

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 1896

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

2. That an Address be presented to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause to be placed upon the Supplementary Estimates of 1896-97 the sum of one thousand pounds (£1,000) to give effect to the foregoing resolution—

said: I shall endeavour, in view of this being private members' day, to condense my remarks into as brief a space as possible. I have been induced to bring this matter before the House, because I have watched what has been going on in other places in connection with the immense amount of good which has resulted to the agricultural, horticultural, and dairying interests by the State offering good prizes for competition amongst those who embark in those industries. I have looked round upon our various agricultural societies in this colony, one of which I have been an active member of for some years, and have studied their working to a considerable extent. I cannot altogether say, considering that we have an Agricultural Department, that it takes the interest in these societies that I think it ought to do. You generally find the officers of the Agricultural Department visiting the agricultural shows, looking at the exhibits, and sometimes judging them; but beyond a few observations made at the luncheon or dinner which follows, supposing they have an opportunity of speaking, the department is not furnished with any report, nor is anything further said as to the good quality or otherwise of the exhibits at these agricultural shows. The probabilities are that the show which these officers attend may have cost the country £100 at least by way of endowment, and yet no information whatever is furnished to the department as to whether that money has been efficiently expended or whether the working of the society is such that the State is justified in continuing the endowment. Then, take our National Society's show held in 1896. We had there district competitions. Exhibits from various districts were sent down to Brisbane, and everyone who had an opportunity of inspecting them must have acknowledged that those who took an interest in the districts they represented were deserving of all praise for the pains they took to make the competition a success. The officers of the department did not, however, come to examine the exhibits as experts for the purpose of giving a report to the Agricultural Department so that the districts interested might have the advantage of an expert's opinion, but the general public were unstinted in their praise of the efforts made by the several districts. I am of opinion, now that we have an Agricultural Department which is to have a Minister to itself, and which has engaged a number of experts, and judging from the appointment of Mr. Benson I believe it will prove a real benefit to the colony—that we should endeavour to make the department a real live department, and we would strengthen the hands of these experts in every way were we to give them an opportunity of showing to the colony the grit that is in them. I am of opinion that by offering State prizes and leaving these experts to be the judges they would have an opportunity of showing their skill in matters of this kind and thus indirectly be a source of great good to the colony. In the colony of New South Wales they have an officer who is sent round regularly to visit the agricultural shows and I shall read part of the instructions given to him. I lay emphasis upon this point just now because it is pertinent to the question. Last year we spent £1,500 upon endowment to agricultural and horticultural societies; this year we were asked to spend £2,500, and we have no report whatever furnished to Parliament or to the Minister as to what the colony is receiving in return for this expenditure. We should receive some report of the kind to guide hon. members

THURSDAY, 26 NOVEMBER, 1896.

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

SUPPRESSION OF GAMBLING ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, it was resolved—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Suppression of Gambling Act of 1895.

INDUSTRIAL STATE PRIZES.

Mr. GROOM, in moving—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the following resolutions:—

1. That, with the view of recognising the desirability of giving every encouragement to pastoral, agricultural, horticultural, and industrial pursuits, this House is of the opinion that the Agricultural Department should organise a system, under regulations to be approved by the Minister for Agriculture, of State prizes for competition in the various sections or classes of the pastoral, agricultural, horticultural, and industrial exhibitions held throughout the colony.

in coming to a decision as to whether such grants should or should not be continued. The officer sent round by the Agricultural Department of New South Wales has instructions given to him, and these are some of them :—

"His aim will be to bring the societies and the department into closer touch, and, by cordial co-operation and interchange of ideas in conference with the committees, to promote the interests of the societies and exhibitors. He will furnish to the department full reports of his impressions of the shows visited, which reports shall be available for perusal if required by the societies concerned. To enable the inspector to faithfully record each society's history and work, it is respectfully requested that the secretaries and committees will place all information at his disposal."

That is exactly what I think our officers visiting agricultural society shows should be asked to do.

The SPEAKER : Order ! I remind the hon. member that he is not speaking to his motion at all.

Mr. GROOM : I am coming to that.

The SPEAKER : The hon. member seems to me to be discussing the Agricultural Department, and this is clearly a motion asking for the expenditure of certain money in prizes.

Mr. GROOM : I am endeavouring to show the necessity for having prizes allotted ; and in referring to certain experts of the Agricultural Department I am endeavouring to explain that they have an opportunity to show their skill in visiting agricultural society shows in the manner I have indicated. To come more particularly to the motion, the prizes now offered by our agricultural societies are necessarily comparatively small, and, generally speaking, the competition for them is not very great. From the information I have gathered from other places, I am of opinion that, if the Agricultural Department were to step in and at the various societies' shows offer a larger amount as prizes than the societies can afford to offer, the number of exhibitors and exhibits would be increased and the quality of the exhibits would be improved. Take, for example, the case of wheat : The prize offered is generally a very small one, and the quantity of wheat asked to be exhibited is very small, sometimes not more than a bag containing, say, four bushels, which has very likely been carefully hand-picked. The exhibits under such conditions are not representative of the farms upon which they are grown ; but if the Agricultural Department offered prizes of, say, £25 and £15 for the best exhibit of twenty-five bushels of wheat in bulk, an opportunity would be afforded of showing what a district could actually produce. In dealing with the matter I had to consider how the difficulty of apportioning the money to the various districts was to be got over. In New South Wales £5,000 is voted for the purpose to which I suggest £1,000 should be devoted, and there the Secretary for Agriculture divided the colony into districts, such as No. 1 District, the South Coast Agricultural District ; No. 2, the North Coast District ; No. 3, the Tableland ; No. 4, the Pastoral District, where the grazing farms were, and so on ; and he apportioned to each an amount based upon its character. In one the amount was fixed at £200, in another at £300, in a third at £350, and so on. Then the Agricultural Department prescribes the objects for which the prizes are to be given. Thus, in an agricultural district, where farming horses are required, a prize of £10 10s. would be offered for the best entire draught horse suitable for farming work, and in a pastoral district prizes would be offered for the best ewe and ram or for the best exhibit of wool, and so on. In addition to those prizes there are champion prizes, or "national" prizes, as they are called there, competed for by persons in all parts of the colony. For instance, there is a prize of £50 for the best cultivated

farm in one portion of the colony, and £50 for the best farm in another, £25 for the best cultivated canefield, and in the same way all branches of industry receive recognition. I see that £30 was offered as a first prize and £20 as a second prize for the best sugar-cane farm. The Mining and Agricultural Departments are one in New South Wales, and prizes are offered also for the best collection of minerals, so that opportunity is given to show what the various districts are capable of producing. The Agricultural Department appoints its own judges in connection with these prizes, and will not allow persons in the district to undertake the duty, and regulations under which the judging is to take place are prescribed. Thus, in a mixed farm, points may be scored up to 1,000, covering general management, state of crops, methods of cultivation, and other conditions ; and in connection with dairying farms, the quality of the cattle, general management, and so on. The judges appointed, having made their awards, send in to the department a report containing a full description of the farms visited, how the farmer conducts his operations, what he grows, what profits he makes ; and the reports form very valuable additions to the annual reports of the department laid before Parliament, and they give the necessary information as to how the money voted by Parliament is spent, and the nature of the return the colony is getting for the expenditure. In a report here I find a reference to one farm of 175 acres, where the farmer is a practical man and does not put all his eggs into one basket. He produced fourteen different articles, on which he received a return of £394 with an expenditure of £168, showing a profit during the year of £226. His farm is described as having been found in excellent condition, and he was awarded a first prize. In another district a farm of over 200 acres is described, and a grazing farm of 5,000 acres is dealt with. There the receipts amounted to £4,911, chiefly from wheat and wool, and the wages and expenditure generally to £3,353, leaving a net profit of £1,558. The officer in charge of the judging sent to the department a full report as to the condition in which he found that grazing farm, and which has been found to be of great assistance to others. In fact, the reports of the judges on the various farms—agricultural, dairy, and grazing—were of such a character that it was as much as the department could do to supply the demand for copies. Ensilage, again, is a most important article in connection with our own colony. In New South Wales valuable prizes were offered for ensilage, and the result was of a most satisfactory character, proving beyond doubt that, if proper care is taken, enough of that valuable fodder can be obtained as will support cattle in times of drought, and so prevent the destruction of many of them from want of food. Those prizes were given by the Agricultural Department of New South Wales in 1892. Owing to the crisis of 1893 they were necessarily discontinued. The Government had to retrench considerably, and in the exercise of economy the prizes were cut down. Those prizes, I am glad to say, have again been renewed, and renewed in a very practical way. I have in my hand a letter from the Under Secretary for Agriculture in New South Wales, dated "Sydney, 6th October, 1896," in which he writes to me—

"I am directed to forward to you herewith a set of pamphlets showing the national prizes which have been offered by this department for competition in the different districts of this colony, and to inform you that in addition to these prizes, which were offered some years ago, the department has awarded special prizes :—For the best cultivated areas of sugar beet, £50 ; for the best rams and ewes at Sydney Sheep Show, £250 ; for the best sheep dressed for export, Sydney Sheep Show, £50 ; for the best exhibit of poultry dressed for export, Sydney Sheep Show, £15 ; for the best five cases of

butter, each 56 lb., Sydney Sheep Show, £50; to encourage dairying industry, £350; for the best exhibits of fruit, Central Cumberland Society's Show, £15; prize for sugar beet, Moss Vale, £10."

At the Sydney Sheep Show, held in July, there was a number of competitors from Queensland. The district of Kiama is noted for its excellent herds of dairy cattle, which are celebrated throughout Australia. At the national dairy show to be held here next January, open to all the colonies, the department propose to offer prizes amounting to £350. The Central Cumberland district is noted for its fruit, and at its show they propose, as will be seen, to offer a prize of £15. Now that the time of depression has passed away, the department is so well satisfied with the previous results that it has renewed and increased its efforts in that direction. What I ask the Assembly to do is to put our Agricultural Department in touch with the various agricultural and horticultural societies in the colony by offering prizes to be judged and reported upon by the experts of the department. It is, of course, necessary that the department itself should be centred in Brisbane, and to keep it in touch with the agricultural and horticultural portion of the communities all over the colonies, by means of its experts going from place to place judging exhibits is admittedly, I think, a step in the right direction. I do not think I am asking anything unreasonable. The Parliament of Victoria, recognising what has already been done by the bonus system in the export of Victorian butter to the value of over £1,000,000, has recently authorised the Treasurer to issue debentures amounting to £350,000 for the further encouragement of the agricultural, horticultural, and dairying industries. We have no reason to suppose, after the pinch Victoria sustained during the crisis of 1893, that that money will be recklessly thrown away. We may be sure that every effort will be made to see that it is expended profitably. I am only asking for £1,000 as an experiment in the direction of national prizes, but it will be enough for a commencement. One-half of the financial year is almost gone, and there will be only about seven months for the Agricultural Department to take action with regard to the amount, supposing the motion is carried. We have a dairy expert who has been doing very good work in the various farming districts, and he has instructed a large number of pupils in butter and cheese making. What better could the department do than offer a prize of £25 or £50 for the best exhibit of butter and cheese made by the pupils of the dairy expert, in some locality where the people can see what the expert is doing, and what valuable services he has rendered to the dairying industry? Prizes of this kind would give a stimulus to the various branches of the farming industry. I will not trouble the House too long in introducing the motion, as I am anxious it should not be talked out. I submit it in the interests of the agricultural portion of the community. I have certainly not taken it up with the view of popularity-hunting or anything of that sort. I take a deep interest in all agricultural matters, and I believe that if we offer national prizes as I have suggested the same practical good will result here as has resulted elsewhere. Before concluding I may mention, to show the stimulus given by these prizes, that in New South Wales they offer an exceedingly valuable prize for irrigation farms. In 1891 only two persons competed for that prize, while in 1892 there were seven competitors for it; and if it had been contested in 1893 I have no doubt a considerably larger number would have competed. I have here the reports of the expert on the whole of those seven irrigation farms, which are of a most interesting character, and

the Under Secretary tells me that the demand for them has been very large. In Queensland the reports of the experts sent to judge the exhibits competing for the national prizes would be sent to the Agricultural Department, and by them published in the ordinary bulletins. I should very much like to see in this colony the department issuing an agricultural paper every month, as is done in New South Wales. I am certain it would meet with a large amount of support from subscribers. At present, however, the reports can be issued in the form of bulletins, and in that way scattered throughout the colony, doing a considerable amount of good. I tender the motion with a sole desire to promote the agricultural industry. The sum I ask for is exceedingly moderate compared with what is given in other colonies, but it will do for a beginning, and I believe the results will be such that in future the department will be only too glad to ask Parliament to vote a larger sum for the purpose. I move the resolution standing in my name.

The PREMIER: It is exceedingly seldom that I take any part in private members' business on a Thursday. I suppose the only excuse I can give on this occasion is that some of my colleagues have been knocked up by the exertions of last night. But when I do deal with a resolution proposed by a private member the first thing that occurs to me is this: Is there any business in it? Will it result in anything?

Mr. JACKSON: It is for you to decide that.

The PREMIER: I am trying to say what I want to say, if the hon. member will allow me. The hon. member will surely allow me the right to speak. Having looked at the resolution, and having listened attentively to the speech of the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba, I have come to the conclusion that it does not mean "business" at all. What are we asked to do? The hon. member talked as if he was asking the House now to come to a resolution with regard to the giving of prizes for competition at agricultural shows under the auspices of the Agricultural Department. But that is not what he is really asking. All that the motion says is that on the next sitting day we should go into committee. There is nothing more in it than that, and the motion might just as well have been passed as formal as in any other way, because I suppose no member of the House would object to go into committee to consider, consult, and deliberate over a matter of this kind. I am not talking on the subject of the resolution at all; that is really not before us now; it is a matter that we ought, as the hon. member has properly put it, to consult about in committee. But suppose the resolution were carried, what would result? We should simply affirm that the House at its next sitting should resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole. Its next sitting will be Tuesday, which is a Government day; Government business will take precedence on that day, so that this matter will go away down to the bottom of the paper, and probably we shall never see it again. That is about the amount of "business" it means, so that the hon. member, knowing the forms of the House, was so far right in taking advantage of this motion to say in the House what he ought to have said when we went into committee. With the object of the resolution I am to a large extent in accord. I think it would be a good thing to take not only this step but every step that we can devise to encourage agriculture and the other industries mentioned in the motion. As to whether this particular mode is one of the best or not I cannot say, but I think that even this itself would be a step in the right direction. What I do not quite understand about it is why, if these pastoral, agricultural, horticultural, and

industrial associations consider this the right thing to do to carry out the object in view, they did not approach the Department of Agriculture in time to have an amount like this put on the Estimates-in-Chief. That would have been the proper thing to do if they really meant business. However, I shall not take up the time of the House in discussing the merits of the matter now. I now come to the 2nd clause of the resolution, and I wish to intimate to the House at once that I object not only to this resolution but to every other resolution of the same sort coming from private members, and shall on all occasions resist them. Matters of this importance should be dealt with at the proper time, brought down by recommendation from the Governor, and included in the Estimates-in-Chief. If the motion were a recommendation that such a provision should be included in the Estimates-in-Chief for next year, I should not oppose it all; but hon. members will see that, if a practice of this sort to put sums on the Supplementary Estimates for the present financial year is allowed and indulged in freely, it will quite upset the whole financial arrangements for the year, for which the Treasurer is responsible. The hon. member who has proposed the motion knows that the money could not be put on the Supplementary Estimates without a message from His Excellency the Governor, and why? Because that time-honoured practice has been established for the purpose of saving the Treasury from raids upon it which may not be justified. I think that if we get into committee it will be quite sufficient for the House to express its opinion as to what should be done next year, and then allow it to be discussed in the ordinary way. I do not see that there is any reason for haste in the matter. The hon. member himself says that it will not operate during the present financial year. If that is so, what is the reason for addressing the Governor and asking him to send down a message recommending that provision should be made on the Supplementary Estimates for this year? I think the proposal is quite uncalled for, and on the principle I have mentioned I object to the management of the Treasury being taken out of the hands of the responsible Minister who is in charge of it by the passing of a motion of this sort, as may be the case if we get into committee on the subject, which I think is very doubtful, because I am afraid the whole thing is merely fireworks.

