped the hon. member for Fitzroy.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, after he had made the statement. The hon. member knows I have no interest in the firm of Burns, Philp, and Co., and it was a cowardly thing of him to bring that forward to-night. He also knows that the fact of my being member for Townsville makes no difference in the matter, because it is all the same to Townsville whether the Northern line is extended due west, west-south-west, or south-west. The Central members are trying to show that the railway would open up better country if it were extended from Hughenden to the west-south-west.

The SPEAKER: I would remind the hon. gentleman that the question now is the adjournment of the debate. He will have the right of reply when that question is disposed of. He now appears to be replying to what hon. members have said.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I think that we might come to a division on the question.

Mr. POWERS: I would ask the hon. gentleman what he means by coming to a division on the question. There is no amendment before the House, and I do not suppose he means to keep the Speaker the chair.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: My motion is before the House.

Mr. POWERS: Yes, but there has been no amendment moved upon that motion. Does the hon. gentleman mean to put it through committee to-night? The question has been debated up to 11 o'clock, and this is an important question which wants consideration. The junior member for Rockhampton made as able a speech as has been made this session, and hon. members ought to have time to consider the arguments he brought forward.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have made up your mind.

Mr. POWERS: I am talking of hon. members generally. I think that at 11 o'clock an adjournment might very well be granted.

Mr. McDONALD: The Secretary for Railways might give us some idea whether he intends to go into committee with this proposal to-night. Surely he can say yes or no. The whole question hinges upon his answer. If he intends to go into committee, why not say so?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We have not got into committee yet.

Mr. McDONALD: But do you intend to take it into committee?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, certainly; take it into committee. I do not say we will push it through.

Question—That the debate be now adjourned—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 25.

Messrs. Murray, Archer, Glassey, Fisher, McDonald, Groom, Powers, King, Fogarty, Drake, Browne, Turley, Harding, Jackson, Rawlings, Callan, W. Thorn, Dawson, Harlaore, Curtis, Morgan, Boles, Kerr, Cross, and Ogden.

NOES, 30.

Messrs. Nelson, Chataway, Watson, McMaster, Philp, Byrnes, Dickson, Morehead, Tozer, Barlow, Dalrymple, Crombie, Leahy, Cameron, Duffy, Midson, Annear, Bell, Stephens, Grimes, Cornfield, Phillips, Agnew, Kingsbury, Petrie, Plunkett, Smith, Battersby, Smyth, and Tooth.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Messrs. Dunsford and Reid.

Noes—Messrs. Daniels and Wilkinson.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. CAMERON: The hon. member for Fitzroy referred to a telegram purporting to come from Mr. Meacham, of Longreach, to the effect that I had been asked to protest against the construction of the line from Hughenden towards Winton. I most distinctly state that I have never received from Mr. Meacham, or anybody else in Longreach, any telegram of the kind. More than that, if I had received such a telegram I should have asserted my right to use my own judgment. Some figures were given by the hon. member for Fitzroy with regard to the effect of this extension upon the traffic along the line to Rockhampton. I know that district very well indeed—in fact, I do not think any hon. member, except the hon. members for Balonne and Warrego, knows it as well as I do, and my opinion is that if this line is extended it will not injure the Central line at all. I am going to take a line from a point about 25 miles north-east from Bowen Downs. First, there is a place called Adelong, where there are about 15,000 sheep. Bowen Downs has, I think, about 300,000 sheep, but I have not got the figures. Then Mount Cornish has about 30,000 head of cattle; next there is Kensington with 150,000 sheep; then Green Hills with 100,000 sheep; then Darr River Downs with 300,000 sheep; then Evesham with over 250,000 sheep; then Corona with 200,000 sheep; then Silsoe with about 100,000 sheep, and Vergemont with 35,000 head of cattle. In fact, the stations along that line represent about 1,500,000 sheep and 65,000 head of cattle, and they all go to Rockhampton, and I believe that

even if this line is built they will still go there. Bowen Downs and Kensington did not avail themselves of the line to Hughenden, and I do not think they will avail themselves of that line if it is extended to Winton. The same may be said of all the places I have mentioned. I think this extension will benefit the people west of Winton, and open up a large tract of country. It will not injure Rockhampton, and I will not oppose it.

