

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 19 DECEMBER 1899

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 19 DECEMBER, 1899.

The SPEAKER (Hon. Arthur Morgan, *Warwick*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

PROPOSED DESPATCH OF ADDITIONAL AUSTRALIAN TROOPS TO SOUTH AFRICA.

The PREMIER (Hon. R. Philp, *Townsville*): I have just received a telegram from Charters Towers stating: "On behalf of Charters Towers Stock Exchange I forward you £300 through the Queensland National Bank towards sending additional contingent to South Africa." I lay the telegram on the table.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ANNEAR: Well done Charters Towers.

Mr. DAWSON: Who signs that telegram?

The PREMIER: R. J. Sayers, chairman.

PAPERS.

The following papers, laid on the table of the House, were ordered to be printed:—

Despatch, dated 26th September, 1899, transmitting convention between Great Britain and Guatemala relative to trade marks.

Despatch, dated 17th October, 1899, transmitting regulations under which commissions in the British army may be obtained by officers of colonial local military forces and by students from the colonial universities.

Return to an order, relative to railway from Warwick to Warrego, and railway routes to St. George and the South-western districts.

QUESTION.

PRIVATE RAILWAY BILLS.

Mr. KIDSTON (*Rockhampton*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

1. Have any Bills been drafted for the purpose of authorising the construction of further private railways?

2. If so, how many?—and where is it proposed to build such railways?

3. Has any application been made to the department for copies of any such Bills?

4. If so, by whom was such application made, and when?

5. Was such application complied with?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Murray, *Normanby*) replied—

1. Yes.

2. Three—viz., Normanton-Cloncurry, Burketown to Lilydale, and branch off Chillagoe Railway to Mount Garnet.

3. Yes.

4. Mr. J. McKellar, who applied for a copy of the Normanton-Cloncurry Bill on the 15th November, 1899.

5. No.

THIRD READINGS.

PUBLIC SERVICE ACT AMENDMENT BILL—
MARSUPIAL BOARDS ACT, 1897, CONTINUA-
TION BILL.

These Bills were read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Council for their concurrence.

SUPPLY.

REPORT FROM COMMITTEE.

Mr. GRIMES (*Oxley*), as Chairman of Committees, presented a report from the Committee of Supply covering resolutions passed in connection with the Departments of Lands, Agriculture, Public Instruction, and Mines.

The resolutions were adopted.

RAILWAYS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.
COMMITTEE.

Clause 1—"Short title and construction"—put and passed.

On clause 2—"Commissioner continues in office for one year"—

Mr. FISHER (*Gympie*): It was thought desirable that an amendment should be made in that clause similar to the one which was made in the Public Service Board Bill. The Secretary for Railways, in introducing this measure, pointed out that, owing to the short time at their disposal, they were unable to deal with that question as fully as the circumstances of the case and the importance of the subject demanded. To prevent anything like that happening again, members on that side desired to limit the time during which the present commissioner should continue in office for nine months instead of twelve months, so that legislation would have to take place on the subject before the 21st of September next year. No one could complain that that would give too short a time to legislate on a matter of that kind, and he thought that every hon. member would freely and fully admit that it was not desirable that important legislation in connection with perhaps the largest department of the State should be delayed until the last week of the session, but that it should be introduced sufficiently early to allow ample time for its discussion. For that reason, and for other cogent reasons, he moved the omission of the words "one year," with the view of inserting "nine months."

The PREMIER: Why not make it the same as in the other Bill?

Mr. FISHER: Well, he moved that "one year" be omitted, with a view of inserting "ten months."

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

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS, the title was amended by the omission of the words "one year," and the insertion of the words "ten months."

The House resumed; the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with an amendment and an amended title, and the third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

RAILWAYS—GENERAL ESTABLISHMENT.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: In moving the Estimates for the Railway Department, one of the chief and most important services of the colony, he desired to draw the attention of hon. members to a few remarks made by the Commissioner in his last report. In adopting that course, he hoped it would materi-

ally assist in the passage of the Estimates. In referring the question of revenue and expenditure, the Commissioner said—

The revenue for the past twelve months, in comparison with that of the previous year, is as follows:—

	1897-98.	1898-99.
Paying traffic	£1,168,671	£1,326,337
Non-paying traffic (being services performed for other Government departments)	47,140	47,138
Gross revenue	£1,215,811	£1,373,475
Deduct working expenses	686,066	784,811

Producing a net revenue of £529,745 £588,664
or a net increase for the year of £58,919.

The percentage of working expenses to revenue and of revenue to capital expended on open lines in the various sections and divisions of the colony will be found in Table No. 11, from which it will be seen that the net revenue from all lines, after deducting working expenses, has returned a sum of £3 3s. 1d. per cent. on the capital expenditure on open lines, being an increase of 4s. 5d. on the previous year's percentage.

This result, notwithstanding the abnormal expenditure which I have been compelled to incur for the purpose of improving the condition of the rolling stock throughout the colony, cannot be regarded as otherwise than eminently satisfactory.

He thought hon. members would agree with that. Under the heading of "Profit and Loss" the Commissioner said—

It will be observed with satisfaction that the deficiency in the working of the railways which has to be defrayed by the general taxpayers of the colony has been reduced by £34,751, the amount being £179,669 as against £214,420 for the previous year, and if the interest charges had been confined to the expenditure on open lines the deficiency for the year under review would only have been £153,144.

On reference to table No. 10 it will be found that 5,822,230 train miles were run during the year as against 5,007,370 in the preceding year, earning 4s. 8½d. per mile at a cost of 2s. 8½d., as against 4s. 10½d. and 2s. 9d. respectively for the previous year, giving a net revenue of 2s. 0½d. per mile as against 2s. 1½d. for 1897-98.

The net revenue per train mile, it will be observed, shows a decrease in comparison with the figures for the previous year, but it must be understood that this result has been brought about by the large quantity of low class traffic dealt with, such as sugar-cane, timber, and raw sugar, and also to the number of special live stock trains which invariably run empty on the forward journey, while in many cases the stock conveyed in them has been trucked at reduced rates, the owners having been compelled, owing to the drought, to remove them to other pastures.

He would draw attention to the fact that the conveyance of stock by goods train had increased by £17,120. The traffic in wool had increased only to the amount of £400, which was comparatively very little, but that was owing to the prevalence of the drought in the West. In reference to the traffic derived from the agricultural industry, it would be observed from the report that the amount of tonnage and the revenue derived was as follows:—

The agricultural produce traffic carried on all lines during the past two years is as follows:—

	1897-1898.	
Tons	255,638	
Revenue	£86,185	
Average rate per ton	6s. 9d.	
	1898-1899.	
Tons	307,717	
Revenue	£88,312	
Average rate per ton	5s. 9d.	

It will be observed that while the quantity conveyed has increased by upwards of 50,000 tons the revenue has only risen by about £2,000. This is due to the fact that the traffic in sugar-cane, which as a rule is only carried very short distances and at very low rates, has considerably increased.

That would go to prove that the Commissioner was doing all in his power to convey agricultural produce along the lines at the cheapest possible rates. There was another

[4 p.m.] item to which he desired to call attention, not so much for the

benefit of hon. members, who had copies of the Commissioner's report, but for the benefit of the outside public. That was the figures with regard to the agricultural produce imported during the past two years at the three principal ports of the colony. To his mind they were rather startling, and served to illustrate the general effect which the past dry season had had on the agricultural industry west of the coast districts. The returns were as follows:—

BRISBANE.			
1897-98.			
Hay and Chaff ...	...	769 tons.	
Maize ...	...	2,103 bushels.	
Bran and Pollard ...	...	147 bushels.	
Wheat ...	...	281,730 bushels.	
Flour ...	...	8,470 tons.	
1898-99.			
Hay and Chaff ...	...	2,766 tons.	
Maize ...	...	151,935 bushels.	
Bran and Pollard ...	...	33,020 bushels.	
Wheat ...	...	415,735 bushels.	
Flour ...	...	9,820 tons.	
ROCKHAMPTON.			
1897-98.			
Hay and Chaff ...	...	2,007 tons.	
Maize ...	...	1,643 bushels.	
Bran and Pollard ...	...	Nil	
Wheat ...	...	87 bushels.	
Flour ...	...	6,383 tons.	
1898-99.			
Hay and Chaff ...	...	1,920 tons.	
Maize ...	...	133,078 bushels.	
Bran and Pollard ...	...	10,290 bushels.	
Wheat ...	...	76,924 bushels.	
Flour ...	...	5,585 tons.	

To Townsville the importations were equally large. He wished to draw attention to these items to show that there was ample and abundant room for the spread of agricultural settlement in the colony. They were still a long way from producing enough to supply their own local requirements; and it was encouraging to intending selectors to know that they had still a very large market within the colony for any produce which they might grow. He should like to draw attention to the heading of sectional workings. On this the Commissioner said—

On the Western Railway the working for 1897-98 was shown from Brisbane to Wyandra, the then terminus of the line. For the past year I have divided the section, and shown the working from Brisbane to Gowrie Junction, and thence to Cunnamulla. The past unfavourable season has had its effect on this line, as notwithstanding the increased railage (between Wyandra and Cunnamulla), the receipts have only exceeded those for the previous year by £14,763, while the expenditure has advanced by about £12,250. The section between Gowrie Junction and Wallangarra has also been seriously affected, as there has been a drop in the receipts of about £7,000, while the three feeders, the Killarney, Allora, and Pittsworth branches, have been almost stationary.

Further on, under the same heading, the Commissioner pointed out—

Since the connection between the Central and Southern divisions was established by means of the steamer plying through the "Narrows" there has been a considerable addition to the traffic on the North Coast line. The revenue due to the s.s. "Premier" alone was £3,408 for the year, earned at a cost of £4,041, showing a loss of £633 on the steamer; but when it is considered that the total receipts from the through traffic were £13,486, it will be apparent that this connection has been the means of adding very considerably to the general revenue of lines both north and south of Gladstone.

With regard to the guarantee line which had been constructed to Mount Morgan, the Commissioner said, and he desired to call attention to this. This was what the Commissioner said—

The heavy traffic on the Mount Morgan branch has resulted in a return for the year of £9 0s. 9d. per cent. on the capital expenditure, after paying working expenses. If similar results continue during the next twenty years the surplus receipts will then have been sufficient to pay the capital cost of the line.

The result was extremely satisfactory. Under the heading of construction, the Commissioner said—

The only line now under construction is that between South and North Rockhampton, and as the principal work connected therewith, namely, the bridge across the Fitzroy, will be completed in a few weeks' time, further railway construction must thereafter be suspended until such time as Parliament sees fit to make further provision therefor. Without in any way wishing to indicate what lines should be first entered upon, I would strongly urge the early construction of the section between Gladstone and Rockhampton. Such a connection would have been of immense service in traffic working during the past year, in permitting an interchange of rolling-stock, of which there was a shortage on the Central line.

He did not wish to dwell too much on this, because there were some other clauses in the report that he felt it necessary to draw attention to. Under the heading of "increased pay" he simply desired to draw attention to the statement he made last year when introducing the Estimates that, if the working of the railway lines continued to prosper as they had done in the past, the Government would take on themselves to restore the workmen in the service to the remuneration which they received in 1893, or previous to the reduction. That had been completed.

Mr. HARDACRE: No, it has not.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They would see about that later on. He promised the House he would endeavour to get this done, and he brought the matter before his colleagues for their consideration; and the Government decided, as far as it was possible—and he thought it had been completed—that the remuneration of the employees in the whole of the railway service should be restored to what it had been previously to 1893. That, he thought, would be found on reference to the Estimates. However, the Commissioner spoke of it in this way—

It will no doubt be remembered that when the pay of the wages staff was reduced in 1893, owing to the financial depression which was then prevailing throughout the colony, a promise was made by the then Government that the rate of pay would be restored so soon as the railway receipts warranted the additional expenditure involved in doing so. As the receipts for the past year have, I consider, been such as to warrant the restoration, I have, with the permission of the Government, made provision in this year's Estimates for the necessary advance in pay, and a new classification by-law will shortly be issued providing for the restoration in full as from the 1st of July last.

That new classification had been circulated, and was probably in the hands of hon. members. He wished to draw attention to some remarks under the heading of "Rolling Stock," which were important.

Mr. DAWSON: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Commissioner said—

The report of the board appointed to inquire into the two locomotive boiler explosions which took place in the Roma street yards in August and December, 1898, forced upon me the desirableness of reorganising the locomotive branch. To this end I have, with the consent of His Excellency the Governor in Council, secured the services of Mr. W. H. Nisbet, whom I have appointed as chief mechanical engineer, the locomotive engineer, Mr. H. Horniblow, having accepted the position of deputy—an appointment which the board recommended should be made to relieve the head of the branch on long tours of inspection. Mr. Nisbet assumed control of this branch on the 1st August last.

They might have something more to say on that appointment on the Estimates.

The condition of many of the locomotives, I am free to admit, has hitherto not been such as to ensure efficient, and I might say safe, working. The completion of the contracts for a large number of boilers and passenger engines of greater power—the delivery of which will shortly be commenced—will entirely remove the difficulties under which I have been and am still

labouring, and obviate the necessity which unfortunately often arises of using goods engines for passenger trains. Particulars of these contracts will be found in table No. 19.

He would pass on to make a few remarks with regard to the "border traffic." It would be remembered that some time ago a conference was held in Brisbane between the Commissioners of New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland to try and make better regulations with regard to this traffic. The Commissioner reported on the matter in this way—

During the late Conference of Railway Commissioners, held at Brisbane in May last, the question of abolishing all preferential rates made by New South Wales in favour of Queensland traffic, and the consequent withdrawal of the border tax on station produce crossing into New South Wales, was very fully considered, and after a lengthened discussion between the representatives of New South Wales and myself the terms of an agreement between the two colonies were arranged under which the New South Wales Commissioners agreed to withdraw all preferential rates in favour of Queensland traffic, and to confine the charges thereon to their class rates, and, further, to permit me to charge the same rates to Cunnamulla (a distance of 604 miles) and the South-western districts of the colony as they were charging between Sydney and Bourke (a distance of 504 miles), provided the Queensland border tax was withdrawn, and the duty on Queensland-grown sugar re-entering the colony borderwise was not imposed.

This agreement has now been in force since the 1st of August last, and although it is rather early to determine what effect it will have upon our receipts from traffic to and from the South-western districts, it is confidently hoped that it will be of mutual advantage to both colonies. Certain it is that the withdrawal of the preferential rates and the cancellation of the border tax will have the effect of entirely removing the friction which has existed between the two colonies for years past. It is, I think, much to be regretted that a somewhat similar agreement could not have been arrived at between the other southern colonies.

He had asked the Commissioner if he could give any return with regard to the border traffic, but he said he could not at present, owing to the dry season. He drew hon. members' attention to the fact that the commissioner's report was very complete, and gave very valuable information. He thought hon. members would see that.

Mr. JACKSON: We have all read it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He knew that; but people outside the House did not know the information supplied in the report. He would like to draw hon. members' attention to table No. 16, which gave a comparative statement of the mileage opened, the capital expended, the earnings, expenses, etc., of the railways in the United Kingdom, Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and New Zealand, and which had been taken from the latest official reports. The mileage opened in Queensland was 2,746; in New South Wales, 2,706—so that Queensland was ahead of New South Wales in that respect. In Victoria the mileage opened was 3,113; in South Australia, 1,724; and in New Zealand, 2,090. He would also like to draw attention to the population per mile of railway. In the United Kingdom it was 1,856; in Queensland, 185; in New South Wales, 497; in Victoria, 378; in South Australia, 210; and in New Zealand, 357. So in this respect also Queensland was a long way ahead of the other colonies. The earnings per head of the population stood thus: The United Kingdom, £2 7s. 11d.; Queensland, £2 14s. 8d.; New South Wales, £2 6s. 9d.; Victoria, £2 4s. 5d.; South Australia, £2 14s. 3d.; and New Zealand, £1 19s. 4d. So that Queensland was the highest in this respect, and he thought that these figures were proof that Queensland had not neglected her duties with regard to her railways. It was a credit to the colony that so many miles were open and that the lines were working so satisfactorily.

Mr. JACKSON: What about the column dealing with the earnings per train mile?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He merely wished to draw attention to these items so that it might afford some information to the public. He moved that £30,620 be granted for railways, general establishment. Hon. members would notice that there was a considerable increase in the vote—something like £4,757. One of the chief items of the increase was owing to the recent appointment of Mr. Nisbet, the chief mechanical engineer, at £1,000 a year. In the head office there were eleven additional clerks and telegraph operators, causing an increase of £1,988, and there were classification increases. Mr. Pratten, the secretary, who, he thought hon. members would admit, was a very deserving officer, was given a special increase of £50. The traffic auditor, Mr. S. Davis, was down for a special increase of £25; and the assistant station auditor, Mr. F. W. Allen, for £10 special increase and £10 classification increase. There was a classification increase of £10 and special increase of £10 to Mr. Fitzgerald; and special increases of £25 to the cashier, Mr. H. Evans; the chief clerk, Mr. J. J. Lewis; to Mr. G. P. D'Arcy; and increases of £10 each to ten clerks. The classification increases amounted to £450. In the Chief Engineer's office there was a special increase of £25 to Mr. Lethem, the officer in charge of surveys; while the clerks received £50 classification increase, and the assistant photographer £10. In the General Traffic office the chief clerk, Mr. J. Chambers, was down for a special increase of £50; the time-table manager, Mr. J. S. Newman, for £25; and four clerks for special increases amounting to £50, and £75 classification. In the Chief Engineer's office, Mr. S. J. Welsh, chief clerk, was down for a special increase of £30, and £10 classification; and there was a special increase of £10 to Mr. Walker, a clerk, and classification increases of £65. These were the increases which made up the difference in the vote between this year and last year.

Mr. FISHER (*Gympie*) did not think that such long speeches as the Minister had made were wise.

Mr. JENKINSON: Why not?

Mr. DUNSFORD: He has given valuable information.

Mr. FISHER: Because the time of the present session was drawing to a close.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am pleased to hear that.

Mr. McDONALD: Not while there is business to do.