Mr. GRIMES: It is almost unnecessary for me to say that I am thoroughly in sympathy with the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba in his endeavour to encourage pastoral, agricultural, horticultural, and industrial pursuits, and that anything which can be done in this direction will have my heartiest sympathy; but while I recognise the importance of the agricultural and pastoral industries I recognise also the claims which other industries have on the Treasury. If we turn to the Estimates of the Department of Agriculture, we shall find that the Government have anticipated the hon. member in this matter. The year before last only £1,500 was placed on the Estimates for agricultural and horticultural societies; now there is no less than £2,400, so that there has been an increase of £900, which will go directly into the hands of those societies, and, I presume, will be spent by them in the manner likely to produce the best results. It may look strange for me, being a farmer, and closely connected with various horticultural and agricultural societies throughout the colony, to express myself in this way, but there has also been a large expenditure of money in the interests of agriculturists besides that; and I do not think we can complain of the attention given us by the Govern-

ment this year. There is £6,000 to be spent on the agricultural college and other things; and there are four or five fresh experts which will cost the colony another £1,000. Under those circumstances, seeing that our claims have been recognised so liberally, I do not think it will be well for the hon. member to press the motion.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: I do not think the intention of the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba in moving the motion is that attributed to him by the hon. member for Oxley. No doubt on page 70 of the Estimates the amount for agricultural and horticultural societies appears £900 more than in the previous year; but there is a footnote to the effect that the aid is not to exceed 10s. for every £1 subscribed; and this money is to be distributed in a way different from that proposed in this motion, as explained by the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: This is not by way of substitution.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: No. While I am in accord with the hon. member in the first part of his motion, I also agree with the Treasurer that it would be entering on an unsound course to carry this resolution; and I would suggest, as the Treasurer has stated that he is in accord with the first part of the resolution, that the mover should eliminate the second portion and proceed with the first. He shall then get a direct vote which will be useful to Ministers in framing their Estimates for 1897-8. With the hon. member for Oxley I hold that the agricultural industry has never received so much attention from any previous Government. There is an additional amount of £8,090 this year over last year; and out of the amount on the Estimates last year there is a sum of £8,560, bringing the total up to £16,650, which we will get the benefit of this year; and I think it would be ungrateful to push the resolution in the face of the expression of opinion given by the Treasurer. Even if the motion went through committee, there would be no chance of it having any effect this year. The Agricultural Department is at present being organised, and the work is proceeding on sound and proper lines; but that organisation is not yet complete; and there is no use in forcing too much work on the department until it has been thoroughly organised. Taking all the circumstances into consideration, I think the course I suggested to the hon. member would be the wise one to follow.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON: I think the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba is to be congratulated on introducing a resolution of this character, under which the importance of agricultural pursuits primarily will appear before the public, and the rising youth of the colony may be interested in devoting themselves to the acquirement of such knowledge in connection with agricultural operations as may lead hereafter to their successful prosecution. I therefore think the hon. gentleman has done well in bringing the resolution before the House, though he may not expect the second portion to be adopted. I would be prepared to vote for the resolution as a whole; at the same time I think the beneficial result will be the same by accepting the proposal of the Government that the first portion only should be adopted. I regret not having been present when the Treasurer spoke, but I understand that the hon. gentleman expressed his entire concurrence with the first resolution, and only objected to the second as being a raid on the Treasury. I believe that even a larger sum than £1,000 per annum might profitably be granted under wise regulations in the shape of exhibitions to students who would follow up agricultural pursuits

with the view of encouraging them in the successful occupation of land. I look upon that as one of the bases of future prosperity in this country, and everyone who takes a wide view of the condition of agricultural settlement must deplore the fact that not more of our rising youth enter into agricultural pursuits, and devote themselves to agricultural life. Even if the hon. member presses both resolutions, I shall give him my support, although I think he would be wiser to press it in a form in which the concurrence of the House would be unanimous. There is no doubt that we are all taking a great interest in, and exercising a watchful vigilance over, the extension of the Agricultural Department; and I hope that before we meet again the Ministerial head of this department will have a seat in this Chamber, and be able to listen to our views and explain the intentions of the Government with regard to fostering and encouraging the agricultural industry. I think the hon. member will accomplish good work by obtaining a unanimous decision upon the first resolution.

Mr. GLASSEY: It is my intention to support this resolution most heartily, and I think the hon. member for Toowoomba, who has represented a farming district so faithfully and so well for many years, will deserve the thanks of every hon. member in this Chamber and of the community generally for submitting it. I was disappointed with the remarks of the Premier, who stated that there is no "business" meant by this motion. I do not share his sentiments in that respect. I think "business" is meant by it, and it has been brought forward in a manner which reflects credit upon the hon. member, and was plain and explicit to the House. I presume the hon. member brought it forward with a view of impressing upon the Government the necessity for the Agricultural Department doing more in future to encourage that important industry than it has hitherto done. That is a reasonable position to take up, and I am sure that, whatever criticisms the Premier may have passed upon the resolution, the agricultural industry will lose nothing by the discussion that has taken place this afternoon. The Premier, as a student of parliamentary history in the old country, must be well aware of the line of procedure adopted there by hon. members ever since we have had constitutional government. I have followed very carefully the methods adopted by politicians in Great Britain for many years, and I am sure the Premier must be conversant with the fact that the gentlemen who have set their minds upon pursuing certain objects have again and again brought the question before Parliament, not perhaps with a view of getting what they wanted at that particular time, but with a view of impressing upon those they were addressing, and upon the community generally, the desirability of having their views embodied in a law. That being the case, the hon. member has adopted the usual course in bringing this matter prominently before Parliament, so that the matter may be fully discussed and ultimately placed upon the statute-book. Coming to the subject of the Agricultural Department, I share the opinions expressed, not for the first time, by the hon. member for Bulimba, and have given expression to my own feelings, that the Ministerial head of that department has not a place in this House. I think it is utterly discreditable—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is now wandering entirely away from the subject.

Mr. GLASSEY: Wandering from the subject! I am dealing with the Ministerial head of this department.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member cannot do that under this motion.

Mr. GLASSEY: I think I can.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is wrong; he must confine himself to the question.

Mr. GLASSEY: One portion of this resolution says—

"Upon regulations to be approved of by the Minister for Agriculture."

If the Minister does not find a place here, we will not be able to criticise his actions.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is entirely wrong; he cannot discuss that question, although the Minister's name is mentioned.

Mr. GLASSEY: I must bow to your decision, and will not cavil at it. I am surprised at the statements made by some hon. members, particularly those more immediately representing farming districts. They are quite satisfied with the small mercies which they have received at the hands of this Government, which seems to be end all and be all so far as the agricultural industry is concerned. I do not share those sentiments. What has the agricultural industry received from this very benevolent Government? After years of pressure from hon. members on both sides, they have agreed to the establishment of an agricultural college for the training of the young in farming pursuits. That is a step in advance, but it should have been taken years ago, and I hope that before long we will have not only one college planted in one specific place, but equal facilities will be granted in various parts of the colony, where our youth will have opportunities of taking practical lessons in agriculture and horticulture, and such facilities may also be granted in regard to stock, although that matter may be dealt with by the agricultural college. The farmers are by no means satisfied with the small consideration their industry has received.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: You will never get that.

Mr. GLASSEY: I am sure the hon. member for Lockyer will agree with me that there are many things required by the farmers which might reasonably be given, and I am also sure that he will admit that the Government might very fairly and properly assist them in the making and maintenance of roads, so that they may prosecute their industry with greater ease, and get their produce to market with more facilities than they have enjoyed hitherto. Few districts have suffered more through want of good roads than that represented by the hon. member and the Rosewood and Stanley districts, and the Government of the day might fairly place a sum on the Estimates for the opening of roads, which are essential to that industry.

Mr. ARMSTRONG: All the districts under the Main Range are in the same state.

Mr. GLASSEY: Yes; but other districts not under the Main Range are in the same condition. I do not come immediately from a farming district; but if I were a farmers' representative I should certainly trouble this House and the Government very frequently in regard to the matters I have spoken of—that is, in regard to the making of roads, the establishment of markets, and the granting of monetary assistance to the farmers.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is wandering entirely away from the question in discussing the making of roads and granting monetary assistance.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He is only stonewalling.

Mr. GLASSEY: I have not the slightest intention of stonewalling. I am endeavouring to remind hon. members representing farming districts of how easily they are satisfied with the small mercies given them by this benevolent Government of which we hear so much, especially from the direct representatives of farming districts. As the Secretary for Lands accuses me of stonewalling, I shall not prolong the discussion. I shall support the hon. member for

Toowoomba most heartily, and I only regret that the Premier does not see his way clear to accept the second part of the resolution. Of course hon. members know that the Supply Estimates for the year are pretty well passed, and perhaps the Premier may be justified to some extent in stating that it is impossible to give effect to the motion this year; but, as he has hinted that he will probably give consideration to the latter portion of the resolution next year, I think the House will be safe in passing the resolution as a whole, believing that the first part is necessary, and in the second place that it will be an expression of opinion on the part of the House that it is favourable to placing a sum on the Estimates next year, and that it is anxious to give encouragement to the agricultural industry, a fact which should give satisfaction to many persons.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Of course the hon. member for Bundaberg clearly understood that I was merely speaking in a jocular manner when I suggested that he was stonewalling. I quite understand that he is in sympathy with the first portion of the resolution. I think that the reason for the hon. member's digression with reference to all that the Government have done for the farmers, and all that they have not done, will be found in this: The hon. member does not like, from his position in this House, to give the Government credit for having done anything that they ought to have done for the farmers, or for having done anything well.

MR. GLASSEY: That is not fair.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That seems to be the feeling which prompts the hon. member. He speaks of the various ways in which the Government have encouraged the agricultural industry, which have been referred to by hon. members on both sides as small concessions doled out by this ne'er-do-weel Government.

MR. GRIMES: Very benevolent Government, he said.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The farmers of this colony do not want benevolence. What they want is simply justice, and I think they are getting justice this year, at all events. The measures which we have this session taken indicate a desire on the part of the Government and their supporters—and I think I may include almost every member of the House—to do ample justice to the farming industry. I hold that for many years justice has not been done to the industry, but, had it not been for the troublous times in which we have found ourselves during the last three or four years, justice would have been done very much earlier. The question of retrenchment is the one which has been uppermost, and the farming industry, as well as all other industries, has had to suffer. With the farming industry it was a question not so much of retrenchment as of not giving it that encouragement and advancement to which it was entitled. The hon. member has stated, for the information of the hon. members representing farming districts, what he would do if he represented a farming constituency, and so forth. I am sure he cannot have thought of the difficulties which surround this apparently very simple question. The very multiplication of agricultural societies is almost a bar to this motion being carried into practical effect. I ask any hon. member who represents an agricultural district to think for a moment of the number of agricultural societies which hold shows in their particular districts within a very few miles of one another. It would be necessary, in order to give effect to a resolution of this sort, to concentrate the prize money in a few societies, otherwise the prizes offered would be of such an attenuated nature

that they would not be worth competing for, even if the prizes were not competed for at the same society's show for two or three years running. Take the Warwick district, for instance. There must be three or four societies in that district within a few miles of each other.

MR. ARMSTRONG: That is the worst instance in Queensland.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There are several other districts in the same position. Take the hon. member's own district, and the shows at Laidley and Gatton.

MR. ARMSTRONG: There is only one society there.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Yes, I forgot. They have done the right thing there. They hold shows in the different places in alternate years. The Toowoomba district is also a striking example. Now, who is going to distribute the prize money among the various agricultural societies? I do not envy the Secretary for Agriculture his task if he is to decide which particular society in a district will be given a share of the prize money. Unquestionably both he and the member representing the district will have a very bad time when they have to meet the committees of the societies which are not included in the distribution. These are some of the practical difficulties which have to be considered in dealing with a question of this kind. That they can be overcome there is no doubt, but I merely mention them as difficulties which will arise. I have the greatest sympathy with the motion, and I think the members representing agricultural districts—I refer to the hon. members for Oxley and Lockyer—are to be congratulated upon their moderation. We are unquestionably this year advancing with very rapid strides. We have adopted measures which were adopted in the other colonies long ago in regard to the establishment of an agricultural college, and, with other hon. members, I sincerely hope that it will not be long before we have agricultural colleges in other parts of the colony.

MR. GROOM: Not on such an extravagant scale.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We may learn from experience.

MR. GROOM: £14,500 invested in one property for buildings and land!

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The cost of the land was exceptional in this case; probably such an amount would not be required to be paid in any other case. As I have previously stated, there are other sites already reserved in other parts of the colony, and I think it will not be long before we have an addition to our agricultural colleges. Under the circumstances the farmers have not much to complain about. Moreover, I should like to know what the results of a scheme like this have been in New South Wales. The hon. member is always quoting New South Wales. Of course it may be a very admirably managed colony. Since I have been in the Lands Department I have been told that the lands inquiry office of New South Wales is so much better than ours.

MR. GROOM: Fifty years in advance.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: In that particular matter?

MR. GROOM: No, in agriculture.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am not by any means satisfied that that is so.

MR. GROOM: Go down and see for yourself.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have been there. I am prepared to admit that they are ahead of us, but when he says fifty years ahead I take leave to doubt that. The hon. member's wonderful love for New South Wales is very strange. I think there are other places to which we might go with much greater advantage for an example than New South Wales. I certainly think that mature consideration should

be given to this question before we adopt a resolution to put this sum on the Supplementary Estimates. Let the Minister for Agriculture take the matter into mature consideration, formulate a scheme, and he will then be able to place on next year's Estimates a sum sufficient to carry out that scheme.

Mr. STORY: There is nothing very sentimental about this motion, but it is very amusing to notice how when any expenditure is proposed in connection with agriculture the members representing the agricultural industry all go for that money as fast as they possibly can. The hon. member for Toowoomba has said something about pastoral occupation, and I think that industry deserves a share of this expenditure. So far, however, the money has all been appropriated in anticipation by the agriculturists. The necessity for these State prizes out West is this: We try to get up shows for the improvement of stock, but the cost of exhibiting stock is so great that many persons have given up exhibiting. The days have gone by when people will be content with a blue ribbon or a second prize. Money prizes will have to be forthcoming or they will not exhibit. If you bring in a dozen sheep to a Western show it means that they have all got to be brought in in wagons for seventy or eighty miles; then there is horse-feed and the keep of the attendants at the township; so that people have come to the conclusion that "the game is not worth the candle," and the result is that only the local township stock is exhibited, and none of the best stock of the district. I think, with the hon. member for Toowoomba, that if this matter is carried out next year the State prizes will be a great inducement to people to exhibit their stock, especially in the outside districts. I hope when the prizes are given they will be made worth competing for.

Mr. SMITH: I thoroughly sympathise with the first part of the hon. member's resolution, but I cannot see my way to agree to the latter part. If we organise a system we shall have gone one step in advance, and when it is organised we will find out whether the objections raised by the Secretary for Lands are as formidable as he appears to think. I believe there are too many agricultural societies in the different districts; if there were fewer, there would be a greater pecuniary inducement to people to exhibit. As it is at present there are so many societies and so many prizes to be given that really the districts cannot carry out the shows successfully. The hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba is a thoroughly good representative of the farmers in this House, and has been for many years. I do not think there is any member of this House who knows more about the necessities of the farmer than he does, or anyone who knows better what advantage the farmer would derive from a scheme such as he proposes. But we must remember that the Government have been doing a great deal for the agricultural industry, and it is only right that they should do a great deal, because it is one of our most important industries. We cannot shut our eyes to the fact that the Government are moving in the direction of assisting the farmers steadily, and with a fair prospect of success.

Mr. GLASSEY: A cautious step.

Mr. SMITH: Perhaps it is better to advance slowly than to make mistakes by going too fast.

Mr. GLASSEY: There is not much fear of them rushing.

Mr. SMITH: I am quite sure that, although in the eyes of the hon. member they are moving slowly, they have done a great deal. They have reduced railway freights a great deal for the farmers.

Mr. GLASSEY: They put on the freights, and then took them off.

Mr. SMITH: The freights should be reduced to the lowest possible limit consistent with having a small margin of profit. The farmers have a great deal to contend with; perhaps their lot is harder than that of any other class of colonists. There is no stagnation in our Agricultural Department, and I hope it will continue to steadily progress; and that when it has got into the system advocated by the hon. member of giving State prizes, it will not be behind in giving money prizes sufficient to induce competition, which is the great desideratum required at these shows, and which it will be impossible to secure unless we have something substantial in the way of money prizes. I know the difficulties surrounding the getting up of shows in sparsely populated districts, and Government assistance of the kind suggested would in such cases be received with gratitude. At the same time the Secretary for Lands has referred to a real difficulty in the distribution of a series of State prizes to all the little societies which may spring up or are already in existence in the different districts of the colony. There should be some means of regulating the number of these societies in any one district. If the hon. member will withdraw the latter part of his resolution, which seems objectionable to the Treasurer, I think he will have little difficulty in carrying his motion in the amended form.

Mr. LORD: I am quite in sympathy with the first portion of this resolution, and I trust the hon. member will withdraw the second part of it. The reasons given by the Premier against that part are to my mind conclusive; I can well understand the hon. gentleman's objection to raids upon the Treasury by private members. I think the present Ministry are prepared to do every justice to the farming industry, and in the Estimates already passed the farmers have been very fairly treated. With regard to the statement of the hon. member for Bundaberg that farming representatives do not look after the interests of the farmers, I may state that it is not a fact. I have never failed in getting a fair thing from the Government in appeals made for works which will assist the farmers. Unfortunately, in my district several bridges were lately washed away, and I had only to appeal to the Secretary for Works to get good assistance to the local boards in the erection of those bridges, and if that is not assisting the farming industry I do not know what is. I believe the distribution of the prizes suggested by agricultural societies would do great good, and I am prepared to assist the hon. member in carrying the first portion of his resolution.