Mr. HARDING: I do not agree with the remarks of the last speaker. I know that country as well as anybody, and am quite satisfied that if this extension is carried out, it will take a considerable amount of traffic from the Central line. It is not a question of Townsville or Rockhampton, but of whether the interests of the country are to be conserved. No one who reads the evidence given before the select committee will have any doubt that the verdict of the minority was the correct verdict in the interests of the country. If that line is run as recommended by the minority, towards Kynuna, it will open up a large tract of country and increase the carrying capacity of that country which is not so heavily stocked as it might be. A line south-west from Hughenden right across to the border will open up the very best country in Queensland—high downs country; but by taking the railway south to Winton it will just get on the verge of the good country, and a little more to the south the country is almost useless. It is only cattle country, and very bad cattle country at that. On this proposed 66 miles of railway there can be no close settlement, owing to the nature of the country. At Stamfordham there is very good downs country, but without timber. There are no facilities for collecting water, and boring is of a most expensive character. It has been proved by experience that from there down to the valley of the Thomson boring is a very expensive luxury and far beyond the small means of the grazing farmer. The evidence taken by the committee proves conclusively that, taking a west-south-west direction, water is easily obtained, and at so small an expense as to render the country available for close settlement; and, as Mr. Jopp says in his evidence, there are no engineering difficulties in taking the railway in that direction. The evidence also shows that a west-south-west line will open up a large quantity of good country, as fine country as any we have in the colony. Tarbrax and all the country about there is splendid country, now occupied by cattle which would be replaced by sheep. In the interests of the country and of the general taxpayer there can be no two opinions as to which course should be taken, if we leave out self-interest and construct the line on commercial principles. When you pass Ayrshire Downs you come to a lot of indifferent country. There is some very good country there, but it is patchy, and a lot of it is dry. A line taken west-south-west will tap far more good country, and be the most direct route to Boulia, in spite of all that was said before the committee. But there is, no doubt, another object in view. It is not so much the extension of the line to Winton as it is an attempt to cut into the territory of Central Queensland; and I suppose the next move will be, on the part of the South, to extend their line to Adavale, and then on to the Thomson, and so cut another slice from the district. There is no doubt we are the Queensland Ishmael; we have North and South against us, and they want to divide us up between them. To say that this line will not take traffic from the Central Railway is altogether wrong. The great bulk of the sheep in that district are down near Longreach. Vindex and all the other stations in that

vicinity, which now send their traffic along the Central Railway, will divert it to the Northern Railway, and it will be detrimental to the interests of the province. The Central line has resulted in large townships springing up in the West, and if the Northern line was extended to Kynuna we should, no doubt, find the same result as at Longreach. We have no right to consider the interests of any town in connection with railway communication, and when people are within 80 or 100 miles of a railway they have very little to complain of. Winton is already better served with railway communication than almost any other place in the colony. It has a railway on one side within 110 miles, and on the other side within 120 miles, and men can carry on sheep-farming profitably when they have only that distance to carry their wool. I have carried wool over 100 miles, and I did not find it any bar to the industry. A west-south-west railway will open up a large tract of country now outside the range of stocking with sheep. I am afraid the grazing-farm settlement about Winton that has been so much talked of will be a failure. No artesian water has yet been obtained there at a less depth than 3,000 odd feet, and I fail to see how grazing farming can possibly be a success under such conditions; and there is very little chance of collecting surface water there. The creeks are neither many nor good. There is no comparison between that country and the country about Longreach as far as adaptability for settlement is concerned; and those who make such comparisons in favour of Winton know as much about the quality of the land as a cow does of a musket. The Thomson country is peculiarly suitable for close settlement, as is shown by the manner in which it is being taken up and utilised. At Winton there is the water difficulty and the absence of timber for fencing. In the Longreach country there is plenty of timber for fencing.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: Nonsense!

Mr. HARDING: I ought to know. I know the country just as well as you do.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: And we differ in opinion.

Mr. HARDING: My opinion is just as good as yours, and I challenge you to disprove what I say.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: I saw it before you were ever in the district.

Mr. HARDING: You may have seen it before I did, but you do not know more about it.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must address the Chair.

Mr. HARDING: In the Winton district timber is very scarce and water difficult to get, and therefore there would be great difficulty in inducing small holders to settle there. But there is a good supply of water on the Thomson in many places; it is as well watered country as I know of; and round about Mount Cornish the land is all fit for close settlement. A lot of the country has been taken up, and if the land had not been withdrawn there would have been very much more settlement there to-day than there is. As the hon. member for Normanby remarked, it is very strange that in most cases the witnesses who came before the committee gave evidence up to a certain point, but when evidence was asked for beyond that point they had to calculate. It looked very much as if the witnesses were primed to answer certain questions. Mr. McDowall was able to give the nearest point to Townsville from the Central district, and he also gave the nearest point in the Gulf district, but when he was asked how much of the Southern division was nearer Rockhampton than Brisbane he could not answer without making a calculation.

I think a witness giving evidence should be prepared to answer all questions that may be put to him. Mr. Perse speaks very highly of the country to the west-south-west, and he shows that that would be the correct route to take the railway in the interests of the country. He says that a great deal of the land along the proposed route is useless without artificial water, and even with it it requires a good flood to make it of any use. Mr. Jopp's evidence is very conclusive in favour of the minority report. Speaking of the country to the west of Hughenden he is asked—

"Is it moderately well watered, or is it very dry? The higher parts of the country are moderately well watered.

"As you go lower down the Diamantina the country gets drier? Yes. The main rivers are well watered, but the smaller creeks are insignificant. The country is more level, and the rainfall smaller.

"How long is it since you were out there? About twelve years.

"At that time, of course, the country was chiefly occupied by cattle? Yes."