Mr. FISHER: No doubt the hon. gentleman gave very valuable information, and that might excuse the length of his speech. The only thing was that the hon. gentleman seemed to thoroughly approve of the Commissioner's report. It would have been interesting to hear him refer to several other portions of the report. For instance, on page 15 the report dealt with private railways.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I saw all that. I know all about that.

Mr. FISHER: He would remind the hon. gentleman that they had also read the other things that he had mentioned. He was quite prepared to accept the hon. gentleman's statement that he overlooked it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I did not overlook it. I did not think it of sufficient importance.

MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION: Oh, oh!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Private railways are outside the railways belonging to the colony.

Mr. FISHER: He agreed with the hon. gentleman that it was entirely outside the work of the Commissioner to deal with the question in his report. Perhaps it would have saved some

discussion if the matter had been omitted. He wished to make a contrast between two portions of the report. On page 11 the Commissioner said—

Without in any way wishing to indicate what lines should be first entered upon, I would strongly urge the early construction of the section between Gladstone and Rockhampton. Such a connection would have been of immense service in traffic working during the past year in permitting an interchange of rolling-stock, of which there was a shortage on the Central line.

Now that was a line that every person he had heard speaking of it considered a most desirable work to proceed with.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am very glad to hear it.

Mr. FISHER: In the last paragraph on page 15 the Commissioner said—

The other line proposed is a tramway from Burketown to Lawn Hill, where extensive deposits of lead and silver have been discovered. The distance of these mines from Burketown is about 100 miles, and the route passes through country of a similar nature to that between Normanton and Cloncurry, and the same objections to its construction from public funds may be urged; so that unless these two lines are undertaken by private enterprise, the mineral areas which they are intended to serve may remain undeveloped for years.

Now mark this—

The concessions which the promoters are seeking are, I understand, most reasonable, and such as may be readily granted by Parliament.

Mr. GIVENS: He knows more about it than we do.

Mr. FISHER: Last night he had occasion to say that the Commissioner was a very capable man, and he would not do anything that he thought outside his duty, but he submitted that in making a statement of that character in his report he was entering the arena of political questions.

Mr. LESINA! Hear, hear! He has no right to do it.

Mr. FISHER asked the hon. gentleman if he allowed that statement to pass without protest?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There has been no protest from me.

Mr. FORSYTH: Don't you think the concession is reasonable?

Mr. FISHER: The question was—Was the Commissioner in a position to declare that certain concessions were such as should be readily granted by Parliament?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The only concession asked for is the right to build the line.

Mr. GIVENS: Why does the Commissioner dictate to Parliament?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He is not dictating to Parliament.

Mr. FISHER: Did the hon. gentleman say that the only concession asked for was the right to build the line?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is all.

Mr. FISHER: The hon. gentleman knew nothing about it, and he would ask him to produce the papers. He was in a position to say that the statement was incorrect. He did not say the hon. gentleman was trying to deceive the Committee, but that was not the only concession asked for. He protested in the strongest possible manner against the Commissioner making such a statement in his report. It was no part of his duty, and he militated against his usefulness, and was treading on dangerous ground, when he gave reasons for the construction of private railways.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: You are opposed to all private enterprise.

Mr. ANNEAR: Even in mining.

Mr. FISHER: The hon. member was incorrect. He had had to be corrected last night, and he had to be corrected again to-day. Most

people could stand without being corrected more than a day. He was not against private enterprise in mining, because mining was the last thing the State should tax. In reply to the interjection of the Chief Secretary, he would ask what the political head of the department was for, if it was not to bear the brunt of any political movement? Why leave it to the Commissioner?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Parliament will have to deal with the concessions.

Mr. FISHER: It was not desirable that the Commissioner should assume the functions of the political head of the department. He would be much safer in his position, and more valuable, if he left such matters to his political head. He quite agreed with what the Secretary for Railways said about the reduction of grades and curves. That would be a very profitable expenditure. Another paragraph that was worth calling attention to was with reference to strengthening the bridges. If the rolling-stock was going to be improved, and the haulage power of engines increased, the train loads would be heavier, and, of necessity, the bridges would have to be strengthened for safety before they could expect to haul as profitably as the other colonies, where the permanent way was much stronger. It was desirable to facilitate the granting of a loan to the Commissioner to enable him to strengthen the bridges. It would be better not only from an economical

point of view but also from a safety point of view, which was an element not to be lost sight of. With regard to the lighting of passenger carriages, it was stated that it was likely to be improved. He thought there was room for great improvement, as would be admitted by those who had to travel by late and slow trains to Gympie and other outside places. In his opinion, the lighting of passenger carriages was most unsatisfactory. He now came to a question to which he desired to draw attention in the most delicate manner possible. There was published in a *Gazette* of the 1st December, 1899, under the signature of the Secretary for Railways, a regulation which read thus—

Employees in the railway service will be afforded every reasonable facility for recording their votes at parliamentary elections, but they are hereby forbidden, under pain of dismissal, from taking any active or prominent part in political matters or from canvassing for any political candidate.

No regulation would prevent any railway employee from working for the political candidate he wished to see returned to Parliament. No regulation would make a man a mere machine, and a regulation of that kind would simply make honest men deceitful, in order to protect their interests and their jobs. It would not prevent them from expressing their opinions privately to their friends upon whom they could rely. Even if he were certain that every railway employee would vote against him, he would still maintain the attitude he had taken up on this question. He did not see that because a man became a public servant he should lose his political rights. The very thing that people were fighting for in South Africa was the exercise of political rights; but this regulation was intended to take away all political rights, except the privilege of going to record votes. Why deny a man the right to express an opinion? Who was to judge as to when a man had exceeded what was reasonable and proper? If a railway employee said to one man that Tom Jones, a candidate, was a nice fellow, would that be all right? And if he expressed the opinion to 100 persons would that be taking a prominent part?

Mr. JENKINSON: It is according to which side he represents.

Mr. FISHER: That was just the position. And a Government might use its power in an unscrupulous way, as had happened in the past, and the only thing that would be accomplished by such a regulation would be injury to the public service and to the public interest. If there was one thing he detested it was a person who whispered his political opinions; and if there was one thing more than another that did mischief to the country it was the feeling that a man could not express his political opinions without dread of losing his position. He strongly protested against a regulation of that kind.

Mr. JACKSON: Is it a new regulation?

Mr. JENKINSON: It is a bad regulation.

Mr. FISHER: Whether it was old or new to the department, it was perfectly new as far as he was concerned, and he agreed with the hon. member for Wide Bay that it was entirely bad. It was mischievous, and would continue to be mischievous in its operation, and would lend a lever to unscrupulous politicians to damage men who were perhaps a great deal more honest than themselves.

Mr. JENKINSON (*Wide Bay*) noticed that the Commissioner in his report drew attention to increased pay in these words—

It will no doubt be remembered that when the pay of the wages staff was reduced in 1893, owing to the financial depression which was then prevailing throughout the colony, a promise was made by the then Government that the rate of pay would be restored so soon as the railway receipts warranted the additional expenditure involved in doing so. As the receipts for the past year have, I consider, been such as to warrant the restoration, I have, with the permission of the Government, made provision in this year's Estimates for the necessary advance in pay, and a new classification by-law will shortly be issued providing for the restoration in full as from the 1st of July last.

Neither in spirit nor in the letter had the promise made by the Minister to the deputation that waited on him in regard to increased pay been carried out in the new regulations. In many instances there was an increase better than it had been since 1893, but in other instances the increase was not what was promised, and was not in many more instances what it should be. He thought it would be taken generally now that the finances of the colony did warrant a restoration of the old rate of wages. The Commissioner said so, the Minister told the deputation so, and the statement published by the Treasurer was further indication that it was so.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: And everybody believes it.

Mr. JENKINSON: And everybody believed it, as the hon. member said. When the deputation waited on the Minister, he asked the hon. gentleman particularly if the restoration of the rate would apply to the whole staff or only to those who were in the service prior to 1893, and most emphatically he told the deputation that there would be a general restoration of the rate. That promise had never been kept, and the Minister was a defaulter as far as that was concerned.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It has been kept.

Mr. JENKINSON: It had not been kept, and he would be able to prove to the Minister that that was so. He intended to go through the regulations *seriatim*, so that the Minister could follow him. Paragraphs 4 and 5 of section 48 of the Railways Act of 1888 were as follow:—

4. All engineers, officers, clerks, and employees in the railway service at the time of the commencement of this Act shall be deemed to have been appointed by the Commissioners under this Act.

5. No person appointed or whose appointment has been confirmed under this section shall, without the permission of the Commissioners, engage in any employment outside the duties of his office.

Now, section 49 of the Act was as follows:—

The Governor in Council may appoint for each branch of the railway service competent persons to be examiners of candidates for employment in such branch, and of officers who are candidates for promotion to the higher grades in such service. Provided that such examiners shall not hold office longer than three years from the date of appointment, but shall be eligible for reappointment.

Under the regulations issued now, part of the examining functions were actually placed in the hands of permanent officials, and they thus violated the spirit and the letter of the Act passed in 1888. Regulation 13, with regard to temporary labour, would be unfair in its operation. It provided that when temporary labour was required in any branch of the service a candidate for employment who had passed the necessary examination therefor should have a prior claim thereto; but a refusal of the temporary engagement should not affect the candidate's claim to permanent employment, though on refusal his name might be placed at the bottom of the list of candidates to whom certificates had been granted. A man might be in employment he would not leave to take a temporary job, but which he would leave on the chance of getting a permanency, and why should he have to suffer on that account? That regulation might press very hardly upon some most deserving men. Regulation 14 provided that no person over the age of thirty-five years should be appointed. He could not, for the life of him, see why that should be placed in the regulations of any State department. Why, it was just about that age that men were taking upon themselves the greater responsibilities of family life, a time when they should not be penalised. Regulation 18 was the one to which attention had been drawn by the hon. member for Gympie, Mr. Fisher, with regard to railway employees not taking any part in elections. Under clause 67 of the Railways Act, it was provided that nothing in that or any other Act should compel railway employees to forego any civil rights to which any Act entitled them, and if in the face of that clause, that regulation was not *ultra vires*, he was very much mistaken. At all events, it was a disability which should not be placed upon the shoulders of any man occupying a position in any State department. Why should he not enjoy the same civil rights as any other man? Was it because he was in the employ of the State, and receiving the money of the State, that his mouth was to be for ever closed? He took it for granted that when the State paid him, there the obligation ended, so long as the man did his work, and it was a great injustice that he should be penalised in that manner—because it would be a penalty upon him. They knew what they had suffered in the past, and they had no reason to suppose that politicians or Ministers would in the future act differently from their predecessors.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What have they suffered in the past?

Mr. JENKINSON: The hon. gentleman knew as well as he did what they had suffered in the past. They knew very well that men had been penalised for taking part in the election of a particular candidate, if it happened that that candidate had been running against the Government. That was where the injustice came in, for men had been allowed to tout and work on behalf of Government candidates, and had received approbation for it, while men in similar grades of employment working on behalf of a candidate who was against the Government had simply been penalised.

Mr. STORY: Shame!

Mr. JENKINSON: It was true, though it was a shame.

Mr. STORY: It is a shame to say such a thing.

Mr. JENKINSON: It was not a shame to say such a thing when it was true; it would be more shameful if, when they knew such things took place, they shut their mouths about them. Such a regulation as No. 18 should find no place in any State department. Regulation 19 was another which seemed to him should not have been framed. Members who were in the House in 1895 would remember that Mr. Wilkinson, then one of the members for Ipswich, carried an amendment when the Railway Bill was going through, taking away the power from the Commissioner for Railways to make such a regulation as that. That amendment was carried in that House, but on re-committal of the Bill it was wiped out. Hon. members would remember the circumstances, and they would see now, from the result, that Mr. Wilkinson and those who supported him had been justified in the action they took, and they had then forecasted what had since taken place. The present Premier, who was then Secretary for Railways, promised at that time that what was sought for should be embodied in the regulations; but that had not been done. The Commissioner at the present time, under the regulations, had power to reduce or dismiss any employee for any cause—incapacity amongst others—and it seemed to him that that regulation was a sort of sword of Damocles held over the heads of the men. Regulation 22 with regard to leave was not at all satisfactory. Civil servants in other departments were allowed three weeks' holidays, but railway men were not allowed that. Very often also their holidays were deferred, and when the men could take them they dated from the time of their last leave, and not from the time when they were due. That was a grievance which he believed had been brought under the notice of the Minister. He understood that there was to be a regulation doing away with it, as it appeared to him it was nothing more nor less than pointing on the men. Regulations 33 and 34 dealt with the wages of signalmen and others, and it occurred to him that the rate for signalmen was hardly enough, considering the responsibility they had to take upon their shoulders. They occupied some of the most responsible positions in the department, and the pay they received should be commensurate with their responsibility. He called attention to regulation 47, to compare it with regulation 65, which was an innovation in that department. When he came to deal with regulation 65 he would show where the difference was. When they came to what were termed "Labourers" in connection with those regulations they found that a distinction was made between two classes. Commencing with regulation 53, in which the pay of labourers was dealt with, they found that it was not a restoration of the rate paid prior to 1893. It reduced by 6d. a day the rate for three years, and offered an inducement to replace old hands by new men, which he understood was frequently done.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is not done; old men are not replaced by new men, unless they are unable to work.

Mr. JENKINSON: He understood that men were knocked off for a week or two; after that they had to serve continuously for three years before they had the right to the classification to which they were justly entitled. Under regulations 53 and 54 carpenters were treated very badly. He did not know why there should be a distinction between carpenters and other labourers, as the work done by carpenters was among the most important work on the railways.

They had to do the work connected with the strengthening of bridges, and the Commissioner had for years been drawing attention to the necessity for strengthening the bridges in view of the heavier rolling-stock now in use. In his last annual report he said—

I would again emphasise the necessity for increasing the strength of the older bridges on our railways, which, until late years, have been built to accommodate a very much lighter type of engine than our present increase in traffic now warrants me in using.

It was necessary for the safety of the public, and for the safety of the rolling-stock that the bridges should be strengthened, and that important work was left in the hands of the carpenters, who appeared to be very badly treated under the new regulations. With regard to gangers and lengthsmen, they had to serve for three years before the old rate of pay was attained, and for that length of time they had to serve at the retrenched rate. The same thing applied to all kinds of labour, skilled and unskilled, and that was not in accordance with the promise the Minister had made. Either deliberately or ignorantly the hon. gentleman appeared to have gone back from the promise he had made to him (Mr. Jenkinson). The hon. gentleman might smack his lips as much as he liked, but he had broken his promise. The hon. gentleman made a promise, and he (Mr. Jenkinson) imagined that, as an honourable man, the hon. gentleman would have fulfilled that promise, but he had not done so, and on his shoulders lay the blame.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have done a great deal for the lengthsmen.

Mr. JENKINSON: He admitted that the hon. gentleman had done a great deal for the lengthsmen, and he believed they were sincerely grateful for that, but the hon. gentleman had not fulfilled his promise that they would be restored in their entirety to the old rate prior to 1893. The Minister was responsible to the Committee and to the deputation that waited upon him; and if the Commissioner did not know the facts that were brought under the notice of the Minister, it was the hon. gentleman's place to bring them under his notice, and see that the promise was carried out.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you think I have not done that?

Mr. JENKINSON: He had repeatedly asserted that the hon. gentleman had not fulfilled his promise, and it was for the hon. gentleman to prove that he was incorrect in that statement. The regulation would not really affect the lengthsmen and labourers who were in the service in 1893, as they would have served three years, but when they came to be promoted to gangerships they would feel that the promise had not been fulfilled, as they would have to serve for three years in that position at the retrenchment rate. The pay for skilled labour in that branch was about one shilling a day less than the old rate of 1893. Regulation 55 provided that—

Gangers, when required, shall, if possible, be selected from the most suitable labourers on the length,

but there was no guarantee that they would be so selected. With regard to the provision in regulation 60 respecting the time lost in travelling, in his opinion payment should be made to the men in every case, as long as the time was made up; and he maintained that the men should be allowed to enjoy their home life as long as the department did not suffer, but that did not appear to be allowed under regulation 60. Regulation 61 provided that—

When it becomes necessary to shift camp reasonable time will be allowed for doing so, and will be paid for, providing it does not exceed eight hours.

It might happen that a gang might be shifted from Gympie to Brisbane, or to some other place, where the time occupied in shifting the camp would exceed eight hours, and he could not see why all the time so occupied should not be paid for, or why men should be penalised for the benefit of the department. Regulation 65 dealt with the Chief Mechanical Engineer's branch, and was an innovation, inasmuch as it provided that cadets must pass an examination and pay an annual premium of £40 for two years. This was making that branch of the service a close preserve for the children of well-to-do people, and penalising those parents who were not in a position to pay the premium and stand out of the wages. Although we had free education in this colony, yet poor parents could not afford to have their lads earning nothing after a certain age, much less to put their hands into their pockets to pay a premium for the instruction of those lads in certain work. That provision was entirely out of place in the regulations. In a democratic country like this, every avenue of employment should be open to both rich and poor alike. Why should they offer special inducements to the children of persons who were in a position to pay a premium of £40 a year for their sons, and also pay for their board and lodging, while they were learning their trade, when the poor man could not do the same? The regulation was an unjust one, and he hoped that the Minister would see his way to expunge from the code that portion of the regulation relating to the payment of a premium.

[5 p.m.] Regulation 67, dealing with mechanics, shop hands, and others, was far from satisfactory with regard to the rate of wages. A young man having served six or seven or eight years as an apprentice started at 7s. a day. An increase of 1s. a day was then allowed for each year up to and including the fourth year, when 9s. a day was the rate paid. At the end of the fourth year 6d. a day more was granted, and then after serving a lengthy apprenticeship of ten years, he found himself with 6d. a day less than was paid to mechanics in outside shops. That was not fair. That was not the way to get the best men into the department.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: That depends upon the rate of wages. Are they fixed outside?