Mr. NEWELL: The hon. member for Toowoomba is to be congratulated upon having brought this motion forward, as I have no doubt the industries referred to in it would be greatly benefited by what the hon. member suggests. The farming industry especially requires every encouragement that can be given to it, and I shall be pleased to support the first part of this motion. I am pleased to think that the hon. member is prepared to withdraw the second part, as I could not very well support that. The farmers should not only be encouraged by giving them prizes, but when they have grown their produce every facility should be given them to get it to market. I should be glad if we could manage to give each farmer a railway to his farm. Perhaps we can hardly manage that yet, but certainly every facility that can be given to our farmers should be given to them.

Mr. GROOM, in reply: The hon. gentleman at the head of the Government was pleased to say that this motion is "fireworks," but I beg to disclaim any such intention. For thirty-four

years I have been a member for an agricultural constituency, and I have done more than lip service for that constituency. I have spent £1,000 of my own money to encourage the farming industry, and £500 of that was given to keep an agricultural society going. Now, when after thirty-four years' service as a member for an agricultural constituency, I am told by the hon. gentleman that this motion is "fireworks," I can only say that it is one of those indignities of parliamentary life which public men have to endure patiently. I am prepared to leave my conduct as an agricultural representative to the independent judgment of my fellow-colonists; I am content to abide by their judgment. The alleged difficulties in connection with this matter are, to my mind, exceedingly light. I think they will not present themselves in the way suggested. In moving the motion, I suggested that champion prizes should be offered for competition throughout the colony. Thus: Prizes for the best cultivated farm, the best collection of preserves or vegetables, the best managed dairy, the best sample of ensilage of not less than 150 tons—for that is the way to test a man's capabilities—the best irrigated farm, the best poultry farm, the best wine-cellar, the best collection of labour-saving implements for a farm, the best exhibit of wheat, and so on. Prizes offered in that way would not be confined to particular places.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What about the farms all over the colony?

MR. GROOM: The farmer could compete wherever he liked. That is what is done in New South Wales.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You would have judges sent from Cairns to Toowoomba?

MR. GROOM: As I said in moving the motion, you might divide the colony into districts and give prizes for the best cultivated farm in, say, the Cairns district, the Wide Bay district, or any other district. I admit the differing conditions in different districts. If a prize were offered for the best cultivated farm in the district of Woothakata, for instance, where they have begun to turn their attention to farming recently, I think we would have a marvellous revelation of what is being done by the farmers in that district. I do not see that there need be any difficulty so far as the distribution of district prizes is concerned. I have brought forward this motion with the very best intentions—with the desire to push our industries ahead. I give the Government credit for everything they have done in connection with agriculture. The Estimates of the department this year are a marked improvement on those of past years, and we all trust the improvement will continue. At the same time, I do not think a member bringing forward a motion of this kind should have improper motives attributed to him. There was one statement of the hon. gentleman at the head of the Government which took me by surprise; it almost took my breath away. I remember when that hon. gentleman sat on this side of the House and I sat on the other, that the party of which he was then a member scheduled sixteen or twenty motions, each involving expenditure amounting to £4,000 or £5,000; and, what is more, they succeeded in carrying them. More than that, they tried to get the leadership of the House by proposing a £3,000,000 loan, and the Government were only saved by a majority of one. Now we are told it is quite unconstitutional for a private member to ask for the small sum of £1,000 for national prizes. I do not accept the hon. gentleman's dictum that no private member has a right to propose a resolution involving expenditure. It is totally opposed to parliamentary practice. If

we accepted such a dictum private members might just as well stop away, or remain simply to register the decrees of the Government. A private member has a right, which no one can take from him, to propose any expenditure which in his opinion is necessary for the public weal. Whether the Government accept it is another question. I affirm, unhesitatingly, that that is the practice in every country which has responsible government. However, in accordance with what I believe to be the opinion of both sides of the House, I will ask permission to amend the motion by omitting the 2nd paragraph.

THE SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the motion be so amended?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Motion amended accordingly; and motion, as amended, put and passed.

GRAMMAR SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS.

MR. GROOM, in moving—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the following resolutions:—

1. That, in the opinion of this House, it is desirable that grammar school scholarships in the future should be increased in value in certain cases, so as to enable successful candidates in country districts to take full advantage of such scholarships.

2. That an Address be presented to the Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to cause provision to be made to give effect to the foregoing resolution—

said: This matter need not occupy the attention of the House more than a very few minutes. There is not a very great amount of money involved in it, although, perhaps, there may be a principle involved in it which may or may not be accepted. The reason I have taken this action is because the last two or three annual examinations for scholarships have revealed an undoubted grievance. Pupils of State schools, both boys and girls, have won scholarships; and under the departmental regulation they are instructed to go to the grammar school indicated by the department. Take girls as an illustration. There is no girls' grammar school on the Darling Downs, and if a girl wins a State school scholarship, and is instructed to go to the nearest girls' grammar school, it would be to Ipswich. I know cases on the Darling Downs where girls have been instructed to proceed to Ipswich, but whose parents, in consequence of their pecuniary condition, could not afford to send them there, the result being that the scholarship which the girls had won were of no use to them. The same thing has happened more than once in the case of boys, and it has occurred to me that it is well worthy the attention of the legislature whether, when a pupil has won a scholarship, the State should not extend to him or her the full advantage of the prize won by allowing such a sum as will pay for board at the school to which they are instructed to go. The amount involved is not very large, and the Secretary for Public Instruction may place any limit he likes in each individual case. I do not say it should be done indiscriminately. All I ask the House for on the present occasion is to do what has been done in other places—to offer bursaries to deserving pupils. I know I shall again be charged with having gone to New South Wales, but I cannot help going somewhere to get illustrations for my arguments. When I was in Sydney a few weeks ago I made inquiries into this subject with the view of strengthening my position here, and I found that the concession I ask for is granted in that colony to boys and girls who, from pecuniary reasons, are unable to take advantage of the scholarships they have won. I also notice that Mr. Anderson, in his report on higher education, recommends the

adoption of the bursary system. If a boy here wins a scholarship, he may proceed to whatever grammar school he is directed to go to, and the State pays the £4 4s. a quarter for him. If the parents are able to pay his board and lodgings, all very well. If they are not, he does not go, and he loses the advantages to which he is fairly entitled by the distinction he has won at the State school.

Mr. CASTLING: He is supposed to go to the nearest grammar school to where he lives, is he not?

Mr. GROOM: Exactly; but there are grammar schools only in certain towns. Take, as an illustration, the case of a boy who wins a scholarship at Roma. The nearest grammar school is at Toowoomba, 200 miles away. Unless the parent can afford to pay for the boy's board, he loses the grammar school scholarship which he has won. Would it not be a proper thing to give that boy reasonable support in the town to which he has to go in order to attend a grammar school, rather than allow him to be deprived of the scholarship altogether? And the same argument will apply with even greater force to boys in Goondiwindi and other towns along the border. The course adopted in New South Wales is shown in the following extract:—

"A scholarship will be tenable for three years, subject to good reports from teachers, and will entitle a pupil to a free grant of text-books and to free education in a State high school. A bursary will be tenable for three years, subject to good reports from teachers, and will entitle a pupil to a free grant of text-books and to free education in a Sydney high school, in a Sydney superior public school, or in a Sydney grammar school, or in one of the country high schools. When a pupil holding a bursary must necessarily board away from home in order to attend one of these schools, an allowance not exceeding £30 a year, in addition to free education and text-books, will be made.

"No pupil will be awarded a bursary whose parents or guardians are in a position to pay for his education; but, subject to this proviso, the examination for bursaries will be open to all boys and girls under fourteen years of age who have attended a public school with reasonable regularity for the two years preceding the date of examination."

In addition to that they offer State bursaries for university education, but as that is not involved in this motion I need not introduce it on this occasion. On inquiry in Sydney I found that they offer eight bursaries—four for boys, and four for girls. I would suggest to the Secretary for Public Instruction that, if he will give the House an undertaking that he will give this matter consideration and endeavour to give effect to the object I have in view, the motion I am now submitting to the House can be withdrawn. I have no wish to press the matter unnecessarily in any particular form. If the hon. gentleman will grant bursaries, say four for boys and four for girls, so as to enable pupils who are not now able to take advantage of the scholarships they have won on account of the poverty of their parents to attend grammar schools, he will be taking a step to complete our educational system. I do not desire that the matter should be dealt with indiscriminately, but that a reasonable prospect should be held out to the children of the poorer classes of the community that when they win scholarships they will be able to obtain the full advantages of them. I am at a disadvantage in not knowing exactly the number of boys and girls who have been unable for the reasons I have indicated to take advantage of the scholarships they have won, but I have been informed that in one town four boys were this year in that position. If that is the case, then for the sake of those four boys alone I should be perfectly justified in asking the House to give this matter reasonable consideration, so that in future no

boy or girl may be deprived of the advantages of a scholarship for want of the necessary provision being made for their board. My object in proposing this motion is to give encouragement to deserving children who have won scholarships. An exceedingly clever girl in my own town, who not only won a scholarship but also distinguished herself at Sunday-school examinations, was unable to take advantage of the scholarship she had won on account of the pecuniary position of her parents, and it is in pursuance of the pledge I gave to my constituents on this subject at the general election that I now submit this resolution to the House.

Mr. STUMM: I desire to second the motion. I think the hon. member has made out a very strong case in favour of his contention. Experience has shown us every year that it is not sufficient to make these scholarships cover merely tuition fees, for every year a number of clever boys and girls living in towns where there are no grammar schools win scholarships, and are not able to take advantage of them, because their parents are not in a position to pay the board fees, which are the most costly part of a boy's education when he has to be sent away from home. In my own town only two out of six successful candidates were able this year to go to a grammar school, and among the four who did not go were two who passed the highest, and passed most creditably, considering the stiff examination that was set. Had these scholarships been the same as they are in New South Wales, every one of those pupils would most likely have gone to a grammar school, and their career in life would probably have been totally different from what it will be. It is sometimes said that we are spending too much on education. I for one do not hold that view. I believe that, so far as expenditure on grammar school scholarships is concerned, we have as a general rule received splendid value for our money in the past. Three-fourths of the university exhibitions this colony has granted have been won by scholarship boys, and in the universities of Great Britain these boys have distinguished themselves. A great number of them are to-day occupying important positions—most of them, I am glad to say, in their native colony. But in addition to these we have, by means of these scholarships, been able to turn out every year a certain number of well-educated boys and girls, and when they have grown up to manhood and womanhood they have taken important positions in life, not so important perhaps as those occupied by their more fortunate colleagues who have been able to go to a university, but still positions creditable to themselves and to our system of State education. With these results before them I hope hon. members will not hesitate to affirm that our system of scholarships should be extended so as to place boys living in towns where there are no grammar schools on an equality with those living in towns where there are grammar schools, and that can only be done by making the amount of scholarships sufficient to pay the board fees of those successful candidates who have to live away from their homes. The Under Secretary for Public Instruction, in the admirable report he presented to Parliament lately with reference to the superior public school system of New South Wales, suggested that the mother colony's system of bursaries should be adopted either wholly or in part in this colony, and that it should be confined to the children of parents who are not able to pay for their education. There is much in that report that I admire; and members of Parliament and the general public are indebted to Mr. Anderson for the valuable information that he has so fully and impartially supplied; but the suggestion that bursaries should be confined to children of parents not able

to pay is one from which I must dissent. Whatever is done, I trust that no such invidious distinction will be made. If a boy has the ability to win a scholarship I hope he will be allowed to enjoy it without the badge of wealth or the badge of poverty being attached to it. I have the greatest pleasure in seconding the motion.

Mr. CASTLING: I am very much in favour, where boys win scholarships and their parents cannot afford to send them to grammar schools, of the department giving some relief, but I know everybody who can pay would try to come under the same list, because we see that every day. The hon. member for Toowoomba gave an instance of a scholarship girl in that town who was unable to obtain the advantage of a grammar school education because there is no girls' grammar school in Toowoomba. We are in the same position in Townsville, but the girls there who have won scholarships go to the boys' grammar school, and they do the same thing in America. When it was started in Townsville there was a good deal of feeling against it, and some of the trustees resigned; but it has been found to work very well. And why not? Boys and girls are brought up together, and I do not see why they should not go to school together. As far as the Townsville Grammar School is concerned, the presence of girls has had an excellent effect on the boys; and I do not see why girls should not go to the Toowoomba Grammar School.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is a matter for the trustees.

Mr. CASTLING: The trustees and headmaster were against it in Townsville, but it became a matter of the existence of the school, which was low down, and those pupils were admitted. The State does a great deal in giving boys and girls a sound practical education; and as far as higher education is concerned I am almost inclined to think that in a great many cases there is too much education. We educate a lot of boys; and what are they fit for? They will not go to work—anything but that; and we educate a lot of girls who can do nothing afterwards but play the piano. When they come to be wives and mothers they are totally unfit for the position they have to occupy, through their education. They cannot cook, or wash, or do anything of that kind. Every second boy nowadays is educated to go to the bar.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: And the other to be a surveyor.

Mr. CASTLING: They don't care about farming. Good hard work is at a discount with boys and girls, because they are over-educated. If you have a clever girl or boy, give a first-class education, but education is thrown away upon a great many people. Where people cannot afford to pay for a boy who has won a scholarship, the State should do something; but people that can pay should be made to pay.

Mr. KERR: I am in favour of this motion. I know a young girl in Tambo who won a grammar school scholarship and went to the Rockhampton Grammar School one year, but could not be kept there any longer by her mother, who is a widow; and I agree with the hon. member that an increased amount should be given to girls and boys who win scholarships, when their parents are not in a position to keep them away from home at Rockhampton, Townsville, Toowoomba, Ipswich, or Brisbane. The hon. member for Townsville says that a grammar school education unfits girls for cooking or washing; but I never knew education to unfit a young woman for that. Then he says that every second boy who passes through the grammar school wants to be a lawyer; and the Secretary for Instruction says the other boy wants to be a surveyor. That has not been my

experience. While I have been following my trade in the colony I have known lads who have passed through the grammar school to be learning their trade in the same shop where I have been working; and they have made very good tradesmen, because they had the advantage of a good education. I say that the more education we can get amongst our tradesmen the better, and I have no fear that all the young people of Queensland who receive a good education will want to go into those higher occupations and not wish to soil their fingers with work. I have a better opinion of the youth of the colony, and I trust that the House will support the motion.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I think I may be pardoned for saying a word or two on this motion. I regret exceedingly that I was not present when the hon. member introduced the motion, because I should like to have heard the arguments adduced by him in favour of this particular proposition. I think the proposition of the hon. member is rather too narrow, and I will show why I think so. It is too narrow in that it restricts too much the class from whom the winners of scholarships may be taken, and it restricts too much the schools at which the successful scholars may take out their scholarships. I believe most thoroughly in the principle that we should provide prizes for our meritorious young of both sexes, but I do not believe in limiting the class of the community from which they are to be chosen, nor do I believe in limiting, as this motion would limit, the particular schools at which the scholarships are to be taken out. We have already in the university scholarships affirmed the principle that the Government of Queensland shall provide prizes, and there is no limitation put upon the persons who may compete for them, provided that they are Queenslanders and of a certain age. Anybody can compete, and there is no privileged class in the community. When these prizes are won, their winners can take them out at any university in the world, provided that it is a university of a standard approved by the Governor in Council. The past restrictions in regard to scholarships were made very largely in the interests of particular grammar schools. In discussing this subject I will not consider the grammar schools at all; the scholars are the persons entitled to the first consideration. The principle we should affirm is this: All Queenslanders up to a certain age shall be entitled, no matter where educated, to meet at examinations, and the successful candidates shall be entitled to take out their scholarships at such schools as may be approved of by the department, although they may not be in Queensland at all. That is the same principle that we have affirmed in regard to university exhibitions, and it ought to be the same in regard to these.

Mr. DAWSON: Supposing their parents cannot afford to send them?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I believe most thoroughly in the principle that far more than free tuition should be afforded. I think that scholarship should be made worth bread and butter to the pupils. I agree with the motion to that extent that there should be a monetary consideration, but I do not wish to restrict the choice of the successful winners to the schools that may be at their own doors. I regret that it has been the policy of the department so to restrict them, and believe that the winners of these scholarships, which are offered as the reward of merit, should be entitled to choose any school they like, even if they wish to go out of the colony or to the old country. Why should a person who wins a prize provided by the State be driven to a mere scholastic institution such as a grammar school? His genius

may lie quite another way, towards agriculture or engineering, for instance; and why should not these scholarships be widened so that the prize provided by the State may be taken out at institutions approved of by the department generally, and the winners be entitled to fit themselves for the vocations they are most suited for? The hon. member wishes that the present system should be maintained, but that the value of the prizes should be increased; but I say that the class of competitors should be extended. I do not care a rap where they are educated.

MR. SMITH: Even if they are self-educated?