That gentleman has been a Government surveyor; he was engaged in surveying a number of the runs, and there is no one better qualified to express an opinion on the country. He goes on to say that the country around Winton is good sheep country. I say that we should look to the general interests of the country and extend our lines in the directions which are likely to open up most country to settlement, and that we have no right to construct lines in such a way that they will compete with one another. Mr. Jopp, in further examination by Mr. Murray, was asked these questions—

"By Mr. Murray: Have you been through to Longreach? Yes.

"What is the character of the country there? Mostly downs country—good sheep country.

"By Mr. Philp: Do you know the country immediately west from Longreach—say, fifty miles west? Yes; you have to cross a lot of patches of poor country to the west of Longreach.

"By Mr. Murray: How far west of Longreach would you go before you get into the inferior country? Thirty or forty miles to Vergemont Creek waters, and then it is inferior right across to the Diamantina."

So that if the line is taken to Winton it will be taken to the verge of the good country; whereas if it is taken in the other direction it will open up magnificent country right up to the South Australian border—well-watered sheep country. A good deal has been said about sheep being taken off Warenda. I believe one of the reasons why they were taken off was because they did not increase there. What with the dogs and one thing and another there was not sufficient inducement to keep them there.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: Are you sure of that?

Mr. HARDING: Yes.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: Well, I know more about it than you do.

Mr. HARDING: I know that is one of the reasons.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: Some men know other people's business best.

Mr. HARDING: Do you say that is not one of the reasons?

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: I say it is a piece of impertinence referring to it.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is out of order in repeatedly interjecting while another hon. member is speaking.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: I rise to a point of order. I do not say it is within the bounds of our rules, but surely it is within the bounds of common sense that I should object to the hon. gentleman alluding to the affairs of a body of persons who may be connected with a business with which I may have something to do. I say it is a piece of impertinence.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for North Rockhampton is responsible for the statement he made, and the hon. member is not in order in interjecting.

Mr. HARDING: I made that statement simply because it was made use of before. You cannot stop people from talking.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD rose to speak.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Rockhampton North is in possession of the Chair.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: Destroying a man's property by telling lies in this House!

The SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the hon. member to withdraw that remark.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: I withdraw it with pleasure, but the fact remains.

The SPEAKER: I must ask the hon. member to withdraw it unreservedly.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD: I shall withdraw it unreservedly.

Mr. HARDING: The evidence of the Commissioner, of Mr. Gray, one of the late commissioners, and of Mr. Thallon, the General Traffic Manager, shows that this line will take a certain amount of traffic from the Central line; and that will do no good to the colony. On the other hand, if it is taken in a west-south-west direction from Hughenden it will open up a large tract of country, benefit the trade of Townsville, increase the receipts on the Northern Railway, benefit the colony generally, and do no harm to anybody. I intend to vote against the motion.

Mr. CROSS: The debate has been interesting as far as a few hon. members are concerned, and I am sure that the excellent speech delivered by the junior member for Rockhampton was one of the ablest speeches delivered in this House. One of the reasons why the House should not go into committee is, as stated by that hon. member, that the Premier promised that this line would not be brought forward this session. That statement was borne out by the hon. member for Fitzroy, and I can only attribute the change of attitude to a desire on the part of the Government to break up as far as possible the persistent agitation for separation. The most disinterested evidence given before the select committee shows in my opinion that this railway is not necessary, and that, if constructed, it will not fulfil the anticipations of its advocates. Moreover, after the opinions expressed by Sir Samuel Griffith, Sir Thomas McLlwraith, and others, I consider it is bad taste on the part of the Government to propose a railway running in this direction, from Hughenden towards Winton. Previous speakers have only referred to portions of the evidence, but so far as I am concerned I am determined to get at the truth of the matter, and I think the public should be given through *Hansard* that information on this subject which they have a right to obtain. I intend therefore to read through this evidence, and comment upon such portions of it as I think require comment. [The hon. member here proceeded to read the evidence.]

The SPEAKER: I warn the hon. member not to read the evidence through in that way. He will certainly not be in order in doing so.

Mr. HARDING called attention to the state of the House.

Quorum present.

Mr. CROSS: Do I understand that I will not be allowed to read quotations from the evidence?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member may read quotations, but I distinctly understood him to say that he was going to read the evidence all through, and comment upon such portions of it as he thought fit, for the purpose of getting it

into *Hansard*. If that is the hon. member's intention, he will certainly be out of order in doing so, and I shall certainly not allow it.

Mr. CROSS: If you have power not to allow that kind of thing, I must bow to it. I did not intend to read the whole of the evidence for the purpose of getting it into *Hansard*, nor do I expect that it would appear in *Hansard*. I desire to make pretty lengthy quotations—

The SPEAKER: I wish the hon. member would speak from his place, and not from the table.

Mr. CROSS: I would like to know from hon. members some constitutional authority deciding whether I should speak from the table or not.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member cannot question my decision. I tell him that he must speak from his place. That is one of the Standing Orders, and he must obey the Standing Orders.

Mr. CROSS: I am anxious to do so, but I will not stand any unnecessary interruptions.