Mr. JENKINSON: They were in the best shops. Again, in regulation 67 it would be seen that carpenters, who were coupled with fitters, were penalised. They might reach 8s. 6d. a day on the Southern line, 9s. on the Central, and 9s. 6d. on the Northern; but he could not see why they should be penalised, and unless they were promoted they would never be able to get any more. As for the outside shops, he understood that the regular rate of wages was 10s. a day. He could not see why mechanics should not be placed on the same footing as leading hands after they had served a specified time. Those mechanics, many of them, instead of getting 9s. 6d. a day in the outside shops, were allowed 11s. He observed also that the cleaners started at from 3d. to 1s. a day more than previously, but at the end of six years their wages were 1s. a day less than they used to be in 1893. Under regulations 71 to 77 there had been restoration as promised; and under regulation 78 also there appeared to be an improvement, but it would all depend, he believed, upon how it was dealt with. Then with regard to allowances. A great deal depended upon the interpretation of that particular clause. He now wanted to draw the attention of the Minister, and through him of the Commissioner, to the necessity of fixing a minimum rate in all branches. That had been pleaded for repeatedly by his side of the House. It had

been done in some instances, but not in others. Again, to remove the political influence which they repeatedly saw brought to bear upon the Minister, it was necessary that every fresh employee should have a test job, and no matter what his recommendations, if he could not carry out that test he should not be employed. He understood that that had been brought under the notice of the Minister, and he could not see what objection there could be to it. Then with regard to the period of probation. It appeared to him that six months was quite long enough; after that period every employee should be given the current rate of wages. With regard to the payment of the employees, he could not too strongly impress upon the Minister the desirability of paying them fortnightly. Certainly, in all large workshops he could see no reasonable objection to it. Nearly all business firms did it; miners and other workmen were paid fortnightly, and as the practice was in vogue amongst the railway employees of New South Wales, he could not see why it should not be introduced here. Another matter to which he wished to draw the attention of the Minister, and with which he could hardly be conversant, was that applications for rises and statements of grievances which were sent through the heads of departments very frequently did not call forth any reply. They had simply been ignored; why he did not know. If a man had a grievance surely it was necessary that it should come under the notice of the head of the department, and in common courtesy a reply should be sent. How were the men to know that their grievances ever came under the notice of the head of the department? He was of opinion that if the Minister would take cognisance of those things there would not be nearly so much reason for members to bring them forward.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You will never do away with grievances.

Mr. JENKINSON was perfectly satisfied that when they had a Minister with backbone many of the grievances would be done away with.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They are your stock-in-trade.

Mr. JENKINSON: This question of grievances should be treated as a matter of business.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: So it is.

Mr. JENKINSON: He begged to differ with the hon. gentleman. He did not altogether blame the Minister, but it was a common complaint amongst employees that their grievances never came under the notice of the Minister. They never got a reply unless they pestered the foreman, and then it was only a verbal reply. How was the Minister to know when there was dissatisfaction in the various branches if it was not brought under his notice?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If complaints have been made, and there have been no replies, why not bring the matter under the notice of the Commissioner?

Mr. JENKINSON: The chances were that a stereotyped reply would be sent saying that the men would have to apply through the local foreman.

Mr. CAMPBELL: That is not the way the Commissioner treats everybody.

Mr. JENKINSON: He did not say it was; but letters had been sent in, and a doubt existed in the minds of employees as to whether they had come to the notice of the Commissioner.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Why don't they write?

Mr. JENKINSON: It was rather awkward. If a man took it into his own hands to bring a grievance under the notice of the head of any of the departments of late years he had not, to say the least, been treated very courteously. With

regard to the smiths, a man in outside shops received 10s. per day. In the Railway Department he did not get that. He was paid less than in an outside shop. It was often mentioned in this House that railway employees had certain privileges that outsiders had not. For instance, they had the privilege, he understood, of travelling once a month to the nearest town; they were allowed a reduced fare to do that. Tickets were issued to them from, take Ipswich, at 1s., while men in ordinary employment could not get a return ticket under 3s.; but his wages in an outside shop would give him 26s. per month more than in the railway employ. Therefore, although this particular privilege was granted, he was 23s. per month worse off than if he had been in outside employment.

Mr. CAMPBELL: In one case he is in regular employment, and in the other he is not.

Mr. JENKINSON: In many cases men had regular employment in outside shops. He admitted, however, that there was a good deal to be said on the other side. With regard to strikers, men were often kept at superior work and were classified at the lower rate, which appeared to be an injustice. They had recently had special pleading that people doing the same work should receive the same rate of pay. He was told particularly with regard to strikers that they were put on at a lower rate of wages, and frequently had to do an expert class of work for which, in the ordinary course of events, they should have had the higher rate of pay. It appeared to him that that was against regulation 83 of the department. Boilermakers did the same. Fitters also were frequently put on at improvers' wages. If they had to do journeymen's work they should receive journeymen's wages, not improvers' wages. Then, with regard to pattern-makers, they had to provide an expensive kit, much more expensive than any of the other employees. Yet, although in the other colonies they were paid more than ordinary mechanics, in Queensland they got only ordinary mechanics' wages. That appeared an injustice. Another matter he wished to refer to was that heads of departments were allowed to sit on the inquiry board. He had nothing to say against that; but he thought a representative of the employees should also have a seat on that board, the same as was allowed in Victoria. He thought it was essentially necessary that employees should be represented on any inquiry which was taking place as well as heads of departments. There were one or two other matters he desired to mention, but he would leave them over for a while to give the Minister an opportunity of replying.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He was rather disappointed with the remarks that had fallen from the hon. member. He made a promise last year that he would use his utmost endeavours to get the remuneration of workmen on all the railways of the colony restored to what it was previous to 1893, and he thought he had succeeded in his efforts to a very considerable extent.

Mr. JENKINSON: I have pointed out you have not.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He had done his utmost, through the Government and the Commissioner, to have the wages restored to the employees of the department in all branches of the service, and the total amount set aside for the restoration of wages amounted to something over £14,000.

Mr. JENKINSON: But that does not give their old rates of pay.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Judging by what had fallen from the hon. member for Wide Bay, he was more dissatisfied this year than last.

Mr. JENKINSON: Nothing of the sort.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: This should not be forgotten—and hon. members would, he thought, agree with him—that the workmen in the Railway Department—lengthsmen, guards, and others—were infinitely better off than those engaged in the same class of work outside the department.

Mr. HARDACRE: Oh, no!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He believed that where one man was wanted as a lengthsmen there were eight or ten applicants. There was no question that the same men would not get anything like the same remuneration outside the department as they did inside.

Mr. HARDACRE: They do.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The liberal wages paid and the regular hours they were called upon to work gave them an infinite advantage over similar workmen outside. That he was convinced of. In addition to the wages received, there were many concessions granted to them that men in other branches of labour did not receive.

Mr. BROWNE: Has there been any restoration made in the Normanton-Croydon line?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: A complete restoration had been made on the Normanton-Croydon line. The Commissioner recognised that the men working there were under disadvantageous circumstances—that in that disagreeable climate, and in a district so remote, there were many disadvantages that they would not be subject to if they were nearer to the Southern districts. The Commissioner had assured him that the remuneration had been completely restored, and he could not say more than that. He surely could not have done more than he had! He thought, at all events, that he had fulfilled the promise he made the House last year, considering he was not the Government.

Mr. JENKINSON: You are the head of the department.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He was the head of the department; but this had to be considered by the Government, and they had, he thought, acted in a most liberal and generous manner.

Mr. JACKSON: They should have got back their pay years ago.

Mr. JENKINSON: It is only a matter of justice.

Mr. JACKSON: Other Civil servants got it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What did the hon. gentleman know about others outside the Civil service? They had suffered from the depression and from droughts, but had their remuneration been restored to them in any shape or form?

Mr. CAMPBELL: No.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Look at the farmers!

Mr. KEOGH: Did they give the unfortunate farmers anything? No; nothing.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The farmers carried on one of the industries of the colony.

Mr. KEOGH: And they have had very little to sell.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They were subjected to droughts, low prices, and depression in every shape and form; but there was no possibility of restoring to them the rate of pay that they had lost since 1893. They had to submit to everything that was going on. So it was with all classes of labour. One thing he was convinced of—that was, that if hon. members representing the railway employees in this House continued to press for greater concessions and increased payment, there would be such a press for employment from outside employees to get into the railway service that it would be practically impossible to deal with them.

Supposing the Commissioner advertised for ten or a dozen lengthsmen and he had 100 or 200 applications, how could he deal with them? That went to prove that the railway service was infinitely more attractive than outside work. The hon. member for Wide Bay seemed more dissatisfied than he was last year.

Mr. JENKINSON: Nonsense!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If he came down and provided for a 35 per cent. increase, some hon. members would still complain. It was their stock-in-trade.

Mr. JENKINSON: I am the most reasonable man in the House, and you know it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He did not expect these hon. members to go to the country and tell the workmen in the railway service that they were handsomely paid. That would not do, for their votes were wanted. They wanted to make it appear that these men were labouring under great disadvantages, which any other Government would remedy. That was the card that some hon. members played. He had no hopes of ever being able to satisfy these hon. members and to present any Estimates which would meet with the approval of the hon. member for Wide Bay.

Mr. JENKINSON: Let me run the department for a week.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: In addition to the rates of pay which had been restored, it was provided by the regulations that night allowances would be: 12 to 15 hours, 1s.; 16 to 23 hours, 2s.; 24 to 32, 3s.; 33 to 40, 4s.; and 6s. for every six hours over 40 hours. The rates in force prior to 1893 for signalmen, foremen, shunters, checkers, and porters had also been restored. The wages of engine-men and firemen had been restored—in fact, slightly increased on the Central and Northern railways. The number of drivers in the first and second classes had been increased from one-fifth and one-fourth to one-fourth and one-third respectively. Prior to August, 1896, the mechanics in the locomotive shops were not classified. Owing to staff changes, some of the employees in the shops had had their wages restored, but the majority were still in receipt of less than prior to 1st July, 1893. The wages of the gangers and lengthsmen had also been restored, with the exception of the Normanton line. Men entering the service could not expect to get the top rate to commence with as paid prior to 1893, which was 6s. a day in the South, 6s. 6d. in the Central portion of the colony, and 7s. in the North, with 6d. a day extra in certain distant districts. Hon. members would see the justice of that. A man who had been ten years in the service was deserving of a little more consideration than the man who has just entered the service. The term of probation prior to 1893 was five years.

Mr. HARDACRE: No, six months.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Previously men received 6d. a day more than they did at the present time; the five years had been abolished and three years substituted as the term of probation. There were many concessions that the railway employees had. With regard to accidents: In the case of men in any branch being disabled during the performance of their duties, on production of a medical certificate full pay for a period not exceeding six weeks was allowed, and after the expiration of that period a fresh medical certificate was furnished and forwarded to the Commissioner, with a recommendation from the head of the branch for a further allowance for a specified time. In the maintenance branch, the expenses in connection with accidents were borne by the department when a certificate was furnished. Then there was a gratuity to the widows of men

killed in the service of the department. In the event of an employee being killed, £50 or £100 would be paid to the widow in full settlement of all claims against the department. Then houses owned by the department were rented to the employees at the following rents:—For a two-roomed house, 6s. per month; for a three-roomed house, 9s.; and for a four-roomed house, 12s. A nominal rent of 1s. was charged to employees who erected buildings on railway land. He thought that was most liberal. Then the employees got railway passes when on leave of absence. Officers receiving £150 a year and guards of the first class and guards of the second class who had been in the service for three years were entitled to first-class passes, also engine-drivers of the first class and engine-drivers of the second class of three years' service, and others to second-class passes. Holders of second-class passes were allowed to travel first class for any specified journey covered by the pass on payment of one-quarter the difference between the second and first class fares. Rations were carried free from the nearest approved towns only, and half rates from towns further removed. The quantities were: for single men, 150 lb. per month; for married men without families, 400 lb.; married men with families not exceeding three, 400 lb.; not exceeding six, 500 lb.; and over six, 600 lb. Corn was included in the allowance, and the carriage of two months' supplies at one time was granted to all free if desired. Season tickets were issued to employees at half ordinary rates. Altogether he did not think there was any room for complaint with these regulations. They were very fair, and the department had restored the men to their former position as far as had been practicable. He thought the department had done very well.

Mr. JENKINSON: The Minister, in reply, had been like the proverbial lion when he rose to speak, but when he sat down he was like the proverbial lamb. He accused him (Mr. Jenkinson) of being more dissatisfied this year than he was last year; but that was not correct. His statements had been distorted by the Minister. He had said that the new regulations were in many respects an improvement on the old ones prior to 1893, but the old rate prior to that year had not been restored in its entirety. As far as he could learn, the railway men who had been restored were perfectly satisfied; but the men who had not been restored to their former status were not at all satisfied. The promise had not been kept in that respect.

He doubted very much whether the hon. gentleman had really read the regulations himself, and whether he had made a comparison between the old rates and the new. They knew that when the deputation waited upon him some of the members of the deputation had actually seen the regulations before the Minister, who knew nothing at all about them. The hon. gentleman had perhaps done his best according to his lights, but, unfortunately for him, his lights happened to be very dim. He had set up several Aunt Sallies that he might have the pleasure of knocking them down again; but he had not attempted to prove that the arguments he (Mr. Jenkinson) had used, and the figures he had quoted, were incorrect. He had not attempted that because he knew they were perfectly true. He was convinced that what the hon. gentleman had said about the advantages which accrued to the men under the new regulations was perfectly correct; but it was only justice that had been meted out to them. They had not been asking for any particular favour, but only for justice in accordance with the promise of the hon. gentleman. It pleased the hon. gentleman to entirely ignore regulations 4, 18, and 65, to which reference had been made, and he entered

[5.30 p.m.]

his most emphatic protest against that. The hon. gentleman had quietly slipped over all those, because he took it they were the *pons asinorum* for him. Regulation 65 referred to the cadets. After passing a certain examination they must pay a premium of £40 for two years and get nothing in return. He said again that that was making a special preserve for the sons of the well-to-do, and was penalising those who were not in a position to pay £10 per annum, and provide board, lodging, and clothing for their sons. Those were the three particular points the hon. gentleman had taken no notice of, and he again drew them very forcibly under his notice.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have noticed them.

MR. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*): thought the Minister had treated the remarks of the hon. member for Wide Bay very unfairly. It was another illustration of the old saying that when a lawyer had no case he should abuse the other side. The hon. gentleman wanted to make out that those who were championing the cause of the railway men were more dissatisfied than before, and that, no matter what Estimates he brought down, they would not meet with approval. That was ungenerous. All they were asking for was that the old rates should be restored; they had never asked for one penny more than that.

MR. JENKINSON: As per promise.

MR. HARDACRE: The Civil servants had suffered less severe retrenchment than the railway men, and their salaries had been restored in two years, but, although two resolutions had been carried in that Chamber in favour of the restoration of the wages of the railway men, and although various Ministers had promised three deputations that they would make that restoration, there was only something like an approximate restoration at the end of six years. That was not fair to the railway men. He was sorry to have to bring the matter forward again, and he hoped he would never have to refer to the wages of the railway men in that Committee again.

MR. SMITH: You would have no grievance then.

MR. HARDACRE: He did not want a grievance. If hon. members on the other side would take up the matter, he would be only too happy to make way for them.

MR. STEPHENSON: There are members over here who have worked quite as hard about it as ever you have.

MR. HARDACRE: That was most ungenerous of the hon. member for Ipswich. He had never failed to give hon. members on the other side the fullest credit for their assistance. He had done that over and over again, so that it might get into *Hansard*. When a number of hon. members waited upon the Minister, and the hon. gentleman gave a distinct promise that this time the wages would be fully restored, he (Mr. Hardacre) pointed out that what had happened was likely to take place. The only exception was that instead of five years the period was reduced to three years. He did not blame the Minister to any great extent.

MR. JENKINSON: I do.

MR. HARDACRE: He thought the hon. gentleman had not made himself sufficiently acquainted with the regulations to know exactly what they were in 1893. He placed the blame upon the Commissioner. Over and over again he had been the stumbling-block in the way of the restoration. He had a considerable amount of esteem for the Commissioner, and recognised his ability, but he would not be doing his duty if he did not put the blame on him in

regard to that matter. The Commissioner informed a deputation of railway employees before the last election that until the railway returns were sufficient to cover the whole of the interest on the money expended, he could not see his way to give them what they asked. And yet he was drawing £1,500 a year himself! A nice state of things!

MR. JENKINSON: In his report this year he says the returns warrant the restoration.

MR. KEOGH: Yes, and he is doing the work that cost £5,000.

MR. HARDACRE: He got £1,500 a year, and ought not to begrudge 6d. a day to the men who did the hardest work. He was reluctant to speak on the matter again. He wished to goodness he did not need to.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I wish so, too. I thought you would express your satisfaction.

MR. HARDACRE: There had been a considerable restoration, but the Commissioner had not done all he might have done on that occasion. Before 1893 the lowest rate for lengthsmen was 6s. 6d. when they commenced, but under the new regulation they only got 6s. when they commenced, and they did not get 6s. 6d. until they had been three years in the service. That was in the Southern division. The same remark applied to gangers and labourers generally. The painters used to get from 6s. 6d. to 9s. 6d.; now they get from 7s. 6d. to 9s. With regard to bridge and stationmen, he had received a letter from a stationman complaining that the promised restoration had not been carried out, and pointing out that under the new classification only a few got the maximum, while the big majority got the minimum rate, which was very much less than was paid prior to 1893. In the case of bridge carpenters the amount was 7s. in the Southern, 7s. 6d. in the Central, and 8s. in the Northern district, but there was no progressive rise. Some of the bridge carpenters who had been in the service fifteen years got 8s. a day before 1893, and got only 7s. a day now. So long as these grievances existed it was the duty of hon. members to bring them forward and have them ventilated, and he hoped that after this discussion the promise made with regard to the wages of these men would be fulfilled, so that the thing would be finished, and there would be no occasion to bring forward this matter again.

MR. JENKINSON: That would be doing us out of our grievances. It would be a splendid move on the part of the Government.