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes. Why should the competitors be confined to boys educated at schools subject to State supervision? Take the case put by the hon. member for Balonne so forcibly of children in the bush. If they are fit to compete, why should they not be allowed to do so, and let the best ones win the prizes? That principle is absolutely just. This is not a question dealing with the education system at all, but one of the State providing prizes for merit. The next question is, Where should the prizes, when won, be taken out? The widest choice should be given; limiting them to the local grammar school is very unfair. I do not want to enter into personal matters, but I may say that I was a pupil in a very distant school and won a scholarship. At that time it was worth money. We did not get free tuition, but a lump sum of £50 a year, out of which we paid our own school fees, and we took it out at any school we thought proper. That principle ought to be reverted to. It is in force in Victoria, and should be so here, making it a condition precedent that certificates of attendance should be given. I am sure that the hon. member who has moved this resolution will have no objection to widening its scope so that the pupils who have won these scholarships may take them out at the agricultural college provided their bent is in that direction. I believe it is a waste of talent in many instances to force men into what are after all merely scholastic institutions where they do not obtain a finished education. Let them be what they like it is only a smattering, like a woman put to learn the piano without any natural taste for it, and when they get away from the drudgery they forget all they have learned. I should like to see a good round sum placed under the control of the Secretary for Public Instruction every year. If we cannot afford to keep up the present system and have this extension, then I would rather see the number of scholarships diminished, and have them made of more intrinsic value than they now are. The present value is frequently delusive, because I have known many cases in which boys and girls have won scholarships in distant parts of the colony and they have been absolutely precluded by poverty from enjoying the results of their examinations. I do not know that we cannot afford this extra cost; I think we can, but even if we cannot it would be better to diminish the number of scholarships and increase the value. If we did that we would know that we were offering to competitors in the colony a fair chance, and each would be able to say, "If I am amongst the number, whatever my poverty may be, I am certain to have three years' education provided for me."

MR. DANIELS: Move an amendment to that effect.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I do not want to do that, but if I had a voice in the administration of these affairs I should modify the motion. As it is I do not wish to interfere with the motion, because so far as it goes I am entirely in accord with the hon. member for Toowoomba. I want him to go further, and I do not think he has any disinclination to go further,

from what I gathered from his remarks. What I would like to see is a system of scholarships inaugurated whereby, under regulations drafted by the department, the whole of the youth of the colony might compete; and that these scholarships should not be provided in the interests of the grammar schools, but in the interests of the scholars; and that the scholars—subject, of course, always to the approval of the department of the standard of the school chosen—should be entitled to go to whatever school they thought fit, even if that school was situated outside our own borders. For climatic and many other reasons that might be highly desirable in some cases. Cases of hardship have occurred through the regulation which insists upon the winners of scholarships attending the nearest grammar school to their homes. Take the case of a boy at Mackay. The Rockhampton Grammar School is the nearest to Mackay. If a boy at Mackay has to leave home why should he be compelled to go to Rockhampton? It is as much a wrench to him to break up his family affairs and go to Rockhampton as if he came to Brisbane. I have known of boys who had relatives in Brisbane who were perfectly prepared to provide for them; but the cast-iron regulation prevented those boys coming to Brisbane.

MR. GLASSEY: That is a bad regulation.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Of course it is; and if it is bad as within our own confines, it is bad altogether, because it may happen that a boy in the North, say, has friends in Sydney who are quite willing to provide for him. Then why should he not be entitled to go to Sydney, so long as he goes to a school of a standard approved of by the department? I do not care one rap about the grammar schools in that sense. They are provided for by the State, and their merit ought to be sufficient to attract pupils without our artificially attracting pupils to them at the expense of the pupils. We ought to provide a sufficient sum of money to give those pupils a chance not only of getting an education but of getting a living as well, and I would allow the pupils the widest scope in order that they might fit themselves for their future avocations in life. It might be that a pupil might not care to go to any school in this country. He might want to go to a school of mines situated somewhere else, and why should he not be allowed to go there? I think the State is doing its duty in providing pupils with the means whereby they will be able to acquire knowledge and bring that knowledge back, but I would not be too local. There is nothing like travel for broadening the minds of youths. There is nothing like residence amongst and mixing with other people; there is nothing like seeing people other than those amongst whom you have been brought up; and I believe the hon. member will achieve a great national service if he widens his motion in the direction I have indicated. I would give a motion of that sort my most thorough support, because I believe that the motion as at present framed is far too conservative, in the sense that it is too much a continuance of the present state of affairs, and I do not think it is altogether suitable for the growing requirements of this country. But otherwise I am pleased that the hon. member has brought the motion before the House, and that he has given me the opportunity of saying a few words on a subject that is very dear to my heart—that is, the subject of the education of the youth of this country.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. CROSS: I should not have had anything to say on the question but for the speech of the junior member for Townsville, but on second thoughts I thought that in a popular House it is

better not to ignore the statement made by the hon. member. His statement in regard to scholarships and higher education is one of those Tory arguments which do no credit to any hon. member.

Mr. CASTLING: Make the people pay for it.

Mr. CROSS: The hon. member seems to think that education should only be provided for the children of people in easy circumstances, and that the boy or girl who is born in humble circumstances and has poor parents should be brought up altogether in ignorance, like a Hottentot—

Mr. CASTLING: No.

Mr. CROSS: In order that they may remain reconciled to their continual toil and drudgery through life. Well, I am extremely sorry to hear a gentleman of the age and experience of the hon. member give utterance to such a lamentable opinion as that. It was a treat to hear the Attorney-General reply, and I hope that reply will do the hon. member good. The speech of the Attorney-General did him credit, and I look forward to the time when the hon. gentleman's influence will be sufficiently paramount to enable him to carry out some of the ideas he has suggested, and I hope that a large number of hon. members on both sides of the House will take what the hon. gentleman has said to heart. The belief that a manual labourer cannot enjoy the beauties of literature and art, or that he cannot take an interest in scientific pursuits, is an outrage upon the common sense of the present day; and I hope the junior member for Townsville will cut out the speech of the Attorney-General, paste it on a sheet of paper, and read it every morning before breakfast.

The HON. G. THORN: This is a very important question. I move that the debate be now adjourned, and that the resumption of debate stand an Order of the Day for this day fortnight.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in moving that motion.

The HON. G. THORN: I move that the debate be now adjourned.

The SPEAKER: Is the motion seconded?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: No; go on with the debate. Let the Secretary for Public Instruction reply.

The SPEAKER: As there is no seconder, I cannot put the motion.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Of course the motion is a very important one. Anything which deals with the great subject of education is of great importance. There is no doubt that it is desirable that more prizes should be given to those who are being educated in the colony. It is desirable to give prizes to everyone, no matter in what useful pursuits they are engaged. Certainly we should give prizes to farmers, to miners, to coopers, and to all other persons who are engaged in pursuits which are assumed to be, and no doubt are, useful to the colony. But the question naturally resolves itself into this—Who is going to provide the funds? It was on that account, I imagine, that the Premier said that any private member has a perfect right to bring forward a motion which involves the expenditure of public funds, but that it better devolves upon the Government, who are responsible, to introduce such a motion. Such a motion as this is an attack upon the Treasury; and after all it is the Treasurer who is responsible for the condition of the Treasury. Nothing is easier than for people who are not responsible to suggest expenditure; and, on the other hand, nothing is more proper than for the person who is responsible for the expenditure to think twice before he adds what ultimately must become a portion of the public burden. In referring to this question generally it has been alleged that certain persons win scholarships at

State schools and are unable to make use of them, because there is no grammar school in the place, and their parents cannot support them away from home. That is undoubtedly true; but I should like to point out that the fact of a boy or girl winning a scholarship by no means implies anything more than ordinary ability. Hon. members seem to be under the impression that because a boy or girl who wins a scholarship is unable to take advantage of it that therefore the services of a bright genius are lost to the world. That presumption is perfectly unjustifiable. The fact of a boy or girl winning a scholarship no more proves that that boy or girl is excessively clever than the fact of a horse winning a hurry scurry race in a remote township proves that that horse is an exceptionally fast horse.

Mr. DANIELS: There is no comparison at all.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member has not heard what I was about to say; and, further, he is evidently ignorant of the whole subject, or he would not have made that observation.

Mr. DAWSON: Don't you think that the fact of winning a scholarship shows more than average ability?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is merely a refinement of the word "average." At all events, it does not show particular ability. There are 132 scholarships granted every year in the colony, and there are over 70,000 children in the schools. What I want to show is that the 132 boys or girls winning the scholarships do not win them in open competition with the children of the colony at all. It is only a special, protected, and limited sphere in which the competition takes place. The boy or girl might win a scholarship with thirty-two marks out of 100. I am disposed to agree largely with the Attorney-General, but I have taken the system as I found it. There is something to be said in favour of it, and something against it. It was formerly held by the Minister, or the department, or certain officials that there ought to be a minimum of, say, fifty marks; and if a boy or girl did not get half the allotted number of marks then their excellence was not sufficient to justify them in getting a scholarship. That was the old system. Under the present system the children compete in a limited sphere. For instance, there were a number of scholarships allotted to the Ipswich district. In the Maryborough district there were fourteen scholarships, eight for boys and six for girls, and so on; each particular district having its allotted number of scholarships, whether the children were the most brilliant in the universe or whether their capacity was mediocre. Now, if children who went in for scholarships did not get twenty marks out of 100, they, at all events, would beat those in their own district who did not get so many. That being so, hon. members must not come to a wrong conclusion, and parents must not be misled into believing that because a child wins a scholarship it is necessarily clever. I admit that if I had a boy who took a scholarship that is the view I should take unless I were acquainted with the facts. If I did not know the facts I might think that the fact of my child taking a scholarship justified me in bringing him up to a profession which would involve very high intellectual ability. There is a financial reason at the bottom of the arrangements which have been made—namely, that in consequence of making arrangements to send boys and girls to grammar schools, the trustees have given two scholarships where otherwise they would only give one. If the House is of opinion that establishing a minimum is not a good thing, and if we fall back upon the old system whereby a boy winning a scholarship can take his lessons where

he likes, then instead of giving 132 scholarships we will give only about sixty-four. The House might say then that the Government were pulling down the number of scholarships, and that it had no sympathy with higher education, but I think it is just as well that that point should be understood. The hon. gentleman was not right when he advised us to follow the New South Wales system. He told us that eight bursaries were given in New South Wales, and that we, therefore, should give eight also. As a matter of fact, we have three university exhibitions, and they are certainly worth more than eight bursaries. The three university exhibitions given by this colony bear a larger proportion to the population than the eight bursaries given in New South Wales.

Mr. GROOM: They have university bursaries as well.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I will admit that they have.

At 7 o'clock, the House, in accordance with Sessional Order, proceeded with Government business.

RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

FIRST READING.

This Bill, the desirableness of introducing which had been affirmed in committee, was read a first time, and the second reading made an order for Tuesday next.

WAYS AND MEANS.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

LOAN PROPOSALS, 1896-97.

The TREASURER: The subject now before the Committee was to deal with the loan proposals for the present financial year. The object of bringing these before the Committee of Ways and Means was for the purpose of getting authority from the House to raise a certain amount of money. He might say that this was not asking for the expenditure of any money whatever. It had nothing at all to do with the expenditure of money, which was a matter dealt with in Committee of Supply. This was asking for authority to raise money to the extent of £2,324,480. The resolution he should submit to the Committee, in course of time, would be to the following effect:—

Resolved that, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty, a sum not exceeding £2,324,480 be raised by the sale of debentures, or the creation and sale of inscribed stock, secured upon the consolidated revenue fund of Queensland, at a rate of interest not exceeding £3 10s. per centum per annum, to defray the cost of certain public works and services.

The real question before the Committee was simply whether the Committee thought it desirable at the present time to grant an authority of the nature he had indicated. Hon. members must be aware that for the last three years they had been appropriating loan money every year to a larger or smaller extent. They had been very moderate indeed in that expenditure during those years, and he did not advocate that they should increase the expenditure to any large extent. At the same time he thought the colony was in a position to spend a moderate amount of money every year for public works and services, more particularly for the extension of their railways. They had appropriated money, as he said, for the last three or four years, and during the whole of that time they had never provided any ways and means for raising the money. It was quite true that two years ago they passed a Loan Act authorising the raising of a certain sum of money, but that was purely a conversion loan to meet liabilities that happened to fall due last year, and which were paid off in course of

time. The proper course, he believed, speaking technically or scientifically, would be for the House every year to appropriate money from the loan fund account, and then go into Committee of Ways and Means to provide that the loan money should be recouped to the amount authorised to be expended. He thought he gave a good reason last session why they should depart from that course—a course, he might say, which had never been carried out. Still all hon. members who had studied the question would say that technically that was the proper course. The reason he gave was this: That he did not see any reason for the House giving authority to the Government to raise money as long as they had sufficient in hand to carry on with. But it must be evident to every member that that could only last a certain time. They could not go on drawing upon the loan fund for ever unless they kept that fund properly supplied with money to provide for what had been appropriated. If hon. members would look at the state of the loan fund on the 30th June last, as given in detail by the Auditor-General in his last report, they would see that the loan fund at that time had been reduced to about £2,360,000. Since then three months' expenditure had been taken from the fund, which of course reduced it by the amount spent during that period. It must be recollected also that a very large portion of it was money which was not available at present; that was to say, it was locked up for the time being in the Queensland National Bank. If the whole of the sum was available in cash and at call for the Treasury to operate upon, there would probably be no occasion to ask the House to authorise a Loan Bill. But they had agreed to forego that for a considerable number of years, and it looked likely at present that even that time would be considerably extended.

Mr. TURLEY: It may be for ever.

The TREASURER: Suppose it was for ever, that was all the more reason why a Loan Bill should be authorised, otherwise they would have to stop all the public works that were now going on, which were now very considerable. As he had said, the real question before them was whether it was desirable or not to give authority to raise that money by loan. On the 10th December last year, in Committee of Supply, not of Ways and Means, he used the following words:—

"It may be said that by passing the Estimates now before the House contracts will be let which will involve us in much heavier liabilities than appear on the surface, necessitate further borrowings, and an increase in the indebtedness of the colony. Well, there is no doubt that that is a view of the subject which should by no means be lost sight of, and the question is whether—with a rising revenue, with our credit well established—any harm is likely to accrue to the colony from such a course. I have shown that there is no necessity for a Loan Bill at present, but if the next Parliament pursues the same course as we are now pursuing, and keeps steadily on with a moderate expenditure on public works to an annual amount of, say, £500,000 or £600,000, then undoubtedly it would be advisable before long for the Government to submit a Loan Bill to the House. We have already, as I have mentioned, expended £610,000 in anticipation of a fresh loan."

On the 30th of June last that expenditure amounted to considerably over £900,000, so that really of the money included in those loan proposals a sum of between £900,000 and £1,000,000 had already been appropriated by the House and spent. He thought they had been fortunate in that they had been able to finance the colony and spend that amount of money during the last four or five years without approaching the British investor. But it must be evident to hon. members that this could not go on for ever. As to the immediate necessity for this loan, he did not think it was very urgent, but the

Treasurer must always look ahead. They could not go on in the Treasury from day to day, but must be provided beforehand. At present he had more money in the Treasury than he required for immediate purposes. The available balance at call on account of the consolidated revenue at the present moment was £945,000—a very much larger sum than he anticipated in his address last year.

Mr. JACKSON: Can you get it if you want it?

The TREASURER: Of course the hon. member, who had the Queensland National Bank on the brain, asked if he could get it if he wanted it. All he could say in reply to that was that he had got all that he had drawn upon up to the present. The bank had not made any default so far, but the hon. member evidently would very much like to see the bank make default. Apparently that was the whole wish of at least some members on the other side of the House.

Mr. JACKSON: It is not my wish.

Mr. McDONALD: It is not my wish; so that if you are referring to me, it is untrue.

The TREASURER: Then why were such questions asked? Had any member heard yet that any cheque drawn upon the bank by the Treasury had been dishonoured? All those observations were very prejudicial to the interests of the colony, and just showed the bias and prejudice that existed in some men's minds. Last year when he addressed the Committee by deputy he pointed out that the Treasury had certain reserves. The whole of those reserves were intact at the present time; not one farthing had been drawn from any one of them. In the first place he had £450,000 of Treasury bills in London available at any moment in case of need, and £156,000 in the Treasury, which was also available in the same way. Then he had £200,000 in the two local banks in the colony, other than the Queensland National Bank, which was available at short notice. They were not extended deposits, as they understood that term, but were available at certain short notice. The Treasury had also a coin reserve of a very considerable amount. It kept creeping up to such an extent that he had hardly room to store it. It now amounted to £750,000, all in coin. He knew that some members thought it was a great waste to keep the money locked up as it was, but he differed from them. It must be remembered that the greatest part of that money had been derived from the sale of bits of paper in the shape of Treasury notes, so that it had cost the colony nothing. It did not come out of the pockets of the people, but had been contributed by the banks and others who required Treasury notes. As he had said last year he desired to keep that reserve intact, and he would tell the Committee how that would operate. Assuming that the House authorised the Loan Bill he was now discussing, and times went wrong, or a war in Europe should take place, it might be very inconvenient to float the loan at the time they wanted to do so, and they could then make use of the reserve he had mentioned. It would also put them in the independent position that, if the market was bad and money became high priced, they would be able to say to the British investor, "We are not in a desperate hurry; we are not so hard up as to be forced to put this loan on the market when the market is unwilling to receive it." We are thus in a position to make our own terms, and we will get our money at the lowest price money is worth for the time being. If the loan was passed, the effect would simply be that a portion, and only a portion, of it would some time or other, certainly not within the next six months, be placed upon the London market. The amount to be placed on the London market, he reckoned, would not be more,

under any circumstances, than £1,500,000, because he had already in hand a considerable amount of money which was legally available to invest in this loan fund. Hon. members would recollect the Act he introduced to hold out inducements to people in the colony who had money they did not require—trustees and others—to invest it in savings bank stock. In that way a fund had been created, and part of the last conversion loan to the amount of £70,000 was taken up by means of that fund. At present he had very nearly £400,000 to the credit of that fund, and that amount, when this Bill was passed, would become part of the loan included in it.