The SPEAKER: Order! If the hon. member insinuates that I am in any way dealing harshly with him, I shall call upon him to resume his seat. I am only now enforcing the Standing Orders.

Mr. CROSS: So far as that is concerned I have noticed very recently several members, and noticeably the Colonial Secretary, addressing the House from the table. The junior hon. member for Townsville addressed the Chair from the table, and no attention was called to it.

The SPEAKER: Order! I distinctly told the junior member for Townsville that he made a mistake, and that I should not allow it again. I allowed him to go on because it was the first time I noticed it in the House. I did not wish to interrupt him in the course of his speech, but I distinctly told him for his information, and for the information of other hon. members, that I should not allow it again—that each hon. member must address the House from his place in the House.

Mr. CROSS: I am glad to hear it is so, but it is somewhat significant to me that you directed your attention to this subsequent to the Colonial Secretary speaking—

The SPEAKER: Order! I will not have the hon. member reflecting in any way upon my decision. If the Colonial Secretary did address the House from the table, it was an inadvertence; I did not see it. The hon. member must not reflect upon my decision, because I wish to deal with him as I deal with every other hon. member of this House.

Mr. CROSS: Well, from my place in this House I will read quotations from this very interesting document. [The hon. member then proceeded to read the evidence given on page 11 of the report of the select committee.] Mr. Morehead asked whether Cambridge Downs was not cattle, and the witness said "No." Then he asked further, what about Llanrheidol, and was told that it was sheep country. Mr. Philp next tackled the witness, and asked—

"During the seventeen years you have been at Winton, have you suffered severely from drought? Only twice to my recollection."

The SPEAKER: I wish to inform the hon. member that we are not now discussing the report of the committee, and unless the hon. member's quotations are relevant to the question before the House—that is, that I do now leave the chair—I shall call upon him to resume his seat. I now warn him not to transgress the rules of the House. It is evident to me that the hon. member is deliberately attempting to stop the business of the House, and if he persists in doing so I shall call upon him to resume his seat.

Mr. CROSS: I do not wish to come to close quarters with you, Sir, on the floor of the House

at all events. I am desirous as far as possible to conform to the rules of the House, and I am also desirous of discussing this question as far as possible. Only a day or two ago I had a conversation with a gentleman who has a very large property in the Central district, out west beyond the termini of the existing railway, and he informed me that the only advantage he received from railway communication was quicker transit for his wool to the seaboard, and that the question of cost was not worth mentioning. He has had experience in that part of the colony as well as in other districts and in New South Wales, and his experience is that teams are very successfully competing with the railways, and, in fact, carrying wool for considerable distances within cooe of the railways. That is another reason why this and some of the other railways proposed by the Government should not be entertained at the present time. It has been said that the construction of this railway would lead to cattle stations being transformed into sheep runs, but Mr. Jopp says that it will not induce anyone to go in for sheep-farming in that part of Queensland. He also thinks there would be great difficulty in extending the line west from Winton. I attach great importance to the view that the construction of this line will seriously interfere with the traffic on the Central Railway. I ask, would any private company owning the two lines extend one line so as to take away traffic from the other? Until the question involved in the Financial Districts Bill and the question of separation are settled, it is not a fair thing for the Government to propose to construct this railway, which will interfere seriously with the returns from the Central Railway.

At five minutes past 12 o'clock,

Mr. KERR called attention to the state of the House.

Quorum formed.

Mr. CROSS: In the question of a railway from Hughenden to Winton and from Winton to Boulia, Central Queensland should have a very important say. It was admitted in evidence that while about two-thirds of the Central division were nearer Townsville than Rockhampton, at least two-thirds of the Southern district were nearer Rockhampton than Brisbane; yet if a proposal was made to build a line from Alpha to Adavale it would be laughed out of the House as a villainous attempt on the part of Central Queensland to rob the South of its rights. Mr. Mathieson says in his evidence that a line to Kynuna would meet the wants of that part of the colony, and that the system of railways shown on the map might not be completed within fifty years. The opinion of the Chief Commissioner must be taken for what it is worth, and in my opinion it is something to smile at. The most material witnesses before the committee were Mr. Jopp and Mr. Gray, and the balance of their evidence is decidedly against the Government proposal. I do not desire to occupy the time of the House longer than is necessary, and I will conclude by moving that all the words after the word "chair" be omitted.

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

AYES, 25.

Messrs. Phillips, Chataway, McMaster, Kingsbury, Tooth, Corfield, Duffy, Grimes, Ogdén, Morehead, Philp, Dalrymple, Tozer, Nelson, Cameron, Crombie, Watson, Smith, Midson, Petrie, Barlow, Stephens, Leahy, Dawson, and Byrnes.

NOES, 17.