MR. HARDACRE: After the expression of opinion on the part of hon. members, and the promises made by the Minister, it was not right on the part of the Commissioner to try to evade the frequently expressed will of the Committee, and he ought to be severely censured for having deliberately done so. He hoped that what had been promised would be fulfilled; and though the expenditure would be somewhat increased the money would not be lost to the department, because it would come back in the form of better service. With regard to rates, while lengthsmen on the Central line got 6s. 6d. a day, the municipality of Rockhampton, where provisions were cheaper, paid 7s. a day for unskilled labour; and at Townsville, Charters Towers, and other places the wages paid by the municipality for unskilled labour were higher than those paid on the railway. With regard to privileges, they were worse off now than they were in 1893. Then they got their rations carried free from any town; now they had to pay half-rate from the principal town in the district.

MR. JENKINSON: From the nearest approved town.

Mr. HARDACRE: Yes. And they were in a worse position in regard to other privileges generally afforded to Government employees, by reason of being stationed at long distances from large towns.

Mr. KEOGH (*Rosewood*) could not entirely agree with all that had been said by Labour members on this question. There had been a grievance to some extent, but from what he could learn, and from what had been put forward by the Minister, he thought the employees had received fair remuneration since the matter was discussed last year. There were one or two things that required attention, and he might say that he thought the railway porters were the worst paid men in the department. They had to work from 6 o'clock in the morning till 6 and 7 o'clock in the evening, and were not allowed any further remuneration for extra time, but he thought that if they worked longer than eight hours they should receive extra pay. He had no doubt that when the matter was brought under the notice of the Commissioner he would rectify it. He was sorry that any complaint had been made regarding that gentleman, who was always very kind and considerate to parties who went to see him, and did all that could possibly be done to remedy any complaint. He had many times to wait on the Commissioner, and he had invariably found that gentleman, and those immediately under him, courtesy and kindness itself. Some reference had been made to the remuneration of the Commissioner being £1,500 a year, but only a few years ago they paid £5,000 or £6,000 for less work than was done now by their single Commissioner. Surely they were able to pay £1,500 for work for which they had previously paid £6,000! That, he thought, ought to be a feather in the present Commissioner's cap. Another small matter he wished to draw attention to was this: The remuneration allowed for boys entering the department, very often fresh from their homes, after passing a certain examination, was 15s. a week for the first six months they were in the service. But he had known many instances where boys who were employed were sent away from the place where their parents lived, and were given only 10s. a week. Surely that was starvation wages? It would not keep the boys in boots and shoes. In many cases the parents of those lads were poor, and they were unable to accept the employment offered their boys, as they could not afford the extra money that would be required to keep them away from their homes. He hoped the Commissioner would take that matter into his serious consideration, and he had no doubt the Minister would be willing that those boys should be given a living wage. Looking at the service as a whole, he considered that the employees of the department were fairly well paid. They got a good many concessions that were not given to farmers, and he believed that class of people were far and away better off than many actual *bona fide* farmers living on their farms to-day, and having to put up with wet weather, and drought, and many inconveniences which the railway men had not to suffer. In wet weather the railway employee got his pay all the same, and he had many concessions which were not given to Civil servants in other departments, or to persons outside the railway service. Civil servants in other departments had to pay full fares when they travelled on the railways. He was not saying that the railway servants should not get those concessions, but he quoted them to show that the railway employees were fairly paid, and got in addition concessions which persons outside that service did not get. The hon. member for Wide Bay said that persons outside the service got better wages; but, if that was so, he could not for the life of him understand why there

should be such a number of persons outside anxious to get into the service of that department. Hon. members would bear him out that there was hardly a day they were not asked to get some man into the railway works, or into some permanent employment of that description. There might be some parties outside getting better wages, but they had not a permanency, and if they tallied up at the end of the year they would find that the wages of those persons did not come near the wages received by the men in the permanent employment of the Railway Department. On the whole he could not disapprove of the wages those men got, but he was still prepared to admit that those who had not yet been placed on the footing they were on, in the matter of wages in 1893, should get the rate of wages, upon which they had been retrenched, restored to them. He was under the impression, until he heard the hon. member for Wide Bay and other hon. members that afternoon, that that had been done in every case. If it had not been done, he had no doubt the Minister would see his way clear to do what was only right and just, and restore to all those men the wages they were paid before the retrenchment of 1893. He remembered a very large meeting of hon. members being held in one of the rooms of the Parliamentary Buildings, and a large deputation from that meeting waiting on the then Secretary for Railways on that subject, and he knew that the Secretary for Railways at that time admitted that the concessions asked for in the matter by that deputation were right and just concessions. He hoped that matter would be looked to, and that they would hear the last of the many grievances of the railway people. There was no doubt in his mind that the Secretary for Railways and the Commissioner would in that matter carry out the behest of what he believed was a majority of the members of that House.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member for Wide Bay complained that under regulation 18 the railway employees had not full liberty to hold public meetings, and to take an active part in the conduct of elections. The Railway Department gave their employees a free pass, and afforded them every [7 p.m.] facility to record their votes at parliamentary elections; but he did not know whether it would be desirable or beneficial, or whether the railway employees themselves would look upon it as a privilege, that they should be permitted to hold public meetings, and to take an active and prominent part in the conduct of elections. As a rule he did not think the railway employees desired it; they recognised that it was better that they should keep out of the turmoil of parliamentary elections.

Mr. GLASSEY: That is what the slave-owners in America said when the emancipation of slaves was advocated.

At three minutes past 7 o'clock,

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

Quorum formed.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He supposed they were prepared to differ in opinion on that point. A general complaint had been made with reference to the position of the railway employees, and he very much regretted it, because the Government had made an earnest effort to remedy their grievances, and he had flattered himself that they had succeeded in doing so. However, it seemed that that was not the case, according to the few hon. members who represented those people in the House. If there was one reason more prominent than another for the appointment of the Commissioner, it was to remove the Railway Department as far as

possible from political influence. He would ask any hon. member whether all that they had heard there that evening was not restoring political influence in as strong a form as it had ever been presented in the House? It appeared to him that an effort was being made at the present time to wrest from the Commissioner the full control and management of the railways under his charge.

Mr. JENKINSON: No one has suggested any such thing, not even inferentially.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He would ask hon. members whether that was not the case? The Commissioner said, "If I am here as a business man to manage the railways of the colony, I want them removed as far as possible from political influence, and I desire to have the privilege of conducting and managing the railways in such a way as I would manage them if I were managing them for a private company"; and he was practically debarred from carrying that into effect, simply because every session, when the Railway Estimates were going through, there was additional pressure brought to bear on the Commissioner to induce him to increase the working expenses of the Railway Department. At the present time the railways of the colony were run at a direct loss to the taxpayer of £179,669 per annum; that was to say, they were that far short of being self-supporting, and the general taxpayer had to make up that amount; and it went without saying that the more expense there was incurred in the management of the railways the greater would be the loss that would have to be made good by the taxpayers of the country. So that while hon. members were striving their very utmost to confer a privilege on the railway employees, they were in the same breath calling upon the general taxpayer to make good whatever sum they might be able to force the Commissioner into expending above the amount he said he could manage the railways with. It was therefore not a one-sided business at all; there were other people to be considered besides the employees in the Railway Department. He supposed he was justified in saying that he had as high and probably a greater regard for the railway employees than many hon. members who said so much about them. He recognised that they were a body of first-class men; he believed there was no better class of men in the colony than the men employed in the Railway Department in all its branches. At the same time he thought they were fairly rewarded.

Mr. GLASSEY: No, they are not. They are the poorest paid class of railway employees in Australia.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If the hon. member could show him that they were suffering any disabilities, either in regard to their remuneration or conditions of labour, or that they were in an inferior position compared with the same class of labourers in other walks of life, then he would be prepared to use his utmost effort to see that they were at least placed on a par with outsiders. But he was strongly of opinion that they were infinitely better paid; moreover, they had shorter hours of labour, they lived in comfortable quarters, and they did not run the risks to which those who were engaged in the industries of the country were exposed. Droughts, floods, and disasters, which affected people in the ordinary walks of life, had no influence upon them. Their pay was certain, their hours of labour were limited and very moderate, and they had many concessions granted to them which other sections of the community did not enjoy from one year's end to the other. He thought the situation should be made clear to hon. members, and that they should not

endeavour to look at the matter only from the employees' standpoint. They should endeavour to study the interests of those engaged in the industries of the colony, who would have to make good any further losses suffered by the railways. The Railway Commissioner said that the wages paid to his employees were in excess of those paid to similar classes outside.

Mr. JENKINSON: That is not so.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And he further pointed out that for every vacant position he had from seven to eight applicants.

Mr. DAWSON: That applies to members of Parliament.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Commissioner contended that he could manage the railways with general benefit to the community if he was absolutely free from political influence, and he agreed with him. He believed he could do it, but if that sort of thing was to go on, the best plan would be to remove the Commissioner, and let Parliament have control of the railways—

Mr. JENKINSON: The question is are you going to back down on your promise?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And resort to the condition of things which existed prior to the appointment of the Commissioner.

Mr. JENKINSON: That is a red herring.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He had as much interest in the railway employees, and knew more about the country generally than the hon. member for Wide Bay.

Mr. JENKINSON: Are you going to redeem your promise?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He had had more practical experience of the industries of the country, more knowledge of the employment of labour, and infinitely more knowledge of the difficulties which employers had in making both ends meet.

Mr. JENKINSON: I employ more labour than you do, and pay more wages, too.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The same difficulty that confronted private employers confronted the Commissioner. He desired to make the railways pay; he desired to put them in the position of paying interest and working expenses, and when that was secured a legitimate claim might be made upon him for an increase of wages. Complaint was made that a promise was made by him last year that the wages of the workmen in all branches of the railway service would be restored to the rate in force prior to 1893.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: You made that promise this year.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He had made a promise that he would do his utmost to induce the Government and the Commissioner to restore wages to the rate in force prior to 1893, and that had been done as far as practicable. However, he would confer with the Commissioner again, and see if it was possible to do anything more. He felt inclined to go a very long way if it was possible to prevent that annual dissatisfaction which broke out every year on the Railway Estimates. He would do his best to see if all grievances could not be removed.

Mr. McDONALD (*Flinders*): There was no doubt that if a prize was given for wriggling, the hon. gentleman would get it, for during his long speech he had done nothing but wriggle. He agreed that the management of the railways should be beyond all political control, but he would point out that it was hon. gentlemen on the Treasury benches who were the first to introduce political control after the appointment of the three railway commissioners. Sir Thomas

McIlwraith sent the Estimates back to the Commissioners no less than three times in 1893, in order that they might bring about the reductions of that year. However, he would point out that on two occasions Parliament had passed resolutions affirming that the wages of railway employees should be restored, and it had not been done. What was Parliament for? Were they to be ignored? He cared not whether there was one or forty commissioners appointed, if that House said a certain thing was to be done, the Commissioner and all other servants of the State were bound by the resolution of Parliament. What did the hon. gentleman attempt? This was not the first occasion that a resolution was carried in this House in connection with placing the railway men in the same status with regard to their wages as they were in prior to 1893. He made an attempt to give certain wages back, but discharged a certain number of men, which, on the face of it, was fraud. The attempt was not an honest attempt on the part of the Minister to carry out the resolution at all. On a subsequent occasion deputations waited on the hon. gentleman, and the hon. gentleman distinctly promised, as the former Minister promised—that the men should be restored to the position they were in prior to 1893. Were members to believe Ministers at all? Were they, when they went to Ministers, to treat them as men they could not trust, as men who would deliberately lie to them? If things had got to that pitch they were pretty bad. He did not want the Secretary for Lands to interject at all, because he knew just as much about railways as he did about lands.

Mr. BRIDGES: Just as much as you.

Mr. McDONALD: When the hon. gentleman promised that the wages of the railway men should be restored to what they were prior to 1893, had he any knowledge of what his words meant? If an hon. gentleman said he was going to see that they were restored, and this House stated that they should be restored, why was it not carried out?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It was carried out.

Mr. McDONALD: Had the hon. gentleman any influence in the Cabinet at all, or was the Cabinet going to turn round on the hon. gentleman, who had promised definitely to do a certain thing, and say it would not do it? If that was the case, what position was the hon. gentleman in? Before he would be made a tool of in that manner by the Cabinet he would not stop in it five minutes. But that was exactly the position the hon. gentleman was in. He came there and tried to deceive hon. members by saying that the men were in exactly the same position. They were not in the same position. Only within the last two days a deputation of railway men had waited on the hon. member for Brisbane South and himself upon this matter and the grievances they suffered under. He agreed with the hon. member that it was not a good thing for this thing to crop up year after year. It looked bad. It did not redound to the credit of any Government to allow it to crop up every year. They should be prepared to deal with it in a definite manner. Instead of that they made a sort of attempt to do it, and at the same time they attempted to deceive the public and the members of this House, and make them believe that they had restored the wages fully, when, as a matter of fact, it was not so. Even the hon. gentleman himself admitted it had been done only in a partial way.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No.

Mr. McDONALD: He admitted that in reply to an interjection he said there were a certain number that had not been restored. Then, to bolster up his position, he talked about the com-

fortable positions of these men, and of the comfortable conditions under which they lived. Had the hon. gentleman ever travelled along the railway lines and seen the comfortable conditions they were in? Did he tell them that the hovels that some of the permanent-way men had to live in was living under comfortable conditions? He did not think the hon. gentleman would like to take his wife and family to live in a number of them. He (Mr. McDonald) had passed a number of these places in the last day or two coming from Charleville, and he did not think they would be the places that people would be happy or comfortable in. When the hon. gentleman talked about the comfort these men enjoyed he should go and view these places for himself. Then he would be in a better position to know whether they were comfortable or not. As a matter of fact some of them were not fit for men to inhabit. He had often been surprised that the Government or the Commissioner had not made an effort to have proper lengthmen's houses erected. If they did that, even if they charged rent for them, it would be better than the position some were in now. They were moved about now from one place to another, and sometimes they could not sell their humpies, and had to pull them down and drag them to the next place they were shifted to.

Mr. JACKSON: That does not pay.

Mr. McDONALD: It did not pay the men to put up a decent house, because they were shifted so often. They were actually removed for political purposes. Both in 1893 and 1896 they were removed from different parts of the colony purely for political purposes, and it was no use for the hon. gentleman or any other member of the Government to attempt to deny it. The hon. gentleman tried to bolster up his position by saying that if there was one of these places vacant there would be 100 rush for it. That did not show the prosperity of the colony that the hon. gentleman was always talking about. The hon. gentleman knew that there were thirty members on that side of the House after his billet. He was well aware of it. The hon. gentleman also knew that even in his billet in connection with the Railway Department it was only an accident he was there—that it was not because he was more intelligent or more intellectual than other hon. members.

A MEMBER of the Opposition: A geographical accident.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes, a geographical accident. That was about the position the hon. member occupied.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member is wandering from the subject before the Committee.

Mr. McDONALD: He could illustrate the point in any way he thought proper, and that was his way.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. gentleman to keep to the question before the Committee.

Mr. McDONALD: What was the question before the Committee?

The CHAIRMAN: The question is that there be granted for the service of Her Majesty for the year 1899-1900 the sum of £30,620, general establishment.

Mr. McDONALD: Was he to understand members were not to discuss the general subject?

The CHAIRMAN: You are not allowed to discuss the position of a Minister of the Crown. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. McDONALD: That was a new rule. If the Chairman said he could not discuss the position of a Minister of the Crown, he would move that his ruling be disagreed to. He now asked his ruling as to whether he was at liberty to discuss the position of the Minister for Railways?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order in discussing, in the way he was discussing, the matter when he was ruled out of order.

Mr. McDONALD: The hon. member was purely a geographical accident in the position he happened to be holding at present, and he (Mr. McDonald) still maintained that. The hon. gentleman, in order to bolster up his position, said that if a vacancy occurred there would, perhaps, be 100 or more apply for it, and he wanted to draw an illustration and show that the hon. gentleman was in exactly the same position. As hon. members knew, every member of the Assembly was in that position.

Mr. DAWSON: That is my position.

Mr. McDONALD: That was everybody's position. If he was out of order, then the Secretary for Railways was also out of order in using the illustration he did. The hon. gentleman was there purely by accident, and because he was there by accident, he wanted to foist upon the House the fact that these men were well treated when they were anything but well treated.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We are all accidents.

Mr. McDONALD: But the hon. gentleman was an extraordinary accident.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am no more an accident than you are.

Mr. McDONALD: Let the hon. gentleman come up to the Flinders at the next election and have a "cut," and he would see where the accident would be then. The reason a large number of men were likely to apply for a vacancy which might occur in the Civil Service was because they would sooner work for the State than for a private individual; and he could understand it, if there were many bosses like the hon. gentleman knocking about the country. While they had bosses like him, it was no wonder men would always make an attempt to get into a position where they knew they would be secure, or which they believed was likely to be secure. If they worked under the individual system their position was not secure—they might be thrown out of employment; but while they were working for the State the employment, as a rule, was permanent. Therefore, it was only natural men were likely to compete for it.

Then the Minister wanted to make [7.30 p.m.] out that it would be better to let men go for a particular position at reduced wages until such time as the railways were made a paying concern. That might be all right in its way, but he did not see why men should suffer because a number of persons returned to Parliament built political railways which prevented the lines of the colony from paying. Had these political railways not been built, the railways of the colony would have been paying to-day. The Minister said the amount of the deficiency each year was £179,000 odd, but he (Mr. McDonald) did not think that was a very great loss, and if the hon. gentleman was going to make up that loss, he would make it up from the general taxpayers of the colony. It was only a matter of cross-entry—whether by direct taxation or by taxation indirectly through the railways. Why should they grumble so much about that? They were in the same position now as if the lines were paying as far as the general community was concerned. The hon. gentleman's arguments were very weak, and it was about time that the will of Parliament was recognised. Time after time Parliament had passed resolutions saying that such and such a thing should be done, but all that had been ignored. A motion had been carried twice with regard to

education, but that had been ignored. On two occasions resolutions had been carried with regard to the railway men, but they also had been ignored by the Government. It was just time that the House put its foot down on that sort of business. If hon. members on the other side voted for a certain thing, and then allowed the Government to ignore their votes, that was their business. They mildly sat there, at the bidding of the Government, although their votes were ignored, and they did not attempt to force the Government to carry out the desires and wishes of the House. That sort of thing was despicable, and was calculated to do grievous harm to parliamentary procedure. Of course, Governments would do that as long as they had a large number of supporters, but he, and other members on his side, would always put their backs up against that sort of business.