Mr. GLASSEY: That measure has been very successful.

The TREASURER: It had been so far successful, and he would explain why. Last year a large amount of Treasury bills came in for payment. They had been purchased to the extent of £200,000 by one of our fellow-colonists—a good friend of the colony, who lent money to the Government when they were very hard up. They fell due last year, and he was paid; but, instead of taking the money out of the colony, he allowed it to go into the savings bank, and took up savings bank stock for the amount. That was one reason why the Treasurer's available balance was to that extent larger than he anticipated last year. It had not gone out of the colony, and by the process he had mentioned it would become part of this loan. Another institution—the Australian Mutual Provident Society—had done the same thing to the extent of a little over £100,000; so that with those large amounts and the small amounts received from other parties he had now about £400,000, which would form part of the loan. The effect of passing the Bill would be that this money, which was not legally available for public purposes, would be transferred from the savings bank fund to the loan fund. The same thing applied to a large extent to the savings bank ordinary fund. When the French Government had to raise a loan of £200,000,000 to pay the war indemnity demanded by the Germans, a great point was made of the fact that the thrifty population of France always invested their savings in the Government funds. Our savings bank was really the same thing. Our depositors did not buy debentures; but they put their money into the savings bank, and the trustees of the savings bank with that money bought Government stock; so that every depositor was practically a debenture-holder. No bank could exist and pay interest unless it had borrowers; but the difference between the savings bank and an ordinary bank was that the savings bank had only one borrower—namely, the State. The savings bank always kept a large available balance; but the available balance at call at present was far larger than the requirements of the bank demanded. A very considerable amount had been placed in the savings bank lately, owing to the unfortunate small commercial crisis. Though they passed a Bill the other day guaranteeing the current accounts in the Queensland National Bank, people had an easy means of getting a Government guarantee by simply putting their money into the Government Savings Bank. But there was a difference. It did not always suit commercial people to keep their accounts in the savings bank because they might occasionally want accommodation, and they could get no accommodation from the savings bank. Considering the way savings bank stock was increasing, and the way depositors were increasing, he would want cover for the savings bank to the extent of at least £750,000; and if he allowed a little further expansion he did not think that more than £1,500,000 would require to be floated in London.

It was possible by raising that stock from 3 per cent. to 3½ per cent. to get more money in the colony; and it was an advantage, so long as money was not taken from commercial pursuits, that the Government should have all the loose capital waiting for investment. If that were done, even the £1,500,000 might not be required to be floated in London. None of the money realised there would come to the colony, but would be retained in the Bank of England to pay the interest on our public debt. At first sight it might appear that this was borrowing money to pay interest that ought to be paid out of revenue. But they had to look at it in this way: They had to remit every month, if they did it monthly, something like £100,000 to London, to pay the interest upon the public debt. Suppose they sent home a half-year's interest by one ship and brought out the same amount, £650,000, by another ship, the two ships would meet about Aden, and they would be paying insurance, freight, and other charges upon the 650,000 sovereigns going home, and the same amount to bring the other money out here. He proposed to leave the money in the Bank of England, give the revenue credit for it, and then recoup the loan fund here from the revenue fund, which would save a great deal of expense. If interest were provided at home for twelve months, it made available for the Treasurer £100,000 per month over and above the ordinary expenditure for public works and such other matters as they had already authorised. He hoped that was sufficiently plain to hon. members. As he had said, he was not in such a position that he was forced to put this loan upon the market at once; he could take his own time, although he must be guided to a considerable extent by the advice of his London advisers, and he had always received the best advice from the Bank of England. There was no necessity to make any further observations in regard to that. He had explained what would be the outcome of the resolutions he intended to move, but he might state that he did not intend to move the whole amount in one sum. It would be better to take the proposals seriatim, although there was nothing in them that the House had not already approved of. There was no new project or scheme for the future; but every item had been already assented to.

Mr. TURLEY: What about the miscellaneous works?

The TREASURER: They were included in every proposal, as they could not be confined to £1.

Mr. TURLEY: You said they were sanctioned by the House.

The TREASURER: The Committee could strike it out. They were not raising money without knowing how it was to be spent. Every one of these items had been already discussed by the House, which had agreed that the railways and other public works mentioned were good, and would conduce to the progress of the colony.

Mr. McDONALD: Why don't you say, "Please don't discuss them"?

The TREASURER: He did not mean anything of the sort. On the contrary, he wished to point out to the hon. member what his rights were, and when he knew them he could exercise them. He could discuss all the railways and other items, and make as many observations upon them as he thought proper. The hon. member for Burke might take a further opportunity of giving them his opinions about local authorities, because there was a vote for loans to local bodies. The hon. member for Barcoo could tell them again that the producers in his electorate preferred to pay sixty miles extra carriage to take their produce to Gladstone, rather than take it to a low place like Rockhampton. And

as there was a vote for the Defence Force, the hon. member for Rockhampton, Mr. Kidston, could show them again that fifty Japanese with quick-firing guns could land at Emu Park and loot the whole Central district. In fact, it was not possible to call hon. members to order upon those Estimates. They could discuss the whole thing from first to last. The only thing the House could not do was to go back upon itself, and it had approved of all these works. The question now was not whether this or that railway was a right and proper thing; but whether they should raise money for these particular purposes. Some hon. members might have a little difficulty in seeing how the various amounts put down were arrived at, and it might save time if he went through the whole of the proposals now submitted. The first item was £50,000 to complete the extension from Charleville to Cunnamulla, and that was arrived at in this way: Originally authority was granted by Parliament to raise £812,000 to extend the line from Roma, and a large part of that money had been spent in the extension to Charleville, but there was still a balance in hand of about £196,000. The Commissioner's report, which hon. members had in their hands, stated that the extension before them would cost about £233,000, so that this £50,000, with the balance in hand, would complete the line. The first section of sixty-one miles was now under construction, and would cost £114,500. The contract expired on 31st December, 1897, but it was expected to be finished sooner than that. The next item was £71,182 for the Indooroopilly Albert Bridge, and that was the exact amount, because the work was already completed; but although Parliament had appropriated the money it had not authorised the Government to raise it to recoup the loan fund. In 1893-4 there was £60,000 appropriated which was not all spent. In 1894-5 £47,000 was appropriated, and last year £18,000 was appropriated. However, the actual cost of the bridge, including raising the approaches upon each side, because the bridge was higher than before, was the amount put down on the Estimate. The next item was the Bremer bridge at Ipswich, which was being built exclusively for railway purposes. A few years ago £7,000 was appropriated, and this year £13,000 was appropriated. Up to 30th June £2,532 had been expended, and up to date £5,817; but they knew from actual tenders, and from the progress of the work, that the bridge would be completed for the amount put down in the loan proposals. Then, with regard to the Roma-street extended accommodation, in 1895-6 Parliament voted £20,500, and this year £15,500. The expenditure up to the present had been £20,336, and it was estimated that all the work in connection with the Roma-street yards, the building of a bridge over Countess street, and providing cold storage accommodation could be completed for the amount set down—namely, £45,000. The next item was the Brisbane Valley Branch, permanent deviations. That was authorised in 1894-5, and Parliament had appropriated £6,400. The deviations, however, had been carried out for a much smaller sum, and the exact sum spent was now set down in the proposals—namely, £4,328. The Fairfield deviation had also been completed. Parliament appropriated in 1895-6 the sum of £26,500, and he was now asking for authority to raise £28,000 to cover the work, which consisted of raising the line above flood level and providing a double line to suit the coal traffic to the South Brisbane wharves. The next work was the South Brisbane extension to Musgrave Wharf, for which he proposed to raise £8,000. The work was authorised in 1895-6, in which year £7,000 had been appropriated. This year £6,400 had been appropriated. A contract had

been let and the work was to be finished in a week or two. There was a small amount over and above the contract price required for the permanent-way and for land resumptions.

Mr. GLASSEY: Will the £8,000 complete the work?

The TREASURER: Yes. The contract price was £4,574, so that the £8,000 would cover everything. The North Ipswich to Tivoli line had been approved of, but no action had yet been taken with regard to letting a contract so far as he was aware. Last year when the work was approved of, they voted £2,000, and this year £9,340. They expected to call for tenders before long. The Brunswick street to Bulimba branch had been estimated by the Commissioner to cost £18,000. That was the amount he now asked for. The contract had been let for £7,963, but a considerable amount would be required for permanent way and land resumptions. The land resumptions would probably be pretty heavy. For the Racecourse to Pinkenba line he asked £23,750. The Commissioner estimated the cost at £23,000, but now that the contract had been let, they knew that the work would cost £750 more than the estimate. It would be noticed that some of the amounts were a little over the estimated cost, but on the other hand several would cost considerably under the Commissioner's estimate. In connection with the Brisbane to Caboolture and Gympie line, £13,150 was asked to be raised. That was for work done by the authority of Parliament, but for which there had been no amount available from the loan fund. For the Antigua bridge he asked £14,720. The work had been finished, and the actual cost had been £14,715 9s. 8d. £15,000 was voted in 1893-4, so that there had been a very slight saving. For the Burnett bridge he asked £10,000. That amount had already been appropriated. Owing to flood waters washing away the earth round the wooden piles, the number of iron piles had been increased, but £10,000 would cover the whole work. That was a matter regarding which the late Commissioner Johnston had had something to say. £382,000 had originally been raised for the Bundaberg-Gladstoneline. He thought that was only for sections one and three. They were now completing the middle section. £45,000 remained unspent of the original amount raised, and that, together with the £150,000 he asked for in the loan proposals, would be quite sufficient to finish the line. For the railway from Childers to Cordalba he asked £31,000. No previous money had been raised for that work. £27,000 was voted last year, and a further amount this year. The actual expenditure up to the present was nearly £30,000, and the Government reckoned that £31,000 would be quite sufficient to finish the line. Last year the Commissioner estimated that the Mayne-Enoggera line would cost £45,000, but this year he estimated that it could be built to the point approved of for £10,000 less, so that they would only require to raise £35,000. That was a guarantee line. Another guarantee line was that from Hendon to Allora. The Commissioner estimated the cost at £7,800. Since then a contract had been let, and they found the work could be done well within the amount appropriated. The amount which had been appropriated was something like £10,000. It would probably cost, on account of land resumed and permanent way material, about £200 more than the Commissioner's estimate. Therefore, instead of asking for £7,800 they asked for £8,000. The next item was the Colton to Pialba line, which the Commissioner said would cost £43,000. The line was now finished; in fact, he had received to-day an invitation to the opening. The House had already appropriated £46,000 to build the line, but they now found that the whole thing could be built for £39,000.

Then came the Central division. They wanted £50,000 for reduction of grades. The House had already appropriated £56,000 for that purpose, and they proposed to raise £50,000. The next was a much more important work—the South and North Rockhampton line. The original idea was to build a single line, and a great deal of discussion took place as to whether the bridge which had to be constructed over the Fitzroy should be a double or single line. A large number of members were in favour of a double line, and when the plans went to the Upper House they endorsed that opinion and recommended that a double line should be built. The line had been under consideration since then, and the Commissioner had come to the conclusion, after consultation with the municipality of Rockhampton and getting certain privileges from them, that it would be advisable to make a double line the whole way from the station at South Rockhampton to the station at North Rockhampton. That involved an additional expenditure of £35,000, so that instead of asking for £53,000, which was the original estimate for a single line, they asked now to be allowed to raise £87,150.

Mr. TURLEY: Will that proposal be submitted to the House?

The TREASURER: No. The House approved of the plans, but the plans did not show whether the line was to be either a double or a single line.

Mr. TURLEY: The House understood it was to be a single line.

The TREASURER: Yes; he thought that was so, but at the same time there was a strong expression of opinion in favour of a double line, which was backed up by the Upper House.

Mr. GLASSEY: What is the distance?

The TREASURER: He thought about three miles, which included the bridge, of course. If hon. members like the hon. member for South Brisbane did not approve of the double line then they could reduce the vote. The next item was the Broadmount line, which included the wharf now under construction. He had omitted the Mount Morgan line, which the House had recently approved of. A sum sufficient to complete the whole work had been put down. The Broadmount wharf had been already let, and would probably be finished before long. He thought the date of completion was 30th June next. The Commissioner estimated that the line, including the wharf, would cost £72,000, but on reconsideration it was found that it could be constructed for something less, and they asked now to be allowed to raise £70,700, which was about £1,300 less than the original estimate. He came now to the Northern division.

Mr. DUNSFORD: What about the £50,000 for miscellaneous works?

The TREASURER: He could give no information about them. The vote was for a number of small unspecified works—so small that they could not be specified. The Mackay bridge over the Pioneer River had had £17,000 voted for it already. The bridge they knew from actual tender would cost £15,284, and there was also about 1½ miles of railway to construct. The work would be completed by the 31st December next.

Mr. GLASSEY: Is it a low or high level bridge?

The TREASURER: It was something between the two. £55,000 was asked for the Northern Railway, to complete the Burdekin deviation and high-level bridge, reduction of grades between Townsville and Charters Towers, and extension of sixty-five miles from Hughenden. That seemed a very small amount, and it required explanation. Originally authority was

given to raise money for that line to the extent of £690,000 and on the 30th June last there was an unexpended balance to the credit of the vote of £230,000. The work to be done would include much more than the extension from Hughenden. It would include reduction of grades and the Burdekin bridge.

Mr. DAWSON: Is there not a balance available for that purpose under the Loan Balances Diver-sion Act of 1894?

The TREASURER: There might be a small balance, and if so, so much the better for the line. Hon. members must understand that they were not proposing the spending a single sixpence of money now. They were simply proposing to raise money, and if they raised £3,000 or £4,000 more than was required for a vote it would of course remain to the credit of the fund. For the Cairns to Herberton line the money authorised had been spent long ago; the original vote for the line was £990,000. The last expenditure on the line of any extent was in 1892-3, when £56,000 was spent. In the previous year the expenditure was £121,000, and in the year before that £161,000. Since then the expenditure had been small—£3,000 or £4,000 a year. At any rate they had no authority to raise any further money since the original vote, which had been exhausted long ago. There had been something spent in connection with bridges on the line, part only of which had been charged to loan, the greater part having been paid out of revenue.

Mr. GLASSEY: There has been pretty well continuous expenditure on that line.

The TREASURER: There had been. £30,000 was put down for miscellaneous works, which included new sidings, coal-shoots, buildings for stores, and so on—items which it was impossible to detail in the vote. The same might be said with regard to surveys, for which £20,000 was asked. Surveys were originally charged to the lump vote for surveys, but when a railway was completed and they were casting up the cost, the survey cost was charged to the particular line. There were thus amounts constantly coming into the survey vote, and that was the reason the amount now asked to be raised was so small. A large amount—£200,000—was required for rolling-stock, and, as hon. members knew, the amount had been overdrawn for some time. £92,600 of the vote had been already spent, and the balance would at least keep them going for two years. The next vote, for dredging the Narrows, he had fully explained when the matter was before the House recently. Three tenders had been received, and they could now tell almost with certainty that the £20,000 would cover the whole cost of the work, and also provide a 15-knot steamer to ply between Gladstone and Broad-mount. The next vote was to dredge a cutting at the bottom of the Fitzroy and a portion of the harbour near Broadmount; and the next would cover the cost of restoring the breakwater at Townsville recently washed away by a storm. £25,000 was required for the defence of the colony; that account had been already over-drawn to the extent of £7,000. For loans to local authorities the amount proposed was, comparatively speaking, small, but they had at present to the credit of that account £117,000. They knew there would be demands upon that fund for loans to harbour boards and other local authorities, and that made provision so that when they did require loans, and were in a position to borrow, the Treasury would be able to supply their wants. £50,000 was required for electric tele-graphs. The vote in connection with the Sugar Works Guarantee Act had already been dealt with in an Act of Parliament. Originally the idea was that they should guarantee the deben-

tures, but as guarantees were things he detested, he thought they were doing the proper thing in lending the money straight away from the Treasury.

Mr. DRAKE: What is the exact amount of present engagements?