Messrs. Curtis, Cross, Hardacre, Fisher, Murray, Kerr, Callan, Archer, Powers, Hardin, McDonald, Browne, Drake, Turley, Boles, King, and Rawlings.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Messrs. Dunsford, Foxton, Dickson, Jackson, Reid, Smyth, and Battersby,

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Noes—Messrs. Wilkinson, Plunkett, Daniels, Glassey, Fogarty, W. Thorn, and Groom.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. HARDACRE: I do not want to do any stonewalling, and I have no objection to the Speaker leaving the chair, but I think after that we might adjourn. The Government will get their business done more quickly if they adjourn instead of attempting to force this matter through committee to-night. The back of the discussion has been broken, and to-morrow we will be able to come to a decision. If the Government have any regard for their own position they ought to allow the fullest discussion upon this, the most important railway that has come before us, seeing that at least one-third of the colony is opposed to its construction.

Question put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 25.

Messrs. Nelson, Philp, Barlow, Tozer, Dalrymple, Morehead, Byrnes, Corfield, Kingsbury, Ogdén, Dawson, Stephens, Grimes, Duffy, Tooth, Crombie, Cameron, Smith, McMaster, Phillips, Watson, Midson, Chataway, and Leahy.

NOES, 16.

Messrs. Curtis, Cross, Hardacre, Kerr, King, Boles, Rawlings, Drake, Browne, Powers, Harding, Archer, Callan, Murray, McDonald, and Fisher.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Messrs. Dunsford, Reid, Foxton, Battersby, Dickson, Jackson, and Smyth.

Noes—Messrs. Wilkinson, Plunkett, Daniels, Glassey, Fogarty, W. Thorn, and Groom.

Resolved in the affirmative.

COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS said it was not his intention to make a long speech, seeing that the matter had been well debated, but in moving the adoption of the plans he wished to state that the matter had nothing to do with federation or separation. The two members of the committee who were opposed to the line were agreed that it should go west-south-west, but if the proposed line were extended to Bculia, that was further south than Winton. In reply to the hon. members for North Rockhampton and Enoggera he could only say that there was no sinister motion in carrying the line into Central territory. Any impartial man must see that the proposed route was the proper one to adopt. Cloncurry was 500 miles from Townsville and only 250 miles from Normanton. Was it a fair thing that they should construct a line 500 miles long from Townsville when 250 miles would do? All the way from Hughenden to Winton there were sheep, while there were many cattle stations on the other route, and there was no doubt that it would not pay to carry the line through cattle country. If the country was suitable, and the owners thought they could make sheep pay better than cattle, why did they not turn their cattle into sheep now? The whole of the country between Hughenden and Winton was already stocked with sheep; there were a number of stations to the west of Winton stocked with sheep and cattle; and no doubt when the line was made the cattle would have to make way for sheep. The land between Hughenden and Winton was suitable for grazing farms. On the square about Longreach there were over 1,000,000 sheep, and if this line was made there would be as many on the square about Winton. In 1886 it was acknowledged by the Central members that the Central line should not be extended to Winton, but that a line should be made from Hughenden. It was in the interests of the colony that the line should be extended from Hughenden to Winton, and that was the sole reason why it was proposed by the Government. A great deal too much had been made of the tremendous traffic which the Winton line was to

take from Longreach, as it would only affect one station—that was Vindex. It was in the interest of the Western portion of the colony that that line should be built, and if there was any benefit to be derived from cheaper railway carriage they were entitled to it. At present the line to Charters Towers was paying 12 per cent., and from Charters Towers to Hughenden it was paying 6 per cent., though that line only went through about 30 miles of sheep country. The line from Hughenden to Winton would pay almost, if not quite, as well as the line from Charters Towers to Hughenden; and it would be followed by as much settlement to the west of Winton as there was to the west of Hughenden now. So far as the interests of Townsville were concerned, it would suit Townsville just as well to carry the line from Hughenden to Cloncurry as from Hughenden to Winton; but it would not suit Normanton as well. In times past the Northern men were not found opposing the lines proposed in the Central district though the railway to Clermont overlooked the claims of Broomsound, and the railway to Springsure overlooked the claims of Gladstone. The Government had treated the Rockhampton people exceedingly well, and they only asked now that the Central people should treat the Northern people with equal justice. £3,000,000 had been spent on the Central Railway system, with a population of about 40,000, and with about the same population on the Northern Railway they had spent only a little over £1,000,000. The hon. member for Enoggera said it would be better to build the line from Normanton to Cloncurry at once, but the Government were proposing to build a line now from the Gulf, that from Croydon towards Georgetown. Along that line there was more settlement than on the line to Cloncurry, and the line would open up the country to mining settlement, and mining centres had saved the colony before now. At that early hour he would not attempt to go over all the speeches that had been made, but he maintained that that line had nothing whatever to do with separation or federation, but it was simply the best extension of the Northern line they could recommend with the information before them, including that supplied by the select committee. That committee consisted of one man from the Gulf and two each from the North, Central, and South, and was as impartial a committee as they could get in the House. No one who read the evidence could come to any other conclusion than that which the committee came to. He repeated that the line was being proposed in the interests of the whole colony, and the interests of the Western producers were entitled to consideration above the interests of any seaport in the colony.

Mr. POWERS was very sorry that the Minister proposed to go on with that railway at that time of the morning. It would have been very much better had he made the speech which he had just delivered earlier in the evening; and he might have done so, because he knew that the line was going to be opposed.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I did not anticipate that this debate would take place before we went into committee.