Mr. DIBLEY (*Woolloongabba*): The hon. member for Wide Bay had drawn attention to the absurdity of some of the regulations, and he endorsed that hon. member's opinions. It was absurd that a competent workman should have to be in the Government service for three years before he got the full wage. That system was not operating in any other establishment in the world amongst tradesmen. If a tradesman served an apprenticeship for six months in the Government service, that should be quite sufficient. If he could not prove his worth in six months it was high time that he should go. The system was not conducive to the general good, and he did not think the Government would get the best results from their employees under it. Very often the man getting the lowest wage was the best workman, and six months' probation was quite long enough. Men could prove their worth in that time if they could prove it at all. He knew permanent bridge painters who were getting 7s. a day and ordinary hands only got 6s. and had no chance of getting on the permanent staff. That was a ridiculous way of carrying on business, and was not likely to produce the best results.

Mr. JACKSON (*Kennedy*): He did not think anyone could accuse hon. members on his side of trying to make political capital with regard to these increases, because they had just gone through a general election. If a general election was coming on it might be a different matter. He was very glad that the Minister intended to see that justice was done, but he admitted that full justice had not been done so far.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No, I did not.

Mr. JACKSON: That was what he understood. There was no doubt that the rate of pay prior to 1893 had not been restored in all cases. Some of the Northern lengths men had not been restored, or recompensed, and he thought the Minister's arguments were very weak. It was no use for him to say that the increased rate would mean that the department would be inundated with applications. How many applications would be received for the position of an Under Secretary, if the position were advertised? Forty or fifty, or perhaps 100. His other argument with regard to the rates of pay outside the service was also very weak. He would like to quote from a Northern newspaper to show what the rates of pay outside the service were. He referred to a municipal meeting, held at Townsville, which was represented by the hon. member at the head of the Government, so that he would be able to contradict the report if it was not correct. It was a meeting regarding municipal labourers. The report stated—

The question of increasing labourers' wages was next considered. Alderman O'Brien moved that the wages of pick and shovel men be increased from 8s. to 8s. 6d.

a day, and that those of hammer and drill men and "spawlers" be increased from 8s. 6d. to 9s. a day. Alderman Dawson seconded. As an amendment, Alderman Murphy moved that all labourers be paid at the rate of 9s. a day. Alderman Short seconded.

That was carried, and at the bottom of the paragraph it stated that a uniform rate of 9s. per day was carried—that was for pick and shovel men. Then, how could the Minister say that men in the service were better off than men outside? He wished to refer to two paragraphs in the Commissioner's report, which might be of interest to the Committee and to the Minister. He thought the Minister would like to have full criticism—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Certainly.

Mr. JACKSON: For that would only tend to increase the efficiency of the department. He would draw attention to the paragraph in the report dealing with passenger traffic. The Commissioner pointed out that the passenger traffic increased very largely during the last twelve months. In the old country that traffic was the best paying traffic, and the railway companies devoted great attention to it, and the Commissioner ought to do the same in Queensland. He took it that the second-class traffic paid as well as, if not better, than the first-class traffic, and yet it was notorious that the second-class accommodation was not what it ought to be. The working people who travelled by the railways should be made as comfortable as possible. He congratulated the Commissioner on the fact that the railways had paid so much better last year. Among other things in which there had been an increase of revenue was the carriage of live stock. Partly owing to the severe drought the colony had been suffering from, and the tick pest, large numbers of cattle had been sent by rail to the meatworks, many of which were not fit to send away, but they were sent for fear that they would die on the runs. On page 7, the Commissioner stated that the number of cattle was 6,089,013 in 1897, while in 1898 it had fallen to 5,571,292. Now, some years ago they had about 7,000,000 cattle in Queensland.

Mr. LEAHY: That was in the beginning of the year. I think there are about 4,000,000 now.

Mr. JACKSON would be sorry to think that was not a rather exaggerated estimate of their losses. Apart from the loss to the Railway Department, it was a serious matter to Queensland that such a tremendous diminution of cattle should be going on, and the matter was well worth inquiry by the Government. There was no doubt the railway returns would be injuriously affected through it in a few years if that diminution continued. On page 10 the Commissioner drew attention to the fact that the Northern Railway was paying very large dividends—as it always had done. In fact, the return for last year was £11 per cent. for the line between Townsville and Hughenden.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What are the other Northern lines paying?

Mr. JACKSON admitted that there were "duffer" lines in the North, just as there were in the South, although not so many. The Northern railways, as a whole, paid much better than the Southern railways, and he wanted to point out that the Northern Railway did not get justice with regard to rolling-stock, stations, and a variety of other things. He did not say the Commissioner himself was neglectful, but the mere fact of the centralisation of everything in Brisbane must result in bad management. Personally he had always found Mr. Gray particularly courteous and willing to do what he could for him whenever he went to him with any grievance. At the same time, there was no doubt that, owing to the distance from Brisbane a tremendous amount of delay took place.

The only remedy for this was decentralisation. Some time ago it was intended to send Mr. Thallon to the North, and give him charge of the Northern railways, but he believed, through political pressure, that action was rescinded. It was a great pity, from the Northern point of view, that Mr. Thallon had not been sent up there, but there were other ways, of course, of getting over the difficulty. One was by giving the district traffic managers more power. He had no doubt that Central members could testify that the same difficulty arose in the Central district. In Townsville, Mr. Evans had not nearly as much power as he should have. He believed it was impossible to even alter a time-table without reference to the Commissioner. That should not be, and he hoped the Government, when considering the extension of the term of office of the Commissioner next session, would also consider whether it was not desirable to appoint deputy commissioners in the Central and Northern districts, giving them plenty of power to administer the railways in those divisions of the colony. He was quite sure the result would be beneficial. There were two or three grievances he wished to mention, and then he would probably not have another word to say. He called for a return the other day in connection with timber sidings along the Northern Railway, and he was somewhat astonished to find that there was only one timber siding, apparently, the owners of which were empowered to levy fees from other individuals sending timber over that siding. He was inclined to think that, although that was the only one of which the department was aware, there were other owners of sidings who were collecting fees—possibly unknown to the department. There was a good deal of complaint amongst the timber-getters on the Northern Railway in connection with that matter. The system seemed to be that the Government allowed individuals to put in sidings, and permitted the owners of those sidings to collect fees from other individuals sending timber over them, until the sidings were paid for. That might seem a very reasonable thing at first blush, but it was giving the owners of those sidings a tremendous interest on their money, because they were getting the benefit of sending their own timber without fees, whilst they were charging other people fees. If a siding cost £500, they might stand out of their money for twelve months or two years before the £500 was collected; but in the meantime their own timber paid no fees for passing over the siding. It was pretty well all clear profit. It was a matter the Government ought to give some attention to. Of course, the Government could not afford to put in sidings at their own expense, unless they got a guarantee that a certain amount of timber would be cut in the district; but he was sure some fairer scheme for the other timber-getters could be devised. With regard to the rolling-stock, the Commissioner pointed out that the workshops at Ipswich had for years past been totally inadequate for the work of carrying out ordinary repairs, and he pointed out the necessity for increasing the workshops. He would like to see the Government establish railway workshops in the Central and Northern divisions, so that the work required to be done for those divisions might be done there, instead of having to be brought to the South. One other matter to which he wished to refer was in connection with what the Commissioner said about private railways. He did not think it was part of the duty of the Commissioner to advocate in his report the construction of a private railway. Under the 18th clause of the Railways Act of 1896, the Commissioner had to furnish a report to the Minister every year, and before a

railway was made he had to report upon the probable cost and other matters; but he was going out of the beaten track in advocating private railways. He had not hitherto had anything to say in connection with the question of the Barron Falls. Some hon. members had found fault with what the Commissioner had done.

Mr. McDONALD: It is not the Commissioner; it is the Minister.

Mr. JACKSON: He would be more inclined to blame the Lands Department than the Railway Department, because the correspondence showed that the present Minister for Agriculture, when at the head of the Lands Department, consented to granting the lease. He hoped the Minister would look into this question of the lengthsman's wages, and see if he could not do complete justice to the men.

Mr. W. HAMILTON (*Gregory*): He had listened to the quibbling and wriggling of the Minister for Railways over this matter; but he happened to be one of the deputation that waited upon the hon. gentleman when he promised, without any qualification whatever, that he would make a complete restoration of the wages of these men.

Mr. McDONALD: That was made before the election.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: And since the election. Now the hon. gentleman said the men had to be three years in the service before they could get their wages increased.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It used to be five years.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Never mind how long it used to be. He promised he would restore those wages.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have done it.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Hon. members on this side were blamed for advocating the cause of the lower-paid men, but it was a good job for those men that they did so. The higher-paid officers had any amount of friends on the other side, but the lower-paid men received very little sympathy from members opposite. A good deal had been said about the Commissioner receiving only a paltry £1,500 a year. He did not know how that gentleman managed to live—it was a wonder he did not starve! The Commissioner might be a success from a financial point of view, but it was at the expense of the travelling public. The second-class passenger accommodation on our railways was the most disgraceful to be found in Australia. Poverty was no crime, but it was very inconvenient if a person had to travel second class on a Queensland railway. On the Central Railway there were second-class sleeping berths, and there were any amount of people who could afford 2s. 6d., though they could not afford 10s.; but he noticed that on the line from Brisbane to Gladstone there was no such thing, and people were packed in carriages from 9 o'clock at night till the middle of the next day; and unless one was a first-class passenger able to pay 10s. for a sleeping berth he had to sit up all the time—perhaps between a Chinaman and a kanaka. It frequently happened that a Chinaman or a kanaka was put in with second-class passengers. He believed there was no sleeping accommodation for second-class passengers on the Northern Railway, and he hoped that more attention would be paid to the convenience of second-class passengers on all the railways of the colony. On the short suburban lines about Brisbane—the Sandgate line, for instance—the second-class carriages had nice cushioned seats; but people going second class from here to Gladstone had to sit on hard wooden seats. How

would the Minister like to sit on a hard wooden seat all night and next day without room to stretch his legs?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Have I never done it?

Mr. W. HAMILTON: Whenever he had seen the hon. gentleman travelling, it was first class. He did not say that the second-class carriages should be fitted up luxuriously, but they ought to have cushions anyway; and sleeping accommodation ought to be provided for second-class passengers travelling long journeys on the Northern line, and on the line to Charleville. Another thing, he thought that on the lines near the coast, where a lot of Chinamen and kanakas travelled by rail, they should be provided with separate accommodation. A person told him the other night that a female friend of his had to travel in a second-class carriage on the same seat as a Chinaman and a kanaka. He did not think that was right, and something ought to be done to prevent that kind of thing.

The hon. gentleman had spoken [8 p.m.] about the lengthsman, and said they had every convenience and comfort, but the hon. gentleman must have travelled on the Central and Northern lines with his eyes shut, if he thought so. If the hon. gentleman saw some of the humpies on the Central line near Barcaldine, or some of the iron-roofed huts on the line, say, between Winton and Hughenden, he could hardly consider that there was any great degree of comfort in them. The hon. gentleman should keep the promise that he had made to the deputation that waited upon him. The railway servants were looking forward to the promised increase of wages as a good Christmas box for them—for that was how the hon. gentleman had put it—they would get all their back pay given them, and it would be a good Christmas box for them.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: So it will.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: It seemed that they were not all going to get it now—only a portion of them.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: It was only to apply to those who had been three years in the service. He failed to see that a man required to be three years in the service at pick and shovel work to qualify him to work alongside another man doing the same work, and he could not see why one should not get the same wages as the other for the same work. The Minister should try to keep his promise to restore the wages to the whole of the lower paid railway servants.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have done so.

Mr. BOLES (*Port Curtis*): Reference had been made to the accommodation provided on the different passenger trains, and trains on the line from Brisbane to Gladstone had been specially mentioned. There was not the slightest doubt that matter required looking after. The line had not been in operation a great while, but such a service should be brought up to date, in the matter of meeting the requirements of the travelling public. The hon. gentleman at the head of the department, and his officers, would admit that the returns from the line had been fairly good since it had been opened, and they would be better if better accommodation was provided. He did not think there was a better paying machine than a sleeping car, and he was half inclined to think that some of the old sleeping cars on the Gladstone line had paid for their original cost already. With all respect to the Commissioner and to Mr. Thallon, who tried to keep as big a grip as they could on the expenses, and liked to show a big balance, there was such a thing as grinding and sweating.

A little while since there was no lavatory carriage provided on that line, and that was simply abominable for such a distance. He would ask the hon. gentleman and his officers to consider the advisability of putting their best carriages on that line. He believed it would pay them very well for the outlay. The line was becoming more and more popular, and if it was carried on to Rockhampton—and he had hoped to see the plans for that extension on the table that session—they would have large numbers of people travelling over the line, who now came no further than Rockhampton. Those old carriages they had were not fit for a service of that kind, and if the accommodation on the line was kept up to date, the number of people who would use the line would fully warrant the expense. They had again to-night discussed the question of the lengthmen's wages. He had been six years in the House, and for four years out of the six those men had been promised that they would be placed on the footing they were on in 1893. He had attended two or three deputations at which different Ministers made the promise, and it did not appear to have been fulfilled yet. He did not know what the difference was, but he had been told that the lengthmen on the Central line were in a worse position than those on the Northern and Southern lines.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You were told wrong.

Mr. BOLES: He would certainly like the Government to see their way to put an end to that difficulty. There had been some talk with reference to circulars, and hon. members would remember that the ex-Minister for Public Instruction had pointed out the other night that the circular sent round to the Civil servants had been intended to put a stop to men in the Government service taking any part in politics. The circular was sent round to prevent certain men from giving assistance to politicians on that side of the House. What was sauce for the goose ought to be sauce for the gander; but what was the fact? At the present time there was a man named W. J. G. Yates; he did not know what he was, but he understood that he was called the mystery of the Railway Department, and that his business seemed to be to get private information. He had been told that that man had gone on board a steamer at Gladstone, and tried to bounce the officers into giving him information, but that he was told that he would get no information from them unless he could show his *bona fides*. He knew one or two lengthmen who had been treated in the same way.

Mr. W. HAMILTON: He is a sort of confidential adviser.

Mr. BOLES: He did not know what he was, but he knew that a little while ago he delivered a very strong speech in public, and he should like to know from the Minister whether the circular to which he had referred had been sent to that officer. If it had been sent to him, it was the other way perhaps.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I never heard of the man before.

Mr. BOLES: He was a very strong Government supporter, and was strongly against anything that was opposed to the Government. But while that man was allowed to act in that way, an unfortunate lengthman who desired to be removed twenty miles along the line, so that he might work his farm and be near his wife and children, when he applied for a transfer, received a notice that his services had been dispensed with, and he (Mr. Boles) got a circular intimating that he was not to interfere with railway lengthmen. The man had never asked him to take up his case, but he saw no reason why railway

employees should not be allowed to state their grievances to members of Parliament, even to members on that side of the House. Very often when a man stated his grievance, which appeared to be genuine, it was found that after one got information from the office one was able to show him that the matter was quite different from what he had supposed. With regard to Mr. Yates, he knew that that officer had gone about making himself very busy among the officials at Gladstone, but whether he was a spy or not he could not say. However, he rose principally to ask the Minister to consider, during next year, the advisability of putting tiptop carriages on the Gladstone Railway.

Mr. RYLAND (*Gympie*): There was one sentiment in the annual report of the Commissioner with which he thoroughly agreed, and that was in relation to the staff. The Commissioner stated that complaints were made against the railway staff, and that—

One correspondent recently went so far as to say that the whole of the employees in the railways of the Australian colonies, from the highest to the lowest, treated the travelling public as if they were condemned criminals.

The Commissioner defended his staff, and said—

I have no hesitation in saying that the railway staff in this colony will bear favourable comparison with any similar body of men in any part of the world.

He thought that was quite correct, and that the railway staff at the present time were most courteous. Anyone who went to the old country, and had anything to do with the railway staffs there, and saw how third-class passengers, who were similar to our second-class passengers, were treated, would see the difference, and that arose from the fact that the railways in the old country were owned by private companies. It was part of the business of railway officials there to make cheap travelling as uncomfortable as possible, and to be as offensive as possible to such passengers, so as to get them to travel second class or first class. He hoped, therefore, that they would never have any but State railways in Queensland. At the same time he did not think the sentiment expressed by the Commissioner was sufficient to make up for the breach of the promise which had been made by the Minister some time ago to a deputation, of which he (Mr. Ryland) formed one. He then asked the Minister if men under five years' service would be restored to the rate of wages which prevailed prior to 1893, and the hon. gentleman distinctly said "Yes." Now it appeared that men under three years' service were not going to be restored, and that was his disappointment in the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The men employed in the service previous to 1893 have been restored.

Mr. RYLAND: There was a misunderstanding between the deputation and the Minister on that point.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That was my promise.

Mr. RYLAND: The deputation pointed out that there was a misunderstanding, and he put it in such a manner as to remove all misunderstanding. He asked definitely whether men under five years' service would be restored to their former positions, and the Minister said, "Yes." Now it turned out that those under five years were not to be restored. He took it that the Minister made a definite promise that all under five, under four, under three, two, one, or six months should be restored. That was as he understood it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I never made any such promise.

Mr. RYLAND: He was surprised at the statement of the hon. gentleman, and he was sure that other members of the deputation were

equally surprised. Six shillings a day was all the men received this side of Rockhampton. Was that a wage for this prosperous colony, with all its gold, all its cattle, and all its wool, to pay any men? In New South Wales, which was nothing like as prosperous a colony, and where living was cheaper, the wage was 7s. a day, and for men working on the permanent way it was 8s. a day. He contended that the very least that should be paid in this colony was 7s. a day. He wished to draw attention to the irregular manner in which the men were paid. Sometimes they got their money on the 4th of the month, and often not till as late as the 10th. He thought there should be no difficulty in paying the men regularly on the 6th. He wished also to refer to the question of the guaranteed railways. According to the report of the Commissioner, that gentleman did not seem to be very much in favour of them, and he mentioned particularly the Pialba line. In reference to that line he said—

The working of the Pialba line for the twelve months ended on the 30th June, 1898, involved a loss of £2,366—one-half of which had to be made good by the ratepayers in the benefited area (in the division of Burrum) traversed by the railway, and the amount has been paid in full. For the year just closed, the ratepayers will have to make good a sum of £1,019, being their share of the loss in working the line.