The TREASURER: The whole of the £500,000 was engaged, but was not actually spent. That was the limit provided by the Act, and beyond that he had no desire to go. When they had gone that far, he thought they had gone far enough.

Mr. DRAKE: £500,000 too far.

The TREASURER: That might be, but leaving that matter altogether aside, it was infinitely better that they should borrow the money themselves than that they should have debentures bearing the Government endorsement roving about for sale. The wire-netting vote, £100,000, was the last, and, like a good many other things they asked for, would return revenue. Like the loans to local authorities and loans under the Sugar Works Guarantee Act, it would pay for itself. Under the Act they lent netting to grazing farmers and squatters and others, who would pay 5 per cent. annually upon the cost of it. So that that amount would not, so to speak, be a tax upon the public, but would repay itself. He hoped also that the extension of the railways would bring in revenue, if not at once, in a very short time. He thought nearly all the works mentioned would be reproductive, and, as he had said before, they had already received the sanction and approval of the House. He presumed it was the desire of the Committee to establish a good precedent by taking the items seriatim, and he moved that the item £641,630, railway extension, Southern division, stand part of the vote.

Mr. GLASSEY: He had listened with close attention to the lengthy, and at the same time lucid, speech of the Treasurer, which had removed some of the misgivings he had felt when he first saw the very large loan proposals of the Govern-ment. At the same time, he could not help mentioning that when they were discussing some of the items they were led to believe that the Treasurer had sufficient money to cover the expenditure without raising a loan at all, or at any rate for some time to come. Now, quite suddenly, they were informed that an almost immediate loan was required of nearly £2,500,000. That must be rather disappointing to some hon. members; it was certainly disappointing to him-self. He had often expressed himself strongly with regard to the rapid accumulation of their national debt, and in 1894 he said that, although it might be necessary to go on with public works on a moderate scale, he should deeply regret to again see the colony launching into the alarming expenditure that had prevailed for so many years. He did not intend to criticise the railway items to any extent. At present he would content himself with asking the Secretary for Rail-ways when tenders for the construction of the Tivoli line were likely to be called for, if the department had finally determined on the route the line should take, and whether the hon. gentle-man intended to pay his promised visit to the district before definitely fixing on the particular route? As to the line itself he did not know of any one in the group that was more likely to be remunerative and beneficial than the Tivoli line if so constructed as to afford the greatest amount of relief to the various collieries there.

Mr. DRAKE: Before entering into details it might be desirable to say a few words on the proposals in general. The proposals now brought forward entirely justified the attitude taken up by the Opposition last session, when the railway plans were under discussion, that the sanctioning of those railways meant the raising of a further

loan. That was flatly denied by Ministers and their supporters. The Treasurer said, in his Financial Statement last year—

“It is not intended to ask any authority to incur any liability that would necessitate the raising of a further loan.”

The Opposition pointed out, when the railway proposals came in one after the other, that that involved an absurdity; that railways in the colony were always constructed out of loan, and must be for some time to come; and that if they went on sanctioning the construction of railways they were to all intents and purposes sanctioning the raising of a further loan. They were told it meant nothing of the kind; that the £800,000 required to complete the railways would be obtained without any recourse to the money market. They were even told the sources from which the money was to come. It was money that had been repaid by the Brisbane Municipal Council, and that had been repaid and was going to be repaid by the Queensland National Bank. The Secretary for Railways went so far as to say it was absolutely criminal to refrain from indulging in that large expenditure while there was so much money lying idle waiting to be spent. And now they were asked to sanction the raising of a loan. Whether the time for borrowing now was more opportune than it would have been last session he was not prepared to say, but a more honest and straightforward course would have been, last session, to have stated at once that those railways would necessitate a further loan, and got the authority then to raise the money. The Government could have exercised its judgment as to the best time for floating the loan. He said at the time that it was not the proper thing to hoodwink Parliament into agreeing to the construction of public works in the belief that it would not be necessary to incur any further loan liability, and then, after the works were sanctioned, to say that as the country was committed to them they could not refuse to sanction the application to go to the money market for a loan. He could not help thinking that one of the reasons why the Government did not make their loan proposals last year was that perhaps it would not have put them in quite such a favourable position for the general election. They wanted to go to the general election and make the people believe they were going to construct all those public works in some mysterious way they had discovered without the necessity of increasing the colony's loan liability—a thing which they, on that side, knew was absolutely impossible. He thought the Government would do wisely if they refrained from making any application to the English money market, if they could help it, until the affairs of the Queensland National Bank had been cleared up one way or the other. There could be no doubt that that affair would not tend to improve the credit of the colony, and he thought the Treasurer was also indiscreet in stating that that money when raised by loan would be used for the purpose of paying interest upon former loans. Of course the hon. gentleman argued that it made no difference whether they used £1,200,000 of loan money for that purpose and spent all their surplus revenue on railways, or whether they borrowed money in England for railway construction and sent home £1,200,000 to pay the interest on loans; but it would be a very bad day for the colony when it had to go to the money market to borrow money to pay the interest on previous loans. He trusted that when the hon. gentleman went to the London money market to raise this loan he would not proclaim there that it was to be used for the purpose of paying interest on past loans. No doubt the hon. gentleman made that statement in order to meet the objection that might possibly be raised

that there was a fear that that money when raised would disappear down the same hole as the proceeds of other loans had gone. He hoped that when the money was borrowed it would be deposited in the Bank of England, and should be glad if it could be deposited in such a way as to make it impossible for it to be misapplied. With regard to the particular objects for which the loan was to be raised, in a great many cases Parliament was already committed to the expenditure, and in some cases probably the money had been spent, so that as usual its hands were tied at the time when it should be able to exercise the freest judgment. He hoped that would teach some hon. members who had last year been lulled into the belief that no loan would be necessary, that when they sanctioned loan expenditure on public works they practically sanctioned an increase of the loan indebtedness.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS did not think the hon. member for Enoggera had been fair in his criticism of the loan proposals. What was said last year, when the plans of railways to the amount of £800,000 were placed before the House, was that the Treasurer had sufficient money in hand to build those railways without borrowing more money. He repeated that to-night. They spent large sums last year, and this year they asked to spend £1,300,000 from loan account. They did not spend more than one-half of what they asked last year, but this year the expenditure would be greater, as the contracts had been let for nearly all the railways. He did not think the Treasurer meant to borrow any money before the 30th June next year. As to the objection which had been raised to paying interest with loan money, it was better to do that, and spend the money raised here on public works, as a considerable saving was effected in that way, the charge for exchange alone being 15s. per cent. There were items in those proposals that were not passed last year, such as the £150,000 for the completion of the railway from Bundaberg to Gladstone; and the Treasurer must always have a certain amount of money in hand; he could not run down to the last £100. With regard to the question asked by the hon. member for Bundaberg, he might say that the route of the Tivoli railway had not yet been decided, but when it was, tenders would be called for the work about two months afterwards. He purposed going up there himself, and would be very glad if the hon. member for Bundaberg would accompany him.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON: The question they had to consider was whether this was or was not the time for the approval of a Loan Bill to cover the somewhat irregular expenditure that had been going on since 1893, and to which special attention was called by the Auditor-General in his report. The Auditor-General there pointed out that—

“The list of expenditure not authorised by Loan Acts is becoming a long one, and, if I may be permitted, I would suggest the advisableness of putting this expenditure on a better footing; the liquid portion of the loan money on 30th June, 1896, only amounted to £173,486 19s. 5d.”

He therefore thought the Government were quite right in submitting to the Committee proposals to cover expenditure which had been sanctioned, and asking the Committee whether new expenditure should be incurred, before adding to the load of irregular expenditure. Indeed, he was of opinion that the Treasurer might have increased the sum, because there was a deficiency of no less than £390,000 in the last loan—the difference between the amount actually realised and the nominal value of the loan. He therefore thought the Treasurer was right in

covering the expenditure incurred heretofore on account of works sanctioned, but for which no provision had been made. No less than £750,000 of loan money, obtained to build the *via recta* and the line to St. George, had been used for other purposes.

The TREASURER: It is locked up.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON: It constituted part of what was represented as the so-called unexpended balance of the loan fund. There was a good deal of force in the contention that loan expenditure for works that had been sanctioned should be voted annually as required. The form in which the Treasurer had submitted these loan proposals invited a good deal of discussion. Estimates were sometimes faulty.

The TREASURER: Those are all based on tenders except one or two.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON: Tenders had been exceeded; and though estimates were more reliable now than they had been in the past, being based on sounder knowledge, uncompleted works were always subject to a certain amount of enlarged expenditure, notwithstanding the confident feeling that provision had been made for all the expenditure that would be necessary. The Treasurer made one remark that seemed to want explanation when he said that £1,500,000 of the loan might be raised at home and remain in the Bank of England, in order to save exchange and other expenses. The hon. gentleman said it would be used by them for investment in certain stocks, but he did not think the Bank of England would undertake such an agency at their own risk.

The TREASURER: They did it for me before.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON: One of the prominent officials of that bank—the late cashier, Mr. May—had to retire from his position through something of this sort.

The TREASURER: This is the bank itself, not an official.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON: The Bank of England at that time did not undertake any such agency business, but the chief cashier used to recommend some constituents of the bank to temporarily invest funds in what he deemed to be unexceptionable securities. In many cases there were losses, several of which were made good by the bank, not on account of any legal responsibility, but from a sense of moral obligation through their chief cashier having given the advice. Dealing in consols the hon. gentleman was safe as far as securities went, but he was not protected against vicissitudes in value in the case of European complications.

The TREASURER: They take the money in the same way as if it were a fixed deposit, and allow such interest as it may earn, charging a small commission for the bank's risk and trouble.

The HON. J. R. DICKSON: That should be made clear. The principle of selling the stock in such proportions as were required to meet our engagements in England and allowing the balance to remain in the bank was one that could not be objected to in any way. He agreed to the application for a loan at the present time and thought that the Treasurer, having the best financial advice in England, should be guided as to the most convenient time for disposing of it. He thought it should include the whole deficiency in the loan account up to the present, and thereby put the loan fund in such a condition that the Auditor-General might be able to inform them that the legislation of this year has restored the loan balances. He should support the proposals.

Mr. HOOLAN: No doubt it was a very good policy to have plenty of money to scatter around, and nobody could blame the Government for getting all they could. In fact if he were a Government, and had a good crowd behind him,

he would rob other Governments, as he had noticed that the praises of Governments which did that were sung all over the world. At present they were only a small Government, and were engaged in "raising the wind," and as they intended to raise a good deal of it he did not see why they should not have a bit of a breeze. The question was not whether the Government were justified in raising a loan or not, but they had to deal with the fact that they were going to raise it. It was not a matter which concerned them particularly now, but the serious part of it was that it would seriously concern them in future. When a man went into the public-house with £5 he indulged in every kind of liquor he could and boozed up his friends, but his trouble arose when he had no more to spend. These loan proposals concerned the country pretty well up and down, but more particularly the Southern district, and he thought very few hon. members would have the temerity to get up and speak against the expenditure of public money in his own district, although whether he could reconcile it with his conscience was another matter. However, conscience was a thing that did not enter much into parliamentary life; if it did it should certainly be brought to bear upon the present occasion to see that this money was judiciously laid out. He was strongly of opinion that this young colony could not afford to borrow money and increase its enormous indebtedness without providing for the interest. Let hon. members look at the position of the State generally in regard to its public works, and see if it had any right to go into the market to borrow money. He contended that it had not. It had not repudiated yet, but the time was not far distant when it would be called upon to do so if they piled up their public indebtedness in this almost reckless fashion. A great proportion of this amount that the Government asked permission to borrow was to be laid out in railways, which had always been a big feature in the colony. It was hard to tell whether Parliament was an assembly of men met to do the business of the country, and regulate public affairs, or an assembly of log-rollers gathered together to help each other to get certain little public works called railways. Hon. members thought the salvation of the public depended upon making railways whether they paid or not, and if Parliament did what was right it would close some railways until they had made the colony attractive to persons in other parts of the world, and increased their population.

Mr. LEAHY: Which will you close?

Mr. HOOLAN: The hon. member would soon have a railway at his own door which would have to be shut up before long. He remembered when a railway was proposed from Ipswich to Dugandan a lot of eloquent speeches were made by hon. members who pledged themselves that the line would go through fertile country, and be a great benefit to a great number of settlers. By a wonderful stretch of imagination a few shepherds were turned into a large and industrious population yearning for a railway. The consequence had been that the Government had built the line, but instead of proving a reproductive work that wretched line had not paid working expenses, to say nothing of interest on the cost of construction. The working expenses during the last five years had been reduced to a minimum, the railway employees had been reduced almost to penury, and yet they found that the loss on working expenses amounted to £82,000, which had to be made good by people who had had no say in the matter. That was a nice state of affairs. Why did not hon. members attempt to regulate that state of affairs before they agreed to any more loan

proposals, and plunged the unfortunate taxpayers in still further debt? The same might be said of the Brisbane Valley line to Esk. He remembered the glowing descriptions which had appeared in the Ipswich papers when that line was advocated. Yet the loss on working expenses on that line last year was £2,220. What sort of a railway could that be at all? The prophets of the past had led them woefully astray, and there was every likelihood that the prophets of the present day would do the same in regard to the lines now proposed. He defied any hon. member to point to one single item in the present loan proposals which would pay working expenses, let alone interest on the capital cost. The next line he would refer to was that from Pengarry Junction to Crow's Nest. Who did not know that railway? It ran through fertile country. It ought to pay, but it did not. The officials were very well regulated; the strictest vigilance was exercised; there were no thieves in the department; there were no "cronk" tickets; they took all the fares, and the passenger rates were very high, though the accommodation was very poor unless for "nobs" who travelled first-class—the second-class passengers were like so many pigs in pens; yet the loss on that line last year was £682, notwithstanding the fact that Mr. Mathieson had reduced the working expenses to a minimum. There might be enormous expenditure still, but he judged from what he heard, and from the visible appearance of the railway employees, that they were not receiving extravagant pay. In the face of such facts, how could the Government introduce fresh loan proposals? They had already a tremendous burden of State indebtedness on account of works that did not pay their way; and if those persons who were in charge could not make such of those railways as passed through fertile country pay, they must make an open confession of arrant incompetency. However, in order to hold their positions, they proposed to continue the same wretched system, which must inevitably land the colony in the present position of the Queensland National Bank, and make it break down of its own accord. Why, at no very distant date they would have the bailiff in possession of the public estate. At present they were deriving a certain amount of revenue from the public estate. They were grinding down the working people, who were rebelling against it. They were accused of inciting the working classes to rebellion and mischief; but if he had at his command 40,000 of them he would continue to excite them to rebellion against a Government maintained at the expense of the working people. It was no use boasting of their revenue. The revenue would not stand the strain put upon it; and the working people could not continue to provide the revenue for Government mismanagement and blunder, and they could not continue to be ground down year after year unless the Government were prepared with an army of occupation to compel them to continue in their present miserable condition. He now came to the Pittsworth line, all going through fertile country, but it returned a dead loss of £247 yearly. Take the Warwick to Killarney line. If that line would not pay, in the name of common sense what line would; but in spite of the fact that it was built through beautiful fertile lands and showed a yearly loss, they were building a line from Colton to Pialba, through a barren swamp, knowing full well that there was no possibility of it paying. The Warwick to Killarney line made a loss last year of £1,376. Did the Committee know that. Had hon. members given any attention to the matter? Could they go before their constituents and give an intelligent account of the various lines and why they did not pay? What was the use of hon. mem-

bers asserting that the country was in a highly flourishing condition, and could afford to borrow more money, when they knew they were practically throwing money into the gutter by building some of those lines. Could any country in the world show a more miserable, wretched record of past mistakes, which were a disgrace to the legislature, than the colony of Queensland? If he had advocated the construction of some of those lines, he would be so ashamed that not even the billet of a Minister would induce him to stay in the House. Any butcher, or baker, or tinker, or tailor could legislate in that way. It was simply mortgaging the country to people who had money to lend, who had lent their money on the strength of delusive appearances and false representations. He came next to the Southport line from South Brisbane. Southport was a lovely watering place with a lovely beach, framed by nature to attract the attention of the world's visitors. The plans were brought forward in the regular way, the Minister pledged himself to them, the Government swore the line would pay and that prosperity would follow on its construction, that it would be a boon to the working man and a boon to humanity—and in the end it turned in a yearly loss of £1,597. Next, they had Ernest Junction to Nerang. A short line, plenty of farmers, numbers of settlers, the land valued at £10 an acre, highly fertile soil, a sugar-growing district—and the whole thing produced a loss of £519 a year. Then there was South Brisbane to Cleveland, a line seventeen miles in length. It returned a loss of £428 a year over working expenses, and yet the Government proposed to extend it into the township for a further distance of seven chains. Next, the Kilkivan Junction to Kilkivan line, going through fertile country, well cultivated, in which there was a goldfield and a mining population, and it resulted in a loss of £997 a year. Why were such lines kept open a day? What shopkeeper would keep his shop open if it did not pay? If he kept it open during exhibition week and there was no return, would he be anything but a lunatic to keep it open longer? Bundaberg to Mount Perry Railway—hon. members knew that if it was possible for any railway to pay under ordinary circumstances that line should pay. Some lines were paying, but it was under extraordinary circumstances. There was something wrong with our railway system, or those railways should pay working expenses. He took the stand that no railway should be constructed if in the first five years after it was opened and brought into use it could not pay interest and working expenses. Our railways did not pay because they were built on lies, and a thing that was built on a lie lived badly, died early, and went to hell's fire in the long run. The Bundaberg to Mount Perry Railway ran from a thriving city to an important goldfield, with copper-mines and coal-mines on the road, and through the Burnett Valley and stretching through the beautiful Burnett country. What was the matter with that railway? Why did not the Government make it pay, instead of constructing more lines from Charleville to Cunnamulla, and from Cordalba to Pialba, from the Racecourse to Pinkenba, and from Mayne to Enoggera; instead of constructing more beautiful monuments of mismanagement and misery? Why did not those railways pay? They were in good working order—the steel rails were not chipped, and people were not afraid to travel upon them—why did they not pay? Because they should be shut up, that was all; because the people who passed them in past times ought to be publicly placed on their trial, as they would be in some countries, for deluding the public and doing away with their money. That

railway showed a loss of £141 a year on working expenses alone. Emerald to Springsure. Here was a place in which the celebrated millionaire, Mr. Tyson, had large interests, and which was represented by the financier of the House, Mr. Hardacre. What was there to prevent the Emerald to Springsure line paying if it was possible for any line to pay? Was it not all due to the logrolling of the past, by which people rigged up public works that public money might be expended in certain districts for the benefit of certain persons who pulled the wires to return men to Parliament whom nature intended to be oyster-saloon keepers? That railway went through a beautiful part of the country, and there was nothing the matter with it except that the State lost £1,215 yearly on it in working expenses, and had lost upon it since the day it was constructed. Emerald to Clermont. That should be a highly paying line.