Mr. POWERS: The speech was made when there were not many more than half of the members present, and very few members had had an opportunity of speaking. He had not spoken, as he thought that the members directly interested should have an opportunity of speaking first. The line had nothing to do with separation at present, but it would have a great deal to do with separation at some future time. He did not doubt that the line would pay, but it would pay at the expense of the Central Railway. The real question they had to consider was whether it would pay the colony as a whole,

and he contended it would not pay to have two lines in competition with one another. As for the argument that the people out West were to be considered, and that they should have a line to the nearest port, if they were to act on that principle they would be justified in making a railway from Woowoonga or Kilkivan to Chinchilla, and the whole Charleville district, as the port of Maryborough was 70 or 80 miles nearer to that district than Brisbane was, but if any such proposal was made, he was sure Southern members would stonewall it, not for one night, but for weeks. And the same members who were supporting the extension from Hughenden to Winton would strongly oppose a proposal to make a railway from, say, Alpha on the Central line to Augathella or Adavale. He had opposed the proposal made three years ago by the Secretary for Railways to include the Winton district in the Northern division, and he still thought that the boundaries laid down in the Financial Districts Bill were the best that could be adopted. They had the opinion of Sir T. McIlwraith, who knew the country well, that a line extending from Hughenden to Cloncurry would open up splendid country.

The Hon. B. D. MOREHEAD said that in his long experience as a member of that House, he had never known much good done by sitting later than half-past 1, and he advised the Government to adjourn.

Mr. FISHER thought it was time to adjourn, as it was important that hon. members who discussed the works policy of the Government should be reported. He also understood that, on the strength of a promise made earlier in the evening by the Government that the House would adjourn soon after the Speaker left the chair, several hon. members had gone away, and he therefore thought it was only fair that they should adjourn.

Mr. ARCHER said that the Secretary for Railways had not convinced him that he was wrong in contending that a railway to the west-south-west from Hughenden would be the most beneficial for the country. If the Government accepted the advice of the hon. member for Balonne, they would be likely to arrive at a speedier conclusion on the question.

Mr. CURTIS again referred to the statement of the Railway Commissioner that this line would not pay beyond the 65 miles. He also contended that it was very probable that the line would not be constructed for the amount estimated. The cheapest line yet constructed cost £2,600 per mile, and as timber was plentiful there, which it was not on the line before them, it was quite likely the latter would not cost less than £3,000 per mile. The Secretary for Railways said there was no question of federation or separation involved in the question. The question of separation was certainly not introduced into the subject by the Government, but when the question did come up at some future time it would be greatly prejudiced, as far as the Central district was concerned, by the construction of the proposed railway. The hon. gentleman also said that Rockhampton had nothing to complain of; but he talked very differently on that matter a few years ago. The Central members did not think so, at all events.

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. CURTIS repeated, at some length, his previous arguments.

Mr. FISHER again called attention to the state of the Committee.

Quorum formed.

Mr. BOLES was thoroughly in favour of extending the trunk lines, but any scheme which

brought them into competition with one another was very bad policy, and it had been admitted by Mr. Thallon that the proposed line would come into competition with the Central line. For that reason alone the whole matter was well worthy of most serious consideration. He believed the line should be run more in the direction of Richmond, where it would have opened up a larger amount of new country.

At 2 a.m.,

The CHAIRMAN reminded the hon. member that he was not discussing the railway before the Committee.

Mr. BOLES continued his remarks, and concluded by saying that if he thought the line would conduce to the welfare of the country generally he would have no hesitation in supporting it; but he could not do so because he believed that the line should go in a different direction.

Mr. CALLAN said the question had been debated since 4 o'clock in the afternoon. There were now five members asleep, and the rest were half asleep. Under the circumstances he thought they had better adjourn, and he moved that the Chairman leave the chair.

Mr. BATTERSBY thought the hon. member should give some reason for his motion; otherwise it looked like obstruction.

Mr. CALLAN said he had no desire to obstruct; he wanted to go home.

Mr. BOLES said that good reason had been given for the motion in the time which had already been given to the question. He urged that they should adjourn.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS saw no reason for adjourning. A great deal of time had been wasted in discussing matters which had nothing to do with the question. He was prepared to go to a vote at any time, and if hon. members talked for a week the voting on the question would be the same.

Mr. KERR said the motion was one which should have been accepted by the Government some hours before. Some members had gone home on the understanding that when the question got into committee the House would adjourn. The Government were giving those who opposed them in the Central district a handle for the elections.

Mr. FISHER repeated the request for an adjournment. It would be good for both sides.

Mr. BATTERSBY would do what he could to prevent the Chairman leaving the chair until the plans were approved.

Mr. McDONALD supported the motion. In the early part of the evening he had waived his right to discuss certain details on the understanding that he would be able to deal with them in committee.

Mr. RAWLINGS, Mr. CROSS, and Mr. DANIELS supported the motion.

At 2.40 a.m.,

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

AYES, 18.