He considered it distinctly unfair that the Burrum division should have to pay one-half of the loss on the working of the line, in view of the fact that it was the Maryborough municipality which received almost the entire benefit. The railway only went through one little corner of the Burrum division, and the business people of Maryborough enjoyed all the advantages. He could not understand why the Burrum should be included in the benefited area, seeing that Maryborough and the Tinana division received all the benefit. He was not in favour of guarantee railways any more than the Commissioner for Railways. An agitation had been going on for some considerable time in favour of a railway to Noosa. It would go right through the Widgee division, but it never entered the heads of the Gympie people to make the Widgee division responsible for it. It was Gympie that would benefit by it. The miners would be able to enjoy a trip to the seaside, and the line would increase the value of property in Gympie.

He did not see why it was done; but [8.30 p.m.] there did not seem to be any business principle in the carrying out of any of these things at all. He said at the time that this Railway Guarantee Act was under consideration that it was a bogus concern from beginning to end. There was a strong feeling at that time that when railways were built they should be built on the betterment principle—that was, that, if there was any deficiency, it should be made up by putting a tax on the land which was increased in value by the railway; or, even if there was no deficiency, that that land should be taxed to meet a portion of the cost of the lines. Here was what the Commissioner said—

I regret that I must still adhere to the opinion expressed by me in my previous reports, that the Act under which guarantee lines are built has had, and will, I fear, have in the future, the very opposite effect to that which Parliament intended that it should have—namely, in discouraging the promotion of railways of an unremunerative character. I am sorry to say that there are many proposed railways of this class now under guarantee, and in course of promotion. Many of them must, if built, result in financial disaster.

They would result in financial disaster if they were built on the same principle as the Pialba line. There would be nothing else for it. Let them get at bedrock, and make the land which benefited by the railways bear the additional cost that those railways were to the country.

Then they would pay, and the Government would not have to go and ask private syndicates to come along. When syndicates came along and asked for concessions to make railways, they did not expect to get all the revenue from the passenger and the general traffic. They did not depend on that at all; that was only a secondary consideration. They were going to get their income from the lands adjoining—from the increased value that would be put on those lands and on the increased production that would be brought about by the railways. Why didn't the Government build their railways on the same principle? About that question of no politics among railway men, he did not think that any man should be curtailed in his political principles or religious sentiments by any employer. He connected the two; they were questions of conviction, and no man was free when such a state of things existed. It might not be right, perhaps, for a man to raise a discussion on these questions during working hours; but when his work was done, and his pick, or his shovel, or his hammer was out of his hands, he should be as free as any man in that Assembly, or in this country, to go and make a speech on any religious question, or any political question, or any question at all, without let or hindrance. He was not free if he was bound in such a manner by any employer—he did not care whether the master was a private employer or a State employer. Every man was a slave who had his liberty curtailed in that respect, and he hoped the Railway Department would see its way to remove this restriction. It would be wise if this influence was brought to bear on them. The men were bound to vote against any Government which had brought about such a state of things, and, in doing so, assert their manhood and their citizenship.

Mr. GIVENS (*Cairns*): There had been several charges hurled across the Chamber at the Secretary for Railways, and he was astonished that he had not got up to make some sort of defence, if any were possible.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have done so.

Mr. GIVENS: He had been there since a quarter past 7 o'clock, and the hon. gentleman was then speaking; but since then there had been several serious charges made against the department with the administration of which he was charged, and he had not replied to them.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What are the serious charges?

Mr. GIVENS: It seemed to him that there was no defence possible or the hon. gentleman would have made that defence. The hon. gentleman asked—What were the charges? The first was made by the hon. member for Port Curtis, and was to the effect that an unfortunate poor employee of the department was sacked simply because he preferred a request to the department through a member of Parliament, while another was allowed to go all over the colony as a political tout for hon. members on the other side.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I never heard of the man in my life.

Mr. GIVENS: The hon. member must be deaf because the charge was levelled at him by the hon. member for Port Curtis.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I heard him; but I do not know the man he was talking about.

Mr. GIVENS: There had not been one solitary argument worthy of the name used as to why the men in the lower ranks of the railway service should not have restored to them the full wages that they had prior to 1893. The Minister said they had been restored to them in a partial

sense. He remembered distinctly that a large deputation interviewed the Minister, and he promised that every individual in the service, irrespective of rank and anything else, should be placed in the same position with regard to wages as he was in 1893. That promise had not been kept. The Minister had been a mere butt in the hands of his fellow-Ministers, and could not carry out his own wishes, or he had said what was not true. He had placed himself on the horns of a dilemma, and could choose which horn he would stick on. One of the first items in this year's Estimates of his department was an increase of £50 for the Secretary to the Commissioner. He had not the slightest objection to that increase. He believed the officer was a very good one and worth the money; but if a man who was worth £500 a year was to get an increase voluntarily, without it being asked for by any deputations or anything else, why shouldn't these unfortunate men who got only six or seven bob a day get an increase voluntarily without having to get about a dozen deputations to get it for them? What were the facts of the case? The highly paid employees, who might be fully worth their salaries, had no trouble whatever in getting an increase—the Minister in charge of the department put it down voluntarily for them. He thought Mr. Pratten, the secretary, was worth £500 a year, but he had no trouble in getting that. The Minister was quite right in defending his action in respect of this matter, but it had taken the party on his (Mr. Givens') side of the House years of hard fighting to get workmen in the service a paltry increase of 6d. a day. They did not respect favouritism, but they wished for fair treatment. They insisted on that, and they would fight till they got it for those workmen. If highly paid officials got increases, the poorer paid employees should also get increases. That was only a fair deal between man and man. Increases to the highly paid officers might mean that they would be able to afford luxuries, but the extra 6d. or 7d. to the unfortunate labourer would mean that he would be able to provide more necessities for himself, his wife, and his family; and necessities should be provided for before luxuries. The Minister said that the men would be fully restored in time, but the department gave with one hand and took away with the other. Prior to 1893 the tools for these workmen were supplied free, but now they had to pay for them. That was a mean, miserable, pettifogging, cheese-paring policy, not worthy of the hon. gentleman at the head of the department. If that was not true the Minister could deny it. He would now like to refer to some remarks made by the Commissioner in his report with regard to private railways. It was a curious coincidence that all the private railways had been proposed for the North, and not for the South. That meant that the people in the North found the money to build State railways in the South, while they were handed over to the tender mercies of the gentle syndicator for their railways in North Queensland. The public debt of the colony had been contracted on behalf of the whole colony, and the public credit of the North, as well as the South, was pledged to the building of railways and other public works. The people in the North were charged 50 per cent. more than those in the South to travel over those private lines, and, as a representative of the North, he resented that. The public credit of the whole colony should be distributed over the whole colony, and should not be devoted to building railways down South. They all knew what the tender mercies of these private syndicators were, and later on he would probably enlighten hon. members on that point. He objected to the Commissioner or any other public officer dic-

tating to Parliament. The Commissioner in his report, judging his remarks in the most lenient way, had acted somewhat in that way. He said—

The concessions which the promoters are seeking from the Government are, I understand, most reasonable and such as may be readily granted by Parliament. He had always considered that the only body competent to say what should or should not pass through that House was the House itself. It appeared, however, that he was wrong, and the Commissioner was the authority on the matter; and anyone who had the temerity to disagree with this highly paid official—this mighty magistrate—especially any hon. member on his side, would be immediately sat upon. He objected to this altogether. No doubt the Commissioner had done good work; he did not say that he was altogether dissatisfied with him; but he would always reserve to himself the right to criticise such actions. He objected to the people in the North being burdened by private syndicators, while the South revelled in the enjoyment of railways paid for out of the State moneys. If the private railway syndicator was so advantageous to the country, why did not the people in the South offer all their railway concessions to him? The North would not object to that. There was not a single place in the South where railways had been proposed to be built by syndicates.

Mr. STORY: Is there not?

Mr. GIVENS: Only in the back blocks—in the miserable God-forsaken places such as the hon. gentleman represented.

Mr. STORY: Talk about something you know something about.

Mr. GIVENS: If he did not know more than the hon. member for Balonne, he would never have had the cheek to come into the House.

Mr. STORY: You have a lot to learn yet.

Mr. BELL rose to a point of order. He wished to know if the remarks of the hon. member for Cairns were in order.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think the remarks of the hon. member are strictly in order.

Mr. GIVENS: He was always willing to bow to the Chairman's ruling, but he would not be dominated by the hon. member for Dalby. If private railway syndicates were such blessings, why did not the people in the South give railway concessions to them for the construction of railways? Why did they not advocate the principle for their own part of the colony instead of for that part of the colony which they only recognised as belonging to Queensland, in order that they might bleed it as much as possible? He wished now to refer to the leasing of the Cairns railway wharf to the Chillagoe Railway and Mines, Limited. He had had occasion several times recently to point out that that syndicate had got very handsome concessions from that Assembly, but apparently they were not content, and came, cap in hand, to various departments looking for further concessions.

Mr. FISHER: Cap in hand, did you say?

Mr. GIVENS: He made a mistake. They were bosses of the situation. They came to the departments and dictated their own terms. For years the Cairns railway wharf had been used exclusively by the Railway Department for railway purposes, but the Chillagoe Railway and Mines, Limited, cast their covetous eyes upon that wharf. He had all the papers in connection with the leasing of the wharf, which were tabled on 19th September last. His opinion was that the lease of the wharf and the adjoining land was entirely outside the power of the Railway Department, because the land was only temporarily vested in the Railway Department for railway purposes by the Lands Department, and therefore the Railway Department had only temporary control of the land. The one

piece of land was reserved for railway purposes, and the other for wharfage for the Marine Department. The first letter in the correspondence was from Mr. J. V. Reid to the Commissioner. It commenced "Dear Mr. Gray." Of course it was necessary, when a job of that sort was being perpetrated, that the most friendly relations should exist between the parties, and so he addressed the Commissioner as "Dear Mr. Gray." At first Mr. Gray was inclined to conserve the interests of the department and of the colony, and he concluded his letter of 6th July, 1898, as follows:—

I shall be glad to hear that this arrangement, which was made in the presence of Mr. Frew, has not been abandoned, as I fear it would be useless submitting the proposal contained in your letter now under reply.

The arrangement which he referred to was that half the wharfage dues should be retained by the Railway Department. A little later the offer was reduced to one-third of the wharfage dues, and after that nothing more was heard of the thing, and the department leased the wharf without having a claim on a single shilling of the wharfage. The only privilege the department had got was that all goods for the Railway Department would be allowed to go free over the wharf. He further considered that the lease was illegal, inasmuch as the wharf was part and parcel of the Cairns railway line. If the Railway Department had power to lease it, it had as much power to lease any railway in Queensland; and no hon. member would argue for a moment that the Commissioner had such an extended power as that. The railway wharf was part and parcel of the railway line, because the triangle on which the engines used to turn was partly on the wharf. Now the triangle had had to be shifted, and it would cost the country £1,060 to shift it. For fear the country should find out how bad a deal they had made the responsible head of the department minuted that the amount was too large to expend in one year, and that it should be done in dribs and drabs, so that the people would not know that it was necessitated by that gross job. The leasing of the wharf was objected to by every public body in Cairns in the strongest terms. Why should not the local authorities of Cairns be consulted in the matter? Again, the lease was defective, because there was no such resumption clause as was inserted in every other lease for wharfage purposes which was issued by the Lands Department. In every other lease there was a clause providing for resumption, if the properties were required for public purposes—such as for harbour trusts—upon giving six months' notice, and paying the actual cash value of all the improvements on the ground. But this company got an indefeasible lease of twenty-one years, with the right of renewal for another ten years, the terms to be settled by arbitration. He objected to any syndicate or individual being shown favouritism; but if any favour was to be accorded he would rather see it shown to a poor man than to a wealthy syndicate. But here was a Government which was continually granting favours to wealthy and influential syndicates, while they denied them wholesale to the poor individual.

He wanted to know why special [9 p.m.] terms had been granted to the Chillagoe Railway and Mines, Limited, in the teeth of the strongest opposition by the people of Cairns, and he would like to know what justification could be offered for the conduct of the Minister or the Commissioner? When the Cairns Harbour Board was formed, all the wharves except this could be resumed and put under the control of the board, and he wanted to know why special favour should have been shown to this syndicate,

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There has been no special favour shown.

Mr. GIVENS: Probably the hon. gentleman would say that the sale of the wharf was advertised, and conducted by public auction; but it was a curious coincidence that, though there were two other reputable auctioneers in the town—men who had been longer established—the auctioneer who conducted the sale was the Cairns agent for the Chillagoe Railway and Mines, Limited. He did not mean to say that there was any special meaning in that, but it was one of the coincidences that cropped up in all transactions in which the Government were concerned. The rent to be received was £155 per annum, but the sale of the wharf necessitated an expenditure of £1,066; and though the work ought to be done immediately, he supposed it would only be done in dribs and drabs, so that the public would be deceived. If it was at all desirable that the wharf should be handed over to the Chillagoe syndicate, it should have been given to them only on the same terms as it would have been given to anybody else. Why should foreign syndicates be accorded special favours which were denied to our own citizens? The other day they found the Government leasing to this company that magnificent national asset—the Barron Falls. Probably the Minister would say that it was all for the good of the district, and that he was fighting against the interests of his district in opposing these leases, but anybody who indulged in that sort of special pleading had no knowledge of the true facts. It had been said that the leasing of the falls would cause an expenditure of £150,000 in the district; but, as a matter of fact, the syndicate only claimed that it would mean an expenditure of £50,000 in the district, and, if they did not get water-power for their electrolytic works, they would have to get some other power, which would mean that a larger amount of labour would be required. The quantity of water required by the company meant between 15,000 and 20,000 horse-power working for the company day and night; and the Government were prepared to let the company have that for £500 per annum. Taking the lowest quantity of water used by the company, and taking one horse-power to be equal to that of five men, that would give them a power equal to 75,000 men working day and night. In a case of this kind anybody who said that a man who opposed the concession was fighting against the interests of the district might as well say that in order to be prosperous you must throw away all your property. Those mighty geniuses who said they were the only men fit to rule the country, said this was a good principle. If that was their knowledge of a good principle, he hoped he would remain in ignorance all his life.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS gave the hon. member credit for doing what he considered best for the district he represented. The wharves which had been leased at Cairns were of a useless character, and had been sold at public auction for £155 a year. The syndicate had to spend about £4,000 in building wharves and furnishing accommodation for the traffic of the Railway Department free of cost to the department. Wharves had been sold at Rockhampton the other day without advertising at all; and it was not unusual for the Commissioner to lease a wharf when he considered that it would be in the interests of the department to do so. There had been no hole-and-corner business about this.

Mr. GIVENS: Are you sure it is legal?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That was a matter raised by the hon. member. Many other complaints had been brought against the department. One was that the Commissioner had taken upon himself to express his

opinion as to the construction of a private railway. All communications with regard to the right to construct those lines had been addressed either to himself or to the Commissioner—they had been addressed to the department—and when the applications came in the Commissioner felt that it was incumbent on him to report upon them.

Mr. FISHER: Will you lay the papers on the table?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He would lay all the papers on the table. If the hon. member thought the department was desirous of keeping anything from the House and country he was much mistaken.

Mr. FISHER: I ask that now.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There was no secrecy in connection with that or any other subject dealt with by the Railway Department, and there was no matter with which they had dealt in connection with which they were not prepared to lay all the papers on the table.

Mr. FISHER: Will you show them to members to-morrow?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, to-morrow. They were public property. What was all this alarm about the proposal to build railways by private enterprise? The question was one which, if anything comes of it at all, could only be decided by the House. It was a question which the good judgment of the House alone would decide. The hon. member for Cairns must not imagine that he had all the capacity and intelligence of the House. There were many other men who were capable also of forming a good and sound opinion. If in such remote districts as that from Burke to Lilydale, where there was a sparse population, a difficult country, and an arid climate, people could be found who were prepared to come forward and spend money in constructing over 100 miles of railway, there were a good many persons who thought those people might well be encouraged. Surely it was incumbent upon members of that House to discuss a proposal of that kind? They could discuss it upon its merits, and there was no necessity for quarrelling about it, when they knew that nothing would or could be done without consulting Parliament. That was the reason the Commissioner referred to that matter in his report, and he saw nothing wrong in it. He believed that if the Commissioner had not done it they would have been charged with another villainous scheme of secrecy in carrying on their correspondence with syndicates for the construction of private lines in the hidden dark recesses of the office, and doing the thing in the secret way in which they had been charged with carrying on the Barron Falls business. There had been no more secrecy in the Barron Falls matter than there was in this—not one bit. In justice to the Railway Department, and in the interests of the public, he thought he should make public the fact that the Barron Falls proposal had been prominently before the public eighteen months ago. He found an article upon the proposal in the *Cairns Post* published on the 16th June, 1898. Only a portion of the article had been read last night, and it was only right that the public should know that there had been no secrecy about the scheme, seeing that so much had been said on the subject by hon. members opposite. The hon. member for Gympie, who had been a few days in the office, claimed to have discovered the secret, and that if he had not brought the thing to light by his vigilance the matter would never have been known. That was not a fair thing to go to the country, and in justice to the Railway Department, with the permission of the Committee, he would read

the leading article on the subject of the proposal published in the *Cairns Post* of 16th June, 1898. It was as follows:—

THOSE FALLS.