Mr. CROSS : So it is.

Mr. HOOLAN : It was all very well for hon. members to laugh, but the poor devils who were yakkering from morning until night to bear the brunt of it had no reason to laugh, and their children would have to bear the brunt of other sins of the same kind as soon as they were big enough to start out and labour in the open market. On the Emerald to Clermont railway they had an annual loss of £115. That was on what was almost a main line from the main Central line and going to Clermont, the celebrated Peak Downs, Wolfgang, to a gold-mine, an undeveloped coal-mine, beautiful timber country, and all the rest of it. Somebody was enjoying the advantage, but the State had to pay. That sort of thing was going on from year to year, and there were some persons in the State who should be made to pay more to those railways if they wished them to be kept open. They were levying tremendous burdens upon the country to carry on the mistakes of the past, and it would be better, as in the case of the bank, to try to get to the bottom of them and rectify them. The Emu Park line was responsible for a loss of £142 a year. Then there was the Bowen line, but there was no use in throwing water on a drowned rat; everyone knew that the loss on that line could not be prevented until the line was carried further inland. There was a yearly loss of £2,409 on it, or nearly the whole of the working expenses, as it returned little or no revenue and was kept open, he supposed, out of compliment to the hon. member for Bowen. Then there was the Cairns line, on which there was a tremendous yearly loss, which was doing no good and would do no good, and he said that, though there was an agitation to carry it through to his district. The cost of construction was enormous, and the yearly loss to the State varied from £3,093 last year to £10,200 four years ago. That was the smallest loss there had been; perhaps in twenty years' time it might pay its working expenses. Then there was the Cooktown line, a valuable main line running through Cape York Peninsular. That line showed a yearly loss of £3,601 on working expenses.

The TREASURER : Mr. Chairman, I should like to move you out of the chair. We do not come here to indulge in comedy.

Mr. HOOLAN : He was pointing out facts which it was important for the public to know, and referring to public works which were a disgrace to the instigators of them, whoever they might be. It was no comedy for the country that had to pay for past mistakes. Some day, when the hon. gentleman had gone to "kingdom come," the comedy would resolve itself into a tragedy. It was actions like those that had made the tragedies of

the world, and if Queensland kept on as she had been going for many years past the tragedy would come sooner or later.

The TREASURER : Every Assembly must have one fool.

Mr. HOOLAN : It would be better to have forty fools than a lot of infernal rogues. He would not go into the question of the loss of interest on railways, although he did not think it was known to many members of the Assembly. He did not know much about it himself till an hour or two ago, and it somewhat startled him. The interest last year on railway expenditure amounted to £756,544, while the income from railways was £408,330, showing an actual loss on that item alone of £348,214; and the works now being constructed would make the loss still heavier. How the colony was going to bear the burden he did not know. What a grand position Queensland might have been in to-day if past legislators had decided only to lay out money on lines which were likely to pay interest on cost of construction and working expenses! They would have had £348,214 a year to spend on useful public works instead of having to make up a deficiency to that amount out of revenue. The present Government was like all other Governments; they must have money to spend. It was neither better nor worse than past Governments all through Australia in its capacity to spend money. No doubt the present proposals would scatter a few thousands annually among the working classes, and in that way might do a certain amount of good for a year or two; it would keep the wolf from the door. But what sort of a state of affairs was coming afterwards? They were trying to create general prosperity on a fictitious basis. He would rather see the State managed from the point of rigid economy, or even of absolute parsimony, than see money scattered broadcast for a year or two with the inevitable result of heavy taxation and wide-spread poverty. Would the Government give a pledge that any of the proposed lines would pay interest and working expenses? They were not game to do it, and he was giving his opinion on it as a representative of the people should never hesitate to do on such an important public matter. It was of quite as much public importance as the affairs of the Queensland National Bank, and they had not hesitated to express their opinions on that hideous blunder of heaven-born financiers and politicians of the past. This proposal for a loan of £2,500,000, coming as it did at the time of the bank disaster, should engage the attention of every member, and every member should express his opinion with regard to it, and not years afterwards, when taxed with his silence, have to say that he happened to be sick on that occasion, or at a social function, which was the way some persons got out of such difficulties. For himself, he was opposed to the proposal, as it would simply create an ephemeral prosperity.

Mr. HARDACRE regarded the bringing down of those loan proposals as very much of a farce, because no matter how much they were opposed to them, or how much they might think that loss would accrue from their adoption, they had no option but to agree to the proposals. They ought, however, to disclaim any responsibility for the passing of the loan, or for the results that would follow, because last year when a large number of railway proposals were submitted, they were distinctly told by the Government that they would not involve a new loan. Now they were told that those proposals contained nothing except what Parliament had previously approved. That he denied utterly. All that Parliament had done in approving of the plans and books of reference of those railways was to affirm that if the lines were

built they should be built according to the routes specified. When the plans were under consideration last session the whole of the opposition on that side was based on the contention that the construction of the lines would involve a new loan, but they were deliberately deceived on that point, and allowed the proposals to go through. On that occasion Mr. Powers, the then leader of the Opposition, moved an amendment, one clause of which stated that the House—

“was not prepared, by passing votes on account to the amount of £118,500, to sanction the acceptance of tenders for all the railway works proposed to cost about £900,000, as the Treasurer admits that the funds to pay for the balance of the contracts will not be in hand out of moneys properly available for that purpose, and must be obtained later on in some way not yet authorised by Parliament.”

The Government defeated them on that amendment, and told the House that they had money in hand to construct all the railways that were proposed. Mr. Morgan, the then member for Warwick, argued that the Government had not taken the House into their confidence as they should have done, and that the passing of those railways would—

“inevitably commit us to the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of pounds of loan money which it will be absolutely necessary for us to go to the London market to raise,”

and that that had been admitted by the deputy Treasurer in his speech this evening. To that the Secretary for Lands interjected—

“I admitted nothing of the sort.”

The Secretary for Railways said at that time that the Treasurer had money enough in hand to build all those railways.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I say so still.

Mr. HARDACRE: Then why were the Committee asked to consent to another loan? Earlier in the session the Treasurer said—

“It is not intended to seek authority to incur new liabilities which would necessitate the raising of a further loan.”

But they did incur liabilities on a false statement that now involved them irretrievably in consenting to a new loan. They had let contracts for railways, some of which were finished, and if this loan was not granted those lines that were not completed, and on which considerable sums had been spent, would have to remain unfinished. In the course of that discussion the late Secretary for Lands (Mr. Barlow) and others insisted that there was no necessity for a Loan Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: There was not.

Mr. HARDACRE: No. But it was most unjustifiable to ask Parliament to pass plans on the understanding that no loan would be required and then ask for a loan to cover expenditure in connection with plans that were passed under false pretences. He disclaimed any responsibility for whatever loss might be incurred through putting a loan on the market at present; and he protested against the deception that had been practised. It was a farce to ask members to consent to things when they had to give their consent willy-nilly. The Treasurer had said that certain moneys were legally available, but the question was whether they were practically available. The hon. gentleman did not tell the Committee that the Treasurer's coin account and the savings bank securities were locked up in the Queensland National Bank.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He has the key of the safe.

Mr. HARDACRE: But suppose the bank closed its doors, how could he get to the safe?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The coin is in the vaults, but the bank has no control over it. The Treasurer has the key.

Mr. HARDACRE: The money was at current account.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are quite wrong.

Mr. HARDACRE: That might be a mistake, but there was nothing in the Auditor-General's report to show that it was not at current account. It was there stated in connection with Treasury notes that the gold and coin in the safe at the Queensland National Bank amounted to £509,000, that the current account in charge of teller was £50,000. Then, with regard to the savings bank securities, there was £875,000 in current account. That was not in the safe. Though the money referred to by the Treasurer might be legally available, it was not practically available, and it was therefore necessary to go to the market for a new loan, however much they might object. Another matter that ought not to be passed over without comment was where the money was to be lodged when it was obtained. A few weeks ago the Treasurer said the money would be placed in the Bank of England, but to-night he had told them that it would go to pay interest upon the national debt, in order to save the ordinary cost of transferring the money from here. If this money was to be lodged in the Bank of England to pay interest, what was to become of the money that would otherwise come out of the consolidated revenue?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It will be spent upon public works.

Mr. HARDACRE: If they brought the money here the necessity would be obviated of sending home the interest amounting to £1,250,000. Substantially, therefore, the money they were going to borrow would be brought over here, and the question was: What were they going to do with it? Was it to be lodged in the Queensland National Bank under the present circumstances? He believed there was an agreement in existence by which all moneys must be lodged with that institution, but they ought to insist that it should be lodged somewhere else. It was useless to say that it would be spent upon public works, because it would not be required for some time, and it should be lodged in the meantime in some of the other financial institutions of the colony. In his opinion the Government ought to take steps to terminate the agreement with the Queensland National Bank as soon as possible.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Treasurer was sufficiently explicit when he said the money to be borrowed would be paid into the Bank of England. If the hon. member would look up the Loan Estimates passed this year he would find they had appropriated £1,315,000, and the bulk of that would be spent this year.

Question put and passed.

CENTRAL DIVISION.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved that £292,850 stand part of the loan for the Central division. In reference to the item of £87,150 for the line from South to North Rockhampton, he explained that when the plans were passed by Parliament the estimate was £52,000 for a bridge with a single line of rails, but it was now proposed to make a double line with a footway alongside it. If any member of the Committee objected to this additional money being spent, now was the time to take the objection.

Mr. KERR: The Treasurer had stated that he (Mr. Kerr) wanted to increase the distance his constituents would have to travel by rail by sixty miles, according to the proposal made by the hon. member for Port Curtis, but that was not his contention at all. His idea was that Gladstone should be connected with a point on the Central line, so that produce would not have to go to

Rockhampton at all. In 1893 the hon. member for Port Curtis asked the then Premier if the Government were prepared to favourably consider the construction of a line of railway from Gladstone to the Central system, *via* the Calliope coal mines, upon the land-grant principle, and the reply was that the Government would consider any proposition for the construction of the line upon the land-grant principle, but whether favourably or not would depend upon the conditions. He did not see that any extra mileage would be put upon the producers. If anything it would be shorter by about five miles to go even from Boolburra or Duaringa to Gladstone than down to Rockhampton and from there to Broadmount, and the line would give railway communication to a coalfield which could supply all the wants of the Central districts. It would be to the benefit of the Western producers if they had railway connection with Gladstone.

Mr. McDONALD: There was not the slightest doubt that they had been distinctly given to understand when those railways had been agreed to that there was sufficient money available without borrowing any more. Of course, in view of the approaching general election, the Government had not thought it politic to state that they would have to raise more money in order to carry out those works. He thought the Secretary for Railways had himself stated that there was no necessity to borrow.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I still say that £880,000 is available for railway construction.

Mr. McDONALD: If the money was still available, why did not the Government produce it? The fact of the matter was that the Government had the money somewhere where they could not get at it. The matter had not been well cleared up. The Treasurer had told them that the money was to be kept in London to pay interest on the national debt, and he supposed those works would be paid for out of the consolidated revenue fund in the colony. They knew that as a rule the hon. gentleman did not tell them what he was really going to do. He had got into the habit of quibbling in such a way that they really did not know how to take him.

Mr. GROOM: Hon. members were suffering just now from having taken an Act of Parliament on trust. In 1890 a very modest-looking Bill had been introduced, called the Audit Act Amendment Bill. He did not suppose one member in a dozen then knew the purport of that Bill, so craftily had it been drafted and brought in, but they had since learned what it meant. There were a number of unexpended loan balances, including, amongst others, £500,000 for the *via recta*, £250,000 for the St. George railway, and £45,000 for the Drayton deviation, making a total of over £3,000,000. In order to enable the Government to divert that money to other works than those for which it had been borrowed, that Bill had been introduced. The late member for Warwick pointed out last session how members had been deceived. Of course they had been told that there was to be no more borrowing. The policy in 1890 was to stop all public works. Since that time the Government had been able to carry out public works by operating on those unexpended loan balances. In 1893 the last instalment of the £10,000,000 loan was raised, amounting to £1,042,000, which the *Courier* had stated—and the statement had never been contradicted—was raised to be placed in a certain institution; and there had been no further loan since, with the exception of the conversion loan of last year. The Secretary for Railways stated that the Government had £800,000 which they could spend in railway construction, but Parliament had never provided that money

for the purpose of executing the works on which the money was being expended. The Government had been operating on other accounts. Take the £250,000 for the Mareeba railway; that money had never been voted by Parliament, but was probably taken from the amount voted for the *via recta* or some other vote. It was well known that when money was voted for a specific purpose it could not be diverted to any other purpose, but Acts had at different times been brought in by the present Premier to divert money. If the House was asked to divert money in that way of course it had the power of refusal, but at the present time they were asked to replenish the loan vote. The Auditor-General had pointed out that they had been drawing on the loan account without lawful authority, and it was only recently that public attention had been directed to the Audit Act Amendment Act and its effect. He had been asked by an ingenious constituent whether he was aware that the money voted by Parliament for the Drayton deviation had been diverted by the Government to another purpose, and when he said he was not aware of it his constituent drew his attention to the Audit Act Amendment Act. That was exactly what had happened, and really no one knew when the Act was passing through what it meant. The House simply took on trust a measure from a gentleman who, it was supposed, could not make a legal mistake. There was of course nothing to prevent members of the Government doing what they had done. They were perfectly within their rights in asking the House to vote that money to replenish the loan fund and make good the amounts they had taken from it on other accounts, but he had no doubt it would become a serious question with some future Parliament whether the Audit Act Amendment Act should continue on the statute-book and the Government be allowed to use money which was intended for altogether different objects.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW: The sweet simplicity of the hon. member for Toowoomba was very refreshing. He was sure the hon. member knew that no Government would have the cheek to spend the unexpended balances of the £10,000,000 loan. Trial surveys which had been made in the past had been a curse to the colony, and had landed it in heavy expenditure. He felt strongly on the matter, because an important public work for his district had been included in the £10,000,000 loan, and it had never been carried out. Hon. members should take into consideration the fact that the Treasurer had been on the Treasury benches for four years, and had never had one penny of loan money to expend. In 1893 he certainly raised a million of money which was said to have gone into the Queensland National Bank, but he did not know where it went. It had been argued and contended by the hon. member for Leichhardt that the House could not disapprove of the loan proposals. He saw nothing to prevent the hon. member discussing and voting against the proposals for the construction of the double line at Rockhampton, or any other work if he chose. He thoroughly understood the Treasurer last session when he explained how plans first came before the House, then went to the Council for approval, and then the House had the vote placed before them, which they could either accept or reject. He approved of the Treasurer's proposal to keep the money in London for the purpose of paying interest—such a proposal as might have been expected from any business man; it was the proper thing to do. If hon. members thought that the proposals which were put before them last year were to be paid for out of revenue, they must have been very simple. No sum of money that the Treasurer had at that

time would have been sufficient to pay for such works, but the Treasurer made up his mind that he would not ask for a fresh loan until he really wanted it, and by that means he had saved the colony a large sum of money by way of interest.