Messrs. Kerr, Murray, Callan, Hardacre, McDonald, Fisher, Curtis, Rawlings, Dunsford, Turley, Daniels, Cross, Browne, Boles, Powers, Harding, King, and Ogden.

NOES, 22.

Messrs. Nelson, Barlow, Tozer, Dalrymple, Philp, McMaster, Smith, Smyth, Tooth, Leahy, DuFy, Grimes, Battersby, Corfield, Conaway, Phillips, Crombie, Petrie, Cameron, Watson, Stephens, and Midson.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. McDONALD argued that taking the line due west for the same distance would pay as well as the line to Winton, and it would go over better country for water, and would reach the Woolgar Gold Field, which with railway communication would probably lead to a considerable development of that part of the country.

It was necessary that they should have a recognised national system of railways, because in the last few years they had had three or four systems suggested.

Mr. DANIELS did not believe that the Government intended to carry out the line, but that it was a bunch of carrots for the election. The line should have gone to Cloncurry, and it would have opened up a vast extent of country from which they could not get the traffic now.

At 3.30 a.m.,

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. BATTERSBY contended that the Government did right in the face of the altered conditions of the colony in changing the railway policy adopted thirty years ago.

At 3.35 a.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: I call upon the hon. member for Woolloongabba, Mr. Stephens, to relieve me in the chair.

Mr. STEPHENS thereupon took the chair.

Mr. KERR said that if the Government were anxious to give the people railway communication they should have given a railway to take the trade of Blackall, Tambo, and the surrounding districts before they proposed to give Winton a railway. There was a scarcity of natural water around Winton as compared with Longreach, and the cost of sinking for artesian water there was so great as to prevent settlement by small people.

At 3.45,

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

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I understand that is the same motion as was moved before, and it is therefore out of order to move it now.

Mr. HARDACRE said that line was the least urgent of all the railways brought down by the Government. The opposition to the line was not confined to Rockhampton solely, as the chairman of an important divisional board in his electorate had requested him to oppose it. The argument that Townsville was nearer to Winton than Rockhampton was a strong one, but the Government did not adopt that argument in connection with other proposals for railways. It was objected that to take the line from Hughenden to Cloncurry would interfere with the line to be constructed from Normanton to Cloncurry, but that argument should have greater force when applied to the existing Central line.

Mr. McMASTER advised hon. members opposite to discontinue stonewalling and allow the question to go to a vote. They might talk for the next twenty-four hours and the result would be the same—a vote would be taken and the railway carried.

Mr. FISHER denied that there was anything in the shape of organised stonewalling on that side of the Committee, and claimed that they were there for deliberation. The Government had played into the hands of the opponents of railways in not adjourning the debate early the previous evening, as it showed that they were afraid to allow full debate on the question.

Mr. HARDING said that some Northern members who were supporting that line were very careful not to trench on the trade belonging to the Gulf ports, but it would be found if that line was constructed, they would in time take the Gulf trade to Townsville. He repeated his arguments against this railway, and contended that it was a most disgraceful thing for the Government to use their majority to force a division on the question without full opportunity being given for discussion.

Mr. MURRAY said as it was now nearly 5 o'clock, and as they had very important business

before them that afternoon, it was desirable that they should adjourn. He moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report no progress, and ask leave to sit again.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I believe that that motion is of an obstructive character, and I rule it out of order.

Mr. BOLES moved that the ruling of the Acting Chairman be disagreed to.

Mr. FISHER, rising to address the Chair,

The ACTING CHAIRMAN said: I rule that the motion cannot be debated.

Question—That the ruling of the Acting Chairman be disagreed to—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 17.

Messrs. Fisher, Hardacre, Kerr, King, Turley, Callan, Cross, Harding, Browne, Boles, Daniels, Rawlings, McDonald, Dunsford, Murray, Powers, and Curtis.

NOES, 22.

Messrs. Nelson, Barlow, Philp, Tozer, Dalrymple, Chataway, Byrnes, Watson, McMaster, Crombie, Duffy, Cameron, Battersby, Smyth, Corfield, Tooth, Phillips, Grimes, Smith, Annear, Petrie, and Midson.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. POWERS pointed out that there were only about forty members present, and again urged that they should adjourn, as several hon. members had gone home under the impression that an understanding had been arrived at that when the House went into committee the Chairman would be moved out of the chair, and that no vote would be taken at that sitting.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied that the hon. member for Toowong came to him about 8 o'clock and said he was going to vote for the railway, but he wished to go home. He suggested that the hon. member should pair with the hon. member for Flinders, and intimated that if they got into committee before half-past 10 he did not think he would go any further. But it was after 1 o'clock when they got into committee, and members having been kept there all night, he could not agree to an adjournment.

Mr. POWERS accepted the explanation, but hoped, as there was evidently some misunderstanding on the question, the debate would now be adjourned so as to allow members who were absent an opportunity of expressing their opinions and voting on the question.