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever," always provided that the charge for admiring it is not too heavy. In the Barron Falls we have "a thing of beauty," but in this utilitarian age we want to know whether or not we are not "paying too much for our whistle." When the Chillagoe Proprietary Company approached the Lands Department with a view to obtaining a lease of the falls for electrical purposes, there was an outcry throughout the district by people who talked in a large, loose manner about "valuable assets," the "property of posterity," and the "vandalistic proclivities" of a syndicate that could propose to destroy the vast natural beauties of the Barron Falls. These people, to use a colloquial expression, "were talking through their hats." They knew nothing about the proposals of the syndicate, but, after the manner of the Labour party in Queensland, they first assumed certain things, and then tackled the proposals of the company upon the strength of such assumptions. It is the proper thing to see that the interests of the district are safeguarded in connection with any scheme, but it is entirely another matter to damn such scheme off-hand until particulars thereof are forthcoming. In the first place let it be emphatically laid down that the talk about posterity is nonsense, apart from the fact that posterity has no connection with the matter under review. If in our time we so act that there will be no necessity for posterity to keep us in our old age, it is all that posterity can expect from us. But to revert to the proposals of the Company: The Minister for Lands, accompanied by Messrs. W. J. Munro, K. Aumuller, N. McLean, and A. J. Draper, visited the falls on Thursday last for the purpose of obtaining information to enable him to decide upon the application of the company for a lease. Mr. Foxton reserved his decision, pending the receipt of further details of the scheme from the Chillagoe Company, and as, at the time of writing, he has not made up his mind what to do, perhaps it may not be amiss to give a few facts regarding the proposal to establish electrical works at the falls. Mr. J. B. McKenzie, a civil engineer of world-wide reputation, has been commissioned by the company to ascertain the amount of power that can be generated by the falls, and in company with Mr. Surveyor Fraser has been busy during the past two weeks in making out his estimates, and in carrying out the necessary surveys. Mr. McKenzie is very reticent regarding the results of his work, but we under rather than over estimate in asserting that he found that 45,000 horse-power could be generated by the falls in the driest season. Of this amount only about 3,000 horse-power would be necessary to run the smelting works at Mareeba, leaving 42,000 horse-power available for the rest of the district. The works necessary to be constructed in connection with this scheme, apart from the small item of machinery, will be identically the same for the generation of either 3,000 or 45,000 horse-power, and are roughly estimated to cost about £50,000. A tunnel will be put in about 20 chains above the falls, and through this the water will be conducted to Mervyn Creek, 50 chains away, and situated at a point 30 chains below the falls. There will not be the slightest interference with the falls, and no one standing at the observation station on the line will be able to tell that any works are erected in connection with them, while the escape of water down the tunnel will not affect the level of the falls two inches. The company will undertake not to mar the beauty of the spot in any way, and with this assurance the people of the district should hail with acclamation the advent of a company which is prepared to put the immense natural forces of the falls to so much practical use that they will result in the employment of hundreds of men in this district. On the one hand we have 50,000 horse-power going to waste, except that it provides an interesting sight for visitors to the district. On the other we have this tremendous force harnessed to the car of industry and progress, while visitors can still come along and find no difference in the aspect which has been the source of attraction to thousands of southerners during the past few years.

There is another view of the case which possesses a great deal of interest for the residents of Cairns. A proposal has recently been made and acceded to by the municipal council to reticulate the streets of Cairns with gas-mains by a Melbourne company. The representative of that company states that the cost of the gas would be about 12s. 6d. per 1,000 cubic feet. A number of people preferred, and still prefer, electricity to gas, but as the gas company asked for no monopoly

proposed to spend £8,000 on works in this town, and bound no one down to take their product, it was rightly considered that the required permission should be given. No one is bound to use the gas, and any other gas or electrical company can come along to-morrow and compete with Messrs. Costes and Co. In view of these facts the proposal of the Chillagoe Company is important. We have it upon the highest authority that when the turbines and dynamo are established by the Chillagoe Company at the falls Cairns can be lighted with electricity at between 3d. and 6d. per unit, equal to from 2s. 6d. to 8s. per 1,000 feet of gas, a price which will be within the reach of the poorest man in the district. High-sounding phrases regarding posterity are worth just the breath they are uttered with; and as for the falls being a valuable asset to the present generation, we need only remark that an asset is only valuable according to the price it will bring. The community is not and will not for fifty years be prepared to spend £50,000 in turning the Barron Falls to practical account, so that, as an asset it is worth nothing at all to us at the present time, and the rights of posterity may easily be safeguarded on the same lines as those embodied in the Chillagoe Railway Bill. We hope that Mr. Foxton will accede to the request of the company, and that within a few years we may see, scattered over the district, big industrial works run by electricity generated by the falls.

That was the opinion of the people most interested, or at all events the opinion of the public Press of Cairns.

Mr. GIVENS: No; the opinion of a miserable section of the Press of Cairns.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He thought that hon. members and the public outside would see that there had been no secrecy about the matter. With regard to the condition of the second-class carriages, the department admitted that the condition of those carriages, and indeed of the whole of the rolling-stock, was not what might be desired; but everyone was aware that the traffic had been so great and the department had been so pressed for time that it had been impossible to meet the growing requirements of the department. Every effort was being made to improve matters, and in almost every workshop in the colony contracts were being executed for the building of carriages and putting rolling-stock in proper order, and it was hoped that it would be in proper order at an early date. With reference to the restoration of the old rates of wages to railway employees, about which a great deal had been said, he claimed that he had carried out his promise. The promise he made was that he would do his very utmost to see that the rates of wages were restored to what they were prior to 1893. That had been done, and the five years' probation that existed previously had been reduced to three, so that in that respect also the promise had been fulfilled.

Mr. GIVENS: After the long discussion they had had on the Barron Falls concession he did not wish to go into the matter at any length that evening, but, seeing that the Minister had invited discussion, he would not shirk it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have not invited discussion.

Mr. GIVENS: The hon. gentleman said there had been no secrecy in the matter. He (Mr. Givens) said that, as far as the Railway Department was concerned, the matter had been conducted with the utmost secrecy. He believed that the people of Cairns were perfectly aware of the negotiations opened with the Lands Department, but when that department refused to grant the lease applied for by the syndicate they thought the matter was at an end. The syndicate, however, lay low for twelve months, and then approached the department presided over by the Secretary for Railways, and nobody knew anything whatever about those negotiations. When the matter was discussed in the House last Friday week on a motion for adjournment, the Premier said, "There has been no secrecy at all; it was two years ago that the application was

first made, and I thought it had been dropped. The matter was only brought up again a few months ago." From that it would be seen that the Premier himself admitted that the matter had been dropped. Yet nobody got the slightest notification of any kind when the matter was reopened, and as far as the Railway Department was concerned the whole transaction had been conducted with the utmost secrecy, as had been admitted by several hon. members on the Government side of the House. There was not a newspaper in Queensland, not even the leading newspapers in Brisbane, that had the slightest inkling of the present transaction until it was brought before the House.

Mr. LEAHY: Look at the *Northern Miner* for last week.

Mr. GIVENS: The hon. member for Bulloo could quote that paper if he liked, but if he looked at it he would find that there was not the slightest inkling in it that the Railway Department had any intention of leasing the land. Hon. members opposite had very often been accused of utilising the forms of the law, as far as the law would permit, to carry on jobbery on a pretty extensive scale, but the Barron Falls transaction showed clearly and conclusively that they had not enough brains among them to carry out that jobbery within the limits of the law.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not think the hon. member is in order in using language of that kind to the Government or to a private member.

Mr. GIVENS: As the remark was a little too strong he withdrew it, and said that circumstances in the present case showed that hon. members opposite had not brains enough to carry out this very questionable transaction within the limits of the law, because the Crown Law Officers had decided that the whole matter was illegal from the beginning.

Mr. LEAHY: The Crown Law Officers do not decide legal matters; they only give an opinion.

Mr. GIVENS: He believed that the courts of the colony would uphold that opinion, and the Premier had intimated that he intended to act on the opinion. If the hon. gentleman had decided to go on with the matter, steps would have been taken to see whether his action was legal or not. Why should the laws of the colony be broken to oblige a large and powerful syndicate? They never found the laws of the colony broken to oblige a very poor man, or even the community. The people of Cairns applied for those falls to be reserved for the use of the inhabitants of the district, but the department refused to grant their application. Another company applied for the use of them, but the department would not condescend to negotiate with that company. A special favour was, however, shown to the Chillagoe Railway and Mines, Limited, with very little negotiation at all. The Secretary for Railways quoted a long article from a paper called the *Morning Post*, and said that expressed the public opinion of Cairns.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: He said it proved that the matter was not secret, which it did.

Mr. GIVENS: It proved that as far as the negotiations between the Lands Department and the syndicate were concerned they were not secret. But that was two years ago. The matter was absolutely secret, as far as the negotiations between the Railway Department and the syndicate were concerned. If they were only letting a good space on a railway hoarding they would advertise it; but when they were granting a concession which their own engineer said was worth from £30,000 to £50,000 per annum, they conducted the transaction with absolute secrecy, and then said they were desirous to conserve the interests of the colony, and to carry out a project for the benefit of the Cairns district.

The HOME SECRETARY: Who are you speaking of now?

Mr. GIVENS: He was speaking of the members who barracked for those syndicates.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: You are speaking of the Trades Hall.

Mr. GIVENS: It said very little for the intelligence of the hon. member if [9:30 p.m.] he thought the Trades Hall was a syndicate, or could be compared with a syndicate like the Chillagoe syndicate, which had been formed for the purpose of fleecing the public.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The Trades Hall fleeces the public very much more.

Mr. GIVENS: Such an insinuation was quite worthy of the hon. gentleman. The Trades Hall had no power to get a farthing out of anyone without their consent, and if that was a specimen of the hon. gentleman's alleged reasoning he did not wonder that people paid very little attention to it.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: It shows that it has gone home.

Mr. GIVENS: If he were not impervious to such puny attacks as that the sooner he left the Chamber the better. He wished to point out that the extract read by the Secretary for Railways was from a paper which represented only an infinitesimal section of the people of Cairns—a paper which barracked for syndicates, and lived on what it could get from boodlers. On looking through the printed correspondence on that matter there was one memo. by the Home Secretary which struck him very forcibly, and anyone would suppose from it that the hon. gentleman himself was to be benefited by the lease being granted when he took such pains to constitute himself the special advocate of the syndicate. The memo. was as follows:—

Before receipt of this letter, Mr. Reid (Mr. Chapman's partner) saw me, and it has been arranged that I shall go to Cairns and make full personal inquiries on the spot, and endeavour to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion of the difficulties.

He supposed it was arranged with the syndicate that the hon. gentleman should go there and barrack for them and arrange everything to their satisfaction.

The HOME SECRETARY rose to a point of order. Was the hon. member in order in imputing motives to him?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order in imputing such motives. I further call his attention to the fact that he is not in order in quoting correspondence from the Lands Department on the Estimate now before the Committee. He must confine his remarks in regard to the Barron Falls to the action of the Secretary for Railways and the Commissioner.

Mr. GIVENS: The two departments were so inextricably mixed up in the transaction that that was a matter of difficulty. However, he would not dwell much further on the subject. The Secretary for Railways went out of his way to make a special case, and he felt bound to follow him. There was another point worthy of note, and that was that the syndicate would, under the lease, have full control of the river, which flowed through one of the richest agricultural districts in the colony; and if at any time the water was wanted for irrigation purposes, or to supply the settlers, they would not be able to take one pint of it so long as they lessened the supply which the lease gave the syndicate authority to take. The feature of the whole thing that he objected to was that the transaction showed that special favours were to be granted to rich and influential individuals which people with neither wealth nor influence could secure. If such favours were to be given to anyone, they should be given to poor men.

At all events there should be a fair deal all round, impartial treatment of everyone, and favours to none.

Hon. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON (*Brisbane North*): He had not intended to add one word to *Hansard* this session; but after what had fallen from the hon. member for Cairns, he felt constrained to say that he had heard his speech five times to-day. That was very trying to the little intellect he had left after being exhausted by that hon. member's constant repetition. He had heard observations about the beauty of the falls and splendid agricultural land that would be destroyed if this water was taken out of them. Was the hon. member unconscious of the fact that he had repeated that seven times? Surely they ought to have the Chairman of the Shorthand Staff intimating to the hon. member that he said that last week. The hon. member made observations about the quantity of water in the falls being diminished, until he had dreamt of it. As he (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) had said to Mr. Callan in the House the other night, when he first heard of the matter, there was secrecy somewhere. It was never in the *Courier* or any other paper in the south.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Who is to blame for that?

Hon. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: He wished the House to understand that he was in entire sympathy with the observations that had been made with regard to preserving these falls that God had given them; and when Mr. Callan said the other night, "I will give £50 to fight it in the Privy Council," he said, "I will do likewise." The Commissioner was wrong. The moment he went outside the sphere of the clause that was read the other night by the hon. member for Gympie, Mr. Fisher, he exceeded his functions. They had heard a good deal about the poor man, and it had been asked—Why did the Government give special concessions and special privileges to this syndicate? the inference being that they gave unusual concessions to it to what they would give poor men. Now, he did not believe there was a rich man in this syndicate. He believed the syndicate in the aggregate was poor.

Mr. GLASSEY: We spoke in the aggregate.

Hon. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: The syndicate might be rich in credit, and this concession might inflate the value of their shares; but to come back to the Commissioner, he hoped that hon. members would confine themselves to the item under discussion. The Government had confessed practically that they had committed an error of judgment. They had been told by the Crown Solicitor what they knew before they asked his opinion—that transaction was *ultra vires*; and that being so, what was the use of hanging on to the transaction? Did they expect the Commissioner to go outside the lines of the functions of that clause that the hon. member for Gympie had spoken of the other night? Had he done wrong within those lines? Had he not proved a good commissioner in the matter of railway management, in general management, in developing the railway traffic, in providing the rolling-stock, and in reducing the curves and grades? Had he not performed everything laid down within the lines of the clause? He said unhesitatingly he had, and he unquestionably accepted the testimony of the House that he had been a good commissioner. What did they want? Some hon. members wanted him to be an epicure in the matter of waterfalls and an expert in windmills. The thing was utterly ridiculous. His position was this: He would like to get a little revenue for the Railway Department to minimise the loss on what was regarded

as a huge failure, but which, ultimately, he believed, would prove a blessing to Queensland. He referred to the Cairns railway, for which he (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) was in some way responsible. In this connection he remembered the words that were used by Lord Brassey a few days after he arrived in Melbourne when he was appointed Governor of Victoria—namely, “that money prematurely spent was not necessarily money lost.” He must say that the hon. member for Cairns had spoken excellently with reference to the question, and he forgave him. By his repetition and diffusiveness he had shown his earnestness for the preservation of the falls. At the same time, he must not bring the poor man there very much more. What had the poor man to do with the wharf? The hon. member supposed they were all rich men who sought wharves; but every rich man did not want wharves for the same term on the same conditions. Some wanted them for coal, some for shipping, some for timber, some for sugar; some wanted it for a short term, and some for a long term. In this case they were wanted for a specific purpose, and they made an offer which would catch the ear of Ministers and get them a lease, and catch capitalists at the other end of the world.

MR. GIVENS: That is my point.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: The hon. gentleman said they ought not to give to the rich man the terms they would not give to the poor man. The poor man never wanted a wharf at all; but if he did, he had only to make a bargain with the Minister for Lands, and he could get a lease for twenty-one years. He would get it on as good terms as the rich man, irrespective of the occupants of office. They did not inquire whether the applicants were poor or rich. They simply inquired what the application was made for—whether it was to encourage industry and enterprise or not. He wanted the hon. member for Cairns to understand that. He distinctly reprobated the assertion that this or any Government, past or present, ever knew the poor man from the rich man.

MR. GIVENS: Yes, they have.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: He had never heard of it.

MR. LESINA: You have been away a long time.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: How many days had he been absent?

MR. LESINA: I don't know.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: He had not been absent from the House as long as the hon. member had. The hon. member was like the hon. member for Rockhampton North, who wished to sit here all the year round on 10s. a day, and get shilling meals in back premises. He (Mr. Macdonald-Paterson) earned his living outside politics.

MR. McDONALD: It is a good thing you do.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: You get your living inside politics.

MR. McDONALD: Address the Chair.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: He was addressing the Chair.

MR. LESINA: If you depended on politics for a living you would starve.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: If the hon. member depended on politics for a living he would pass away like the ticks. He was a fit subject for them, but being immune, through his foreign blood, he could not catch them. The hon. member for Cairns talked of jobbery, but there must be always two parties to jobbery.

THE CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member that I have already called him to order on that point.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: He was very glad the Chairman had done so, as he was just about to finish his remarks. With regard to the newspaper report quoted by the late Minister for Lands, what was the value of it?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: It was public property.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Yes, in Cairns. But the hon. member for Cairns said that the influence of that paper was diminutive.

MR. McDONALD: A circulation of about thirty.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: If it had a circulation through the whole of the North, he had not heard of it—no one in the southern part of Australia had.

THE HOME SECRETARY: It was all in the *Courier*.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: In June, 1898?

THE HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: He had read something in the *Courier*, which said that that paper did not know of it.

MR. FISHER: It had been declared off.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: He had been a careful reader of the *Courier*, the *Charters Towers*, the *Townsville*, and other papers, but he had never heard of it.

MR. LEAHY: It was in the *Northern Miner* of the 29th of last month.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: thought the Ministry should have given the reporters on the metropolitan papers the information that it was contemplated to lease the Barron Falls. Reasonable publicity should have been given to the matter of that lease and to the extraordinary circumstances connected with this important concession.

THE HOME SECRETARY: It was treated as all other special leases are treated.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I wish the hon. member would hold his tongue. I protest against your facility for interrupting.

THE HOME SECRETARY: Address the Chair.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON asked the Chairman to call the hon. member to order. His tongue ran away with his brain.

MR. McDONALD: The Chairman has ruled that interruptions from the table are very disorderly.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: With regard to the lease of the Cairns wharf, the hon. member for Cairns should remember that some business differed from others. Howard Smith and Sons might require a lease for ten years; the Australian United Steam Navigation Company for fifty years; a timber company for fifteen years, and so on, according to requirements. The hon. member should use his business capacity—his big head showed that he had a large brain—and he should see that no hard-and-fast rule could be laid down between the poor and the rich. He had been very sorry to hear that this lease had been granted for forty-eight years, which was a period no living member could see the end of—a period within which every man in Queensland now over twenty-one, would have passed away, or would be incapacitated from taking part in public affairs.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Not so. You can't say that no man will live over seventy, unless all the insurance companies are wrong.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: He meant every parliamentarian.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Why don't you say so?