Mr. STEWART: Although he did not altogether approve of the method in which that loan was being authorised, he could not do otherwise than support the vote set down for the Central division, and his only regret was that it was so small. Seeing that the Central lines paid rather over 5 per cent. on the capital invested in them, and there were several districts there that might well be opened up by railways, the Government, instead of spending £270,000 of loan money upon unpayable lines within twenty miles of Brisbane, might very well have extended railway communication in the Centre and the North. There was not at present a single paying railway in the neighbourhood of Brisbane, and he protested against the bolstering up of Brisbane by fresh loan expenditure, while the Centre and the North were hungering for increased railway communication. He was putting in a plea for the expenditure of money on railways in a portion of the colony in which railways paid, as against a portion of the colony in which railways did not pay. One could hardly take two steps about Brisbane without running up against a railway or a railway bridge upon which public money had been spent.

Mr. BATTERSBY rose to a point of order. The hon. member was dealing with the Southern division. They had passed that vote.

The CHAIRMAN: I cannot see any point of order at all. I think the hon. member for North Rockhampton is quite in order.

Mr. STEWART: Why did not the Government spend £270,000 in building a railway through the splendid pastoral country between Jericho and Blackall, and down by Tambo, instead of continuing the policy of building up Brisbane at the expense of every other portion of the colony? As a Central man he protested against that policy.

Mr. CALLAN could not agree with the hon. member, though he was largely interested in Rockhampton and the Central district. Including the vote for the Narrows and the entrance to Broadmount, the Central division was down on the list for £327,850, and that was a fair whack out of the total vote. The junior member for Rockhampton would admit that the Central district was being fairly treated, and Central members would no doubt get more in the future. He did not think anyone could say the Central district had not been treated fairly.

Mr. STEWART: If the hon. member for Fitzroy was satisfied, he was not. The inference to be drawn from the hon. member's remark, that a large portion of the money was to be spent in and around Rockhampton was that Rockhampton was being bolstered up in the same way that Brisbane had been bolstered up. The two cases were not parallel. Every farthing of the money to be spent in and around Rockhampton was to be spent to assist not Rockhampton, but the Western pastoral industry.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: As the large sum down for the Central district had not yet been expended, if any hon. member wished any of the proposed works to be deferred for a year or two, now was the time to say so. Apart from that he would say that if any town in the colony had been exceptionally well treated it was Rockhampton.

Mr. CURTIS: The Central division had certainly received far more consideration than it had been accustomed to receive from previous Governments. He agreed with the hon. member

for Rockhampton North that the bulk of the proposed expenditure was in the interests of the Western producers rather than in the interests of the people of Rockhampton. At the same time there was a mutuality of interest in the matter, for whatever benefited the pastoralists of the Western interior must necessarily benefit the people of Rockhampton. But if they considered the matter from the revenue-producing capabilities of Central Queensland, the division was entitled to even greater consideration than it had received. In reply to the hon. member for Barcoo, he would say that any proposal to extend the Gladstone Railway to a point on the Central Railway west of Rockhampton would be most unjust to the people of Rockhampton. No Government would venture to propose such a railway without giving full consideration to the people who had been living for years in Rockhampton and the vicinity, and who had invested there every sixpence they possessed, especially as the construction of such a line might have the effect of diverting traffic from Rockhampton, and ruining a number of people. With regard to the present proposals of the Government, he shared the opinion of the hon. member for Fitzroy, that the people of the Central district had no reason to complain, especially as the Central members were a disunited party, only four of whom supported the policy of the Government. It was through no fault of his that there was no independent Central party, which would be a great benefit to the whole of the Central division.

Mr. MACDONALD-PATERSON hoped the Committee would not accept the invitation twice given by the Secretary for Railways to cavil at any of the amounts set down on those proposals for the Central division, when he said that if they objected to a double line along the streets of Rockhampton or to a double bridge across the Fitzroy they could move a reduction in the vote. He would not do anything of the kind. He was there as a representative of the whole colony, and it was their duty to develop the harbours and rivers of the leading centres of Queensland, and to augment the revenue of their railways by extending the lines to deep water. He was prepared to help Townsville, Rockhampton, and other places in that respect, as well as Brisbane. With regard to the interjection of the Secretary for Lands that Rockhampton lived on the West, he would remind the hon. gentleman that the whole of their eastern seaboard, and even places like Ipswich and Toowoomba, were dependent upon the West. With respect to the suggestion of the hon. member for Barcoo that a line should be constructed from Boolburra or Duaringa to Gladstone, he would point out that that country was extremely difficult for railway construction, so that the line would be very expensive. The distance was from 125 to 150 miles, and such a line would increase the mileage for the hon. member's constituents. The hon. member should go back to his constituents and inform them that the sum of money necessary for a line from Duaringa to Port Curtis would construct a railway from Longreach to the South Australian border, and ask them which would do the most good.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS wished there was a Central Chamber where Central members could settle their differences; he believed it would be a good thing for the colony. Referring to the remarks of the hon. member for North Brisbane concerning the bridge at Rockhampton, when he moved the vote he explained that £87,000 was asked for to complete that bridge, though the House had in the first instance passed plans for a bridge to cost £52,000. He did that so that there should be no misunderstanding on the subject afterwards.

Mr. BOLES held that the hon. member for Barcoo was perfectly justified in advocating whatever line he thought would be most advantageous to his constituents. Whether the line he advocated would be a practicable one or not, or whether it was likely to be carried out, was not for him to say; but he might say that to anyone looking at a map of the colony it would be evident that there was not a difference of five miles between the mean distances from Duaringa to Gladstone and from Boolburra to Broadmount. He had been over the country where the hon. member suggested the railway should go, and he denied that there were any engineering difficulties in the way of railway construction. There were no high ranges or large rivers to cross; the only thing against it was that it was flooded country. He had pointed out again and again that the port chosen by the Government was never likely to be used by large ships, and would be a constant source of expense; whereas a line to Port Alma and thence to Gladstone would give the Central district railway communication with two good ports.

Mr. HARDACRE explained that he knew the Committee were not bound to agree to every item; but he maintained that they were committed to the bulk of the proposals through the action taken last year. He regarded the proposals relating to the Central district as the least objectionable of all the items. The hon. member for Rockhampton had complained that the Central members had not sufficient influence in getting loan money expended in their district, because they were a divided party. Most of the Central members were on his (Mr. Hardacre's) side, and if the hon. member wanted the party to be undivided he should join the majority. That was what he would do if he wanted to be loyal to the Central district, and then the district would get more justice.

The CHAIRMAN: I trust that the hon. member will confine his remarks to the question.

Mr. HARDACRE asked the Treasurer to assure the Committee that he would not lodge in the Queensland National Bank the consolidated revenue money which would go to pay interest on the public debt if this loan was not floated. If he paid interest with the loan, he would have here the money which would otherwise have to go for interest.

The TREASURER: I am glad you see that.

Mr. HARDACRE: The hon. gentleman made a promise before that he would not lodge the loan in the Queensland National Bank, but would put it into the Bank of England; but while he had made the promise to the ear he was breaking it in reality. They ought to have an assurance that this money would not be placed in the Queensland National Bank under present circumstances.

Mr. KIDSTON thought this was the most justifiable vote in the whole list. Rockhampton had only one interest, and that was to develop the trade of the Western country in the Central division. The greater facilities they could secure for that trade the better for Rockhampton; that was the only way in which Rockhampton could benefit. This vote was placed on the Estimates by the Government solely in the interests of the Western producers, and not in the interests of Rockhampton as a town. No doubt it would benefit, but it could only benefit through the Western country. He might remind the hon. member for Barcoo that when he wanted to refer to Rockhampton again he should remember that even a blacksmith at Tambo lived on the Western producer just as much as any shopkeeper in Rockhampton, because he was not the producer. He was surprised that the Secretary for Railways should

almost invite a reduction in the vote, because there was no other district in the colony whose railway returns so well justified further railway extension. According to the annual return of the Commissioner for Railways for last year, the net return upon all the capital invested in railways in the South was £1 18s. 7d. The net return for all the railways in the North, taken together, was £2 16s. 2d., and for the Central railways, taken together, £5 1s. 6d. The return from the Central railways was nearly three times that from the Southern railways, and nearly twice that from the Northern railways. He quite agreed with his colleague that the Central district had nothing to complain of in these Estimates, and he was not complaining, but these matters required to be drawn attention to.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: According to the Commissioner's report, the return from the Central line, from Rockhampton to Longreach, last year was £6 4s. 7d., whilst the return from the Northern Railway, from Townsville to Hughenden, was £8 19s. 2d. He did not see the figures quoted by the hon. member in the report at all.

Mr. KIDSTON: The figures quoted by the hon. gentleman with reference to the misnamed Northern Railway were quite correct. He had given the net return for the Northern system of railways. The Commissioner gave the net return for the Southern and Central railway systems, but in the case of the railways in the Northern division the returns were given for each railway separately, but not for the whole system.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It was not fair to quote the returns for one year. For five years the Central Railway had paid £3 3s. 11d. per cent., whilst the Northern Railway had paid £5 14s. 4d. There was a time when the Central Railway hardly paid working expenses, but the Northern Railway had always paid working expenses and interest, and in addition had returned a profit to the Government of £250,000.

Mr. KERR: If he had a mania, he had not a mania for grasping at everything, like the hon. members for Rockhampton. There were pioneers in the West who had been there before the junior member for Rockhampton had seen Rockhampton, and twice as long as the senior member had been in Rockhampton. He did not pretend to be a philanthropist. When he did anything he wanted an equivalent. That portion of the Central district round Rockhampton had reason to be satisfied, but the people in the West got nothing. If a railway was taken from the Central Railway to the southward it would pay handsomely.

Mr. HARDACRE: The Treasurer had not yet told them what would be done with revenue money which would have to be spent if this loan was not granted.

The TREASURER: The equivalent of the loan moneys would be spent in paying the navvies, lengthsmen, and others who were employed on public works. They could not construct railways without employing labour.

Question put and passed.

NORTHERN DIVISION.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved that £360,000—Northern division—stand part of the proposed vote.

Question put and passed.

SURVEYS GENERALLY.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved that £20,000—Surveys generally—stand part of the proposed vote.

Mr. GLASSEY asked if the Railway Department had selected any person to make the survey

of the line which he had brought under the notice of the Minister the other day? That was the survey in the direction of Eidsvold.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Commissioner had given instructions to get a report on the route.

Mr. KERR asked when the survey which had been promised from a point on the Central line to Blackall was to be made?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That survey would be made as soon as the survey from Longreach was completed.

Question put and passed.

ROLLING-STOCK.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved that £200,000 be granted for rolling-stock.

Mr. GLASSEY thought this the proper time to raise the question of the want of sanitary carriages on the railways. He hoped attention would be given to the matter, as it was a long-standing complaint, and so far as he could see no improvement had been made.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS could assure the hon. member that considerable improvements had been made, and that the department was trying to provide sanitary carriages on all lines.

Question put and passed.

HARBOUR WORKS.

The TREASURER moved that £60,000 be granted for harbour works.

Question put and passed.

DEFENCE

The TREASURER moved that £25,000 be granted for the defence of the colony.

Mr. GLASSEY asked what this money was required for? Was it for forts, small arms, or ammunition, or what?

The TREASURER said they were always spending money on the forts and getting the latest description of guns. For instance, they were importing half-a-dozen Maxim guns. The defence vote on loan account was overdrawn to the extent of £8,000, and this vote was to replenish the account. No money would be spent that was not voted by Parliament.

Question put and passed.

LOANS TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

The TREASURER moved that £75,000 be granted for loans to local authorities. He had already explained that there was a balance of £117,000, but that amount might not prove sufficient in view of the fact that the harbour boards would require money.

Mr. GLASSEY asked if anything was to be done in the direction of erecting the traffic bridge over the Burnett? The construction of the bridge had been provided for by special Act of Parliament, and the money had been voted, but the bridge had never been built although its absence was a serious inconvenience and loss to the community.

The TREASURER: What the hon. member said was quite true. A special Act had been passed providing that the local authorities should find half the money, which they would borrow from the Government, the money to be repaid by means of tolls. The other half was to be provided by the Government; but he was rather dubious about building bridges upon those terms. They saw what had happened in the case of the Victoria Bridge. As soon as it was built it was claimed that it was a national work. A conference held in South Brisbane decided that what was wanted was a free bridge, but since that time the local authorities on the north side had protested that they did not want a free

bridge at all. The House had carried a resolution that the bridge ought to be free, and if it was to be considered a national bridge all the local authorities would be prepared to take it as such. He was opposed to national bridges. If the people interested in the bridge the hon. member referred to would say that they were prepared to pay for their bridge in the way provided for in the Act, and would not afterwards ask to have it made free, as being a national bridge, he would have no hesitation in lending them the money to build it. If they would do that the Government were bound by Parliament to carry out their part of the contract, and would do so.

Mr. GLASSEY was pleased to hear the hon. gentleman put the matter as he had done. He could tell the hon. gentleman that the ratepayers of the local authorities interested were, with very few exceptions, content to carry out their part of the contract under the Act. He reminded the hon. gentleman that the Burnett was the only river in the colony over which a free bridge had not in the first instance been built. That was a point which he thought should not be overlooked.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW: The difficulty was that the ratepayers could only pay a certain amount of interest and redemption, and if the term of the loans was extended from forty to sixty years the Treasurer would not hear any more about national bridges.

The TREASURER hoped that all those matters would be settled under the Local Government Act they expected to pass next session. Up to the present the local authorities, with but two exceptions, had met their obligations faithfully. Their arrears were remarkably small, and on the whole he was proud of the local authorities of the colony, and he was quite willing, where their financial position was good, to lend them what he thought they were justified in borrowing for the development of the districts they governed.

Mr. GLASSEY wished to inform the hon. gentleman that a couple of weeks ago the mayor of Bundaberg and the chairman of the Burrum Board presented a petition signed by a large number of ratepayers, to the Secretary for Works, stating that they were prepared to enter into arrangements to borrow the necessary sum for the work if the Government would carry out their portion of the contract. That showed that those local bodies meant business.

Mr. HOOLAN: The local authorities' engagements at present were limited, and it was too early to make any extra boast about their honesty. Until recently they had been heavily subsidised by the State. Most of them had been fairly honest, but the question to be considered was whether they could pay. A decent punt was quite good enough for Maryborough or Bundaberg, and whatever they had the people who used it ought to pay for it. During the short time local authorities had been able to borrow money, there were already three instances of repudiation—Mackay, Dalby, and Port Douglas; and he dared say that in many other instances, in the course of a few years, the same thing would occur.

Mr. O'CONNELL: Even the decent punt over the Burnett River was not run for nothing; the people had to pay for using it; and they proposed, if they were allowed to get the bridge, to pay in the same proportion as they were now paying. The people of Bundaberg were asking nothing from the Government that they were not prepared to pay back again with interest.

Mr. BELL could not allow the charge of repudiation made against the municipality of

Dalby to pass unchallenged. That body recognised the greater part of its indebtedness, and it was not from any deliberate action that it had fallen into arrears with its payments. To apply the term "repudiation" to the Dalby municipality, in the sense in which the hon. member for Burke used it, was absolutely incorrect and most unfair.

Mr. BATTERSBY: The hon. member for Bundaberg had stated that the mayor of that town and the chairman of the local divisional board had come down to Brisbane prepared to give a guarantee in respect of a loan for that bridge. He might inform the hon. member that something more than a guarantee of the chairman was required in such matters, that the local authorities had to pass a resolution on the subject, advertise their intention to apply for a loan, and, if the loan was not objected to by the rate-payers, to submit plans and specifications of the proposed work.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to remind the hon. member that the House is now in Committee of Ways and Means, and that this discussion of local authorities is irregular on the present vote.

Mr. DANIELS thought there should be some system adopted in assisting local authorities in the erection of bridges, and that a certain proportion should be contributed by the Government to all local authorities alike, or none at all.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION wished to say that the charge made by the hon. member for Burke against the municipality of Mackay of repudiating its debts was entirely uncalled for, and perfectly unjustifiable.

Question put and passed.

ELECTRIC TELEGRAPHS.

The TREASURER moved that £50,000 be granted for electric telegraphs.

Question put and passed.

SUGAR WORKS DEBENTURES.

The SECRETARY FOR WORKS moved that £500,000 be granted for the purchase of debentures under the Sugar Works Guarantee Acts, 1893-5.

Mr. GLASSEY asked whether all that money had been applied for?

The SECRETARY FOR WORKS: All the money had been promised, he understood.

Question put and passed.

RABBIT WIRE NETTING.

The SECRETARY FOR WORKS moved that £100,000 be granted for the purchase of wire netting under the Rabbit Boards Act of 1895.

Question put and passed.

TOTAL VOTE.

The TREASURER moved—

That towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding £2,324,480 be raised by the sale of debentures or the creation and issue of inscribed stock, secured upon the consolidated revenue fund of Queensland, and bearing interest at a rate not exceeding £3 10s. per centum per annum, to defray the cost of certain public works and services.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again on Tuesday next.

The reception of the resolutions was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

The House adjourned at nine minutes past 12 o'clock.