Mr. PHILLIPS said the matter had now been before the House for thirteen hours. It was discussed on a previous occasion, when the hon. member for Rockhampton moved for the appointment of a select committee. That committee sat on six different days and examined all the experts and local residents they could get, and had brought up their report, which had now been before the House for several days. Yet hon. members wished to go on with obstruction. He was for going through with the matter, and hoped the Government would not adjourn.

Mr. HARDING contended that the report was not final, and that it had not been unduly discussed. If the matter had been adjourned, as was expected, business would have been accelerated.

Mr. BROWNE agreed that they should now see the thing through, but denied that the whole of the obstruction came from that side of the Committee. The strongest opposition to the railway, and the heaviest charges against the Government and the Secretary for Railways came from a supporter of the Government. After hearing the discussion he believed that he would vote against the line, although he was a Northern member.

Mr. KING was of opinion that the line was necessary, and that it was going in the right direction, but took exception to the statement that the obstruction came from that side of the Committee.

Mr. CROSS distinctly understood that when they got into committee they would adjourn; but when that compact was broken he felt he was justified in discussing the matter as he did until some understanding was arrived at.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS denied that any compact had been broken by the Government, and said the hon. member was stonewalling before they went into committee. The members for the Central district had consistently opposed the railway at every stage, and the matter having now been discussed for eighteen hours, the Government were bound in duty to the House and the country to resist that opposition.

Mr. CURTIS thought it would have been an extraordinary thing if Central members had not opposed the construction of the line, seeing that it was a railway that ought never to have been proposed, and which no Government ever would have proposed were it not for the numerical weakness of the Central members, as it was a departure from all past arrangements, and an outrage on the Central division. However, he would be quite willing to take a division on the question in a full House.

Mr. FISHER said that though the Central members had opposed the railway, the Premier had previously stated that he did not believe the hon. member for Rockhampton moved for the select committee with the view of shelving it in that way.

Mr. DANIELS again urged that they should now adjourn, and argued against the railway, quoting from the evidence in support of his opinions.

Mr. CROSS again spoke against the proposed line, and the action of the Government in connection with it.

Mr. MURRAY moved, in order to have the matter decided in a full House, that the Acting Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY said that the hon. member should have made his proposal before going into committee. The question had had every opportunity for full discussion, and the continued discussion could not lead to a change of opinion either in the Committee or outside. The only question before them was whether the route proposed was a proper route, and there could be no question of that. When they were considering where the money was to come from hon. members would have something to consider.

Mr. HARDACRE said that the Government had been asked before going into committee to adjourn, and up to that time there had been no obstruction offered to the resolution. Some of the Central members had not even spoken on the question at that time. If the Government had acceded to the request of hon. members, this debate would not have been so prolonged. What was now asked was that hon. members who had left the Chamber should have an opportunity of taking part in a division that afternoon.

Question put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 17.

Messrs. Callan, Kerr, Hardacre, Murray, Powers, McDonald, Browne, Harding, Turley, Cross, Curtis, Rawlings, King, Dunsford, Boles, Fisher, and Daniels.

NOES, 23.

Messrs. Nelson, Dalrymple, Barlow, Byrnes, Tozer, Philp, Crombie, McMaster, Duffy, Tooth, Ogden, Leahy, Grimes, Corfield, Phillips, Midson, Watson, Cameron, Annear, Petrie, Smith, Smyth, and Chataway.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. McDONALD said the hon. member for Toowong, who was the "whip" on that side, had told him that it was intended to adjourn immediately after the motion to go into committee was carried. It was owing to the Government breaking the compact that the obstruction had taken place.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS denied that he had broken any compact. He had informed the hon. member for Toowong, who had come to him and stated that he was anxious to support the resolution, and wanted the debate adjourned, that if the motion to go into committee was carried by half-past 10 he would go no further. He had advised the hon. member to pair with the hon. member for Flinders. Most hon. members who had gone away were in favour of the motion.

Mr. McDONALD said that certain Central members had been going to divide on the question that the Speaker leave the chair, and it was on that question that hon. members had paired, and not on the main question.

Original question put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 27.

Messrs. Nelson, Barlow, Tozer, Philp, Byrnes, Leahy, Dalrymple, Chataway, Ogden, Grimes, Tooth, Duffy, Rawlings, King, Turley, Dawson, Corfield, Dunsford, Phillips, Crombie, Smith, Watson, Midson, McMaster Petrie, Cameron, and Annear.

NOES, 13.

Messrs. Curtis, Powers, Hardacre, Cross, McDonald, Fisher, Kerr, Murray, Callan, Browne, Daniels, Boles, and Harding.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Messrs. Jackson, Smyth, Battersby, Dickson, Reid, Foxton, Kingsbury, and Morehead.

Noes—Messrs. Fogarty, W. Thorn, Groom, Glassey, Wilkinson, Plunkett, Drake, and Archer.

Resolved in the affirmative.

The House resumed; and the resolution agreed to in committee was adopted.

#### MIRANI-CATTLE CREEK RAILWAY.

##### REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

Mr. POWERS presented the report of the select committee on this line, and moved that the papers be printed.

Question put and passed; and the House adjourned at twenty minutes to 7 o'clock a.m.