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Why did the hon. member interrupt in his abrupt and abnormal fashion? The hon. member for Croydon

had given the hon. gentleman, Mr. Dalrymple, an ample and wholesome rebuke for his interruptions. I name him.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I ask your ruling whether the hon. gentleman is not out of order?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. gentleman is out of order in referring to an hon. member by name.

HON. T. MACDONALD - PATERSON: Well, the hon. member for Mackay was one of the greatest transgressors in the way of interjections in the House, and he hoped he would mend his ways before he was much older. He was trying to put him off the track.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: He is completely bushed.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON asked the Chairman to call the hon. member to order.

THE CHAIRMAN: When the hon. member for Brisbane North makes a personal attack upon an hon. member he must expect him to reply.

MR. McDONALD: He started it.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: Had he made a personal attack on any hon. member that evening?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Yes.

MR. LESINA: Certainly not.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: He had animadverted on the unwholesome and unwarrantable interruptions that were becoming a scandal

[10 p.m.] on both sides of the Committee, and particularly on the Ministerial side. If he had risen for nothing else than to say that, he hoped it would be taken into account by the junior members of the Committee, so that they would not follow the example of the hon. member for Mackay and the Home Secretary. In endeavouring to correct the hon. member for Cairns, he had done it in the best of feelings, and he now wished to say that if anything came of the Barron Falls question, he would be found on the side of those who wished to protect them for the general public of Queensland.

MEMBERS of the Opposition: Hear, hear!

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE (*Mackay*): He was gratified to learn that the hon. member was prepared to stand by the falls. He was sorry that the hon. member had considered it necessary not only to lecture him, but a great many other hon. members. The reason the hon. member attacked him was because he said, "Not so" when the hon. member hazarded the statement that in forty-eight years every man of twenty-one in Queensland would have passed away. He really thought it was a kindly act to correct the hon. member on that point. The age of man, according to the Psalmist, was stated to be "three score years and ten"; and knowing a little more, he hoped, about actuarial tables than the hon. member, he wished to let the hon. member know that he was inaccurate, and consequent upon that the hon. member delivered himself of a little reproof. If the hon. member was going to stand by the falls, or to stand under the falls, he would offer no objection whatever. With regard to the charges which had been made against the Secretary for Railways and the Commissioner in connection with the proposed lease of a portion of the water which went over the falls, because water fell from a height to a lower level he did not think that God intended that water not to be interfered with. Any hon. member who held that opinion was in a singular minority, because year by year the use of that force was becoming more general in Europe and America. Even Niagara was being harnessed, and there was every reason to believe that a great change would take place in the commercial system of the world, and that instead of coal they would be

dependent upon water for their force, and instead of the great manufacturing centres being situated in the low countries, they would be situated in the neighbourhood of mountains. That was the trend of modern industrial operations.

MR. McDONALD: No; we have the rise and fall of the tides.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The rise and fall of the tides was one thing; but could any intelligent interrupter imagine that, because they had tides, therefore they would not use the force which was bottled up in any falling water? If the hon. member did not know that, he was not up in the changes which were taking place in the evolution of modern industry. The hon. member for Brisbane North had said a good many things. Amongst others—and he believed the hon. member for Cairns had made the same observation—he had said that the concession was made to a syndicate, and not to a poor man. That seemed a very puerile observation. It would not be a poor man who would offer to buy London. If it was proposed to make use of a great natural force, which required a plant that would cost over £100,000, it was evident that it could not be done by a poor man. If anything was more amazing than another, it was to find hon. members on the other side, who championed labour—who laughed at aestheticism—who did not go in for the "greenery-gallery"—who wanted practicality—it was amazing to discover that those hon. members wanted that great force to be left unused in order that they might benefit the lordly globe-trotter. That position was not taken up by working men in other parts of the world. There that force was being used to lessen man's labour and promote his welfare. If hon. members asserted—as they appeared to do—that no waterfall in Queensland was to be used, it was a very retrograde kind of opinion to entertain. Certain charges had been made against the Government in connection with the method of the transaction. The hon. member for North Brisbane and the hon. member for Cairns appeared to suppose that that particular force should remain unused for all eternity; but there were others who did not take such an extreme view. Their objection was that the falls should not be utilised for the benefit of a syndicate. But it was certain that if it was not utilised by men of means it would not be utilised at all. There were others who took exception to the method of the transaction. Some hon. members said that the lease had been executed secretly. That was entirely in contradiction of the facts. It had been conclusively proved that leading articles had appeared on the subject in the Cairns papers.

MR. BROWNE: Eighteen months ago.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: If a leading article appeared in the *Cairns Argus* eighteen months ago slandering hon. members they would call it publicity. It would be all over the colony.

MR. BROWNE: We call it ancient history.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: When the question was discussed in the district—a discussion in which the then Secretary for Lands took part, in which the mayor of Cairns took part, in which the chairman of the divisional board took part, and when it was discussed in the local papers—if that was to be called a secret transaction, he did not know what would be called a public transaction. Though some hon. members professed to take a deep interest in the Barron Falls, it was a matter that did not affect Brisbane one-hundredth part as much as it affected Cairns, and, if it was brought under public notice in Cairns, and the public men of Cairns were in communication

with the Government on the question, he thought the charge of secrecy fell to the ground. The matter only became of interest to Brisbane when party politicians sought to make political capital out of it.

MR. MAXWELL: There must be some party politicians on the other side.

MR. GLASSEY: When are you going to debate the Estimates?

THE CHAIRMAN: Order!

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The hon. member for Brisbane North said that the hon. member for Cairns had made the same speech no less than seven times on this subject. Probably the hon. member might imagine that to be flattery, but it showed to him that this matter had been before the Chamber days together—

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON: I have heard you make the same speech seventeen times.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: He was glad the hon. member paid so much attention to his speeches as to remember seventeen of them, but was sorry they had not directed the hon. member to a higher degree of intelligence. He would like, now he had been interrupted by the hon. gentleman, to call attention to the fact that this censor of others was willing to do what he was anxious to suppress in other persons. Now, to go on with his remarks which had been interrupted by that disorderly member—

MR. McDONALD: Stonewalling!

THE CHAIRMAN: Order!

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE did not object to interjections, more especially when it came from that adroit scalp-hunter, the hon. member for Flinders. When he was interrupted he was referring to the reiteration of this subject, the real reason for which was the election coming on in Brisbane, and the fact that hon. members opposite desired to forget the dismal fiasco they made of their political position a little while ago, and wanted people to believe something to the detriment of this wicked, incapable, and stupid Government.

MR. LESINA: They believed it in the Warrego on Saturday, and they will believe in it at Enoggera on next Saturday.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: That was because they were so far from Brisbane as not to know the truth of the matter. Coming to the question under consideration, the first charge was that of secrecy.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: We now charge you with stonewalling.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order!

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: He might point out that people had been misled in this connection, probably by the manner in which the charge had been brought, and the emphasis laid upon it; and seeing that the *Cairns Post* had been very much disparaged, as any paper would be if it did not echo the sentiments of hon. members opposite, he would now refer to the *North Queensland Register*.

MR. DAWSON: The *Eagle* is a more respectable paper.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The only two papers for hon. members opposite were the *Worker* and the *Eagle*.

MR. DAWSON: And you read both of them.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE was happy to say he read neither. This was what the *North Queensland Register* said in December, 1899—

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: That was after the lease.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: That did not matter so long as it dealt with the merits of the transaction. The charge of secrecy had been exploded long ago. This was the first time, so far as he knew, that any offer had been made to harness this great natural force.

MR. RYLAND: What about the gas company?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: There was a better gas company in that Chamber than out of it. This was the first substantial offer ever made to utilise a force of the kind in this country; at any rate, he did not know of any other.

MR. FISHER: Read the correspondence.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order!

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: No lease of the kind had ever been proposed before in connection with these falls.

MR. FISHER: There were applications. Read the correspondence.

THE CHAIRMAN: I have repeatedly called hon. members to order for making interjections, and if they are persisted in I shall have to take action under the Standing Order.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The object, of course, was to prevent him saying what he wanted to say. He wished to read the opinion of at least an impartial observer, for the writer claimed that the matter should have been advertised. The answer to that was that, if it had been advertised, he did not know of anyone but the company who could have bought it, or could have utilised it as the company was prepared to do. The *North Queensland Register* said—

So long as the smelting works are placed far enough below the falls, so that the fumes cannot injure the foliage in the gorges and sides on either side of the falls, it would be the worst of bad business to block such a magnificent industry.

The smelting works, however, would be placed at Mareeba, and there would be no fumes at all.

MR. GIVENS: There are no smelting works to be placed at Mareeba.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The article went on to say—

A comprehensive smelting works connected by rail with a district like that behind Cairns, where almost every kind of mineral is found, would be an inestimable boon against which the trumpery lessening of the water over the falls, for two or three months, is not worth considering.

That was exactly the position—

Only those who are raising refractory ores know what a boon the distant Aldershot Smelting Works have been and are to North Queensland, and the big smelting works the Chillagoe Company propose to erect would be worth four hundred or four thousand times the occasional depreciation of the spectacular beauties of the falls.

That was his opinion, and that was why he thought it an extraordinary thing that objection should be taken to the utilising of that source of power, when it would doubtless mean the profitable employment of hundreds if not of thousands of working men.

MR. LESINA: Why not put it up to auction?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: Here was another comment in the article—

Mr. Pagan, it is said, values the right at £42,000 a year; what has it brought in the past? If it were not for the Chillagoe Company we do not believe that the concession would realise 42,000 pence in the next fifty years.

That was undoubtedly true. That was not the only source of such power. He knew of several waterfalls in the colony, and he ventured to say there was more water in the rivers behind the falls on the Herbert River and the huge falls on the Burdekin; but were they utilised?

MR. HIGGS: The public did not know you wanted offers.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE: There were plenty of other places where, if the hon. member could form a company for the purpose, and desired to obtain a riparian right, he could do so. Did hon. members consider it would be a good thing for the Government to advertise that there were various other sources of water-power running to waste in the colony? If they did not, it was because they knew perfectly well that with the

exception of that company there were no other people in the colony who could utilise those powers.

Mr. HARDACRE : The Acetylene Gas Company applied for such a power.

Mr. McDONALD : What are you stonewalling for?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE : He had a perfect right to address the Chair, and he protested against the interjection. It was monotonous. If members on his side, who, by numbers, were entitled to more than half of the time of the House, attempted to take up a fourth of it, the time-grabbers opposite overwhelmed them with charges of stonewalling. If any statement was being made from his side which went some way to controvert the statements based upon audacity made by hon. members opposite, and hurled at his long-suffering side of the House, the charge was instantly made that it was stonewalling. It was because members on the Government side had some mercy upon the reporters, and did not desire to waste all the resources of the colony on *Hansard*, that hon. members opposite were allowed to get some damaging shots home which might have been easily repelled. He declined to cease his remarks because they were inconveniently true for hon. members opposite. He sympathised with them, but he had a duty to perform.

Mr. W. THORN (*Aubigny*) would like to know what the question before the Committee was at the present time? He had thought it was the Railway Estimates, but they were hearing nothing but Chillagoe.

The CHAIRMAN : The hon. member has no right to rise and interrupt an hon. member unless he rises to a point of order.

Mr. W. THORN : He had risen to a point of order. He wanted to know the question before the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN : That is not a point of order.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE : He was dealing with a matter which had been brought up on the Estimates. The article to which he had been referring closed in this way—

Apart from the method of leasing, however, the scheme has our strongest support, because, though the country receives £1,000 per annum in rent, the works will be worth fifty or 100 times that amount to the colony.

There was a testimony from an authority that was, at any rate, unbiased.

Mr. TURLEY : It is only the opinion of one person.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE : That was all—and of those whom the paper represented.

Mr. HIGGS : It is a Star Chamber lease, at any rate.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE : The usual practice in regard to leases had been followed by the Lands Department in this matter. With regard to the Railway Department, apparently there was no precedent for a lease [10.30 p.m.] of that kind; no demand had ever existed before, and what was said in that leading article was quite true—namely, that if the Chillagoe Company had not made an offer there was nobody else who would have utilised the power at all.

Mr. W. HAMILTON : Yes, the Acetylene Gas Company made application.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE : That interjection was apparently made in ignorance of the fact that the arrangements were made with the knowledge of those people, who would have liked to have used those falls if they had the necessary capital, but who had not the necessary capital, and who, when they discovered the

amount of funds it would take to utilise the falls, were quite satisfied with the arrangements made with the company.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER : Is that a fact?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE : Of course it was a fact. The Home Secretary, who was at that time Secretary for Lands, was then endeavouring to deal with that particular difficulty.

Mr. FISHER : Why don't you place the correspondence on the table?

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE : It was public property. The matter had been before the House, and that statement had been made repeatedly. He had heard the Home Secretary state in the House that the Cairns municipality had thought of using the power to generate electricity, and that when they found the costliness of the undertaking they were satisfied with this arrangement, and anticipated that they would be able to utilise a portion of the power which the Chillagoe Company would generate for that purpose, if they so desired. With regard to the question of advertising such a lease in all the papers of the colony, or in a large number of them, that had never been done before, and there was no special reason why the department should do that in the present case; but if the Government had advertised that they were prepared to lease this water-power it was not likely that the result would have been different. It would have been like advertising something which would cost £10,000,000 to buy where there was only one person who had £10,000,000. That person would buy it. The lease of that water, which at present went to waste, would be a very good thing for the colony; it would be a good thing for Cairns, as it would assist to establish a gigantic manufacture, and would assist all the people in the back country who had ores to be treated. It was impossible to promote the growth of a huge industry there without bringing about the same beneficial results to the colony as were brought about in other parts of the world where those particular powers were utilised. There was no place in the world where they were so much utilised as in the United States and in Canada. There the water-power was made a profitable use of, and it was due to that, in some cases at any rate, that the American supremacy in manufacture bade fair to be established.

Mr. HIGGS : We thought you objected to American institutions.

HON. D. H. DALRYMPLE : Hon. members on that side thought a great many things for which there was no earthly ground, except their own vivid imaginations. The hon. member who had just spoken said that no water should be taken from the Barron Falls. That opinion was against the opinion of men in the rest of the civilised world. Why should they lock up a power of that sort for the benefit of an occasional tourist? It was unreasonable that they should injure Queensland and its industries in order that they might give some sentimental benefit to a few persons who visited the falls. But it had been conclusively shown that the falls would not be seriously affected by granting the proposed concession, as for the greater part of the year there would be no practical difference in the quantity of water that would pass over the falls. In the dry season there might be a little less water than there was now, but the difference would not be very great. He had been there in the dry season, and he knew anyone who made the journey there to view the falls at that season would make his journey without any justification. The falls were a spectacle of great beauty when the flow of water was considerable, but in the dry season it was a mere ribbon on a brown

wall, and, as he had said, the flow of water in the dry season would not be very much smaller than it was at present. He believed that the benefits to be derived from utilising that force would be a great deal more than the colony was likely to receive from an occasional globe-trotter.

Mr. FISHER (*Gympie*): The hon. gentleman stated that it was publicly known that other companies had made application for the lease of the falls.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: No; that they had not done so, and that if the land had not been let to the Chillagoe Company it would not have been let to anybody.

Mr. FISHER: If the hon. gentleman had read the correspondence, he would have found that on the 31st of July, 1899, the Acetylene Gas Company of Australasia wrote as follows to the Secretary for Lands:—

DEAR SIR,—We are about to erect works for the manufacture of carbide of calcium, and require a large water-power to run the machinery. You will see by the printed matter enclosed under separate cover that this is necessary for the economical production of carbide of calcium. The Barron Falls have been mentioned to us as a suitable site, and we should be greatly obliged if you could favour us with some information about them.

We want to know something about the volume of water passing, distance of the falls from a port, and means of transport; quality of the limestone in the district, and whether there is any coal to be got near hand.

Thanking you in anticipation, we remain,
On that the Minister made the following minute—

The use of the Barron water-power is now being dealt with by the Railway Department in connection with the offer of the Chillagoe Company. Inquire Railways what arrangements have been made.—D. H. D., 11-10-99.

The reply sent by the Under Secretary for Lands to the Acetylene Company was as follows:—

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 31st ultimo, and to state that the subject referred to therein will be dealt with as early as possible.

The Minister did not state that any other company was negotiating for the concession.

Mr. STORY: Yes; look at the letter of the 29th of September.

Mr. FISHER: That was a memorandum from the Under Secretary for Lands, but on another page it was shown that the Railway Department was dealing with the matter. The lease was granted and signed on the 5th October. It was practically decided that the privilege should be given to the Chillagoe Company, and yet in September the following letter was sent to the Acetylene Gas Company:—

Referring to your letter dated 31st July last, requesting to be supplied with information concerning the Barron Falls as a possible sight for the erection of works for the manufacture of carbide of calcium, I have the honour to inform you that, pending the result of certain negotiations now in progress, the department is not in a position to offer your company any privileges at the Barron Falls.

The Government were not in a position to inquire into the other offer, because they had really dealt finally with the Chillagoe Company. He supposed all Ministers were in possession of that fact. He understood the Secretary for Railways to say that the Home Secretary knew all about it.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: The public knew of it, because the Cairns papers discussed it.

Mr. FISHER: On a previous occasion, when the matter was discussed, he asked whether an application from another company had been made, and the reply of the Secretary for Railways was "No."

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There was no offer from the other company.

Mr. FISHER: The other company had applied for information, and the reply was that negotiations were going on with the Chillagoe Company, but the Under Secretary took very good care in replying to reply to the Acetylene Company in a formal manner, not intimating the fact to them, and they had to wait for a proper reply from 31st July until 29th September. The junior member for Mackay made a great point, as he thought, of the circumstance that Mr. Pagan was not fully acquainted with the facts.

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I gave the *North Queensland Register's* opinion on the matter.

Mr. FISHER: Did the hon. gentleman not discount the engineer's opinion?

Hon. D. H. DALRYMPLE: I thought it preposterous myself.

Mr. FISHER: He wished to ask one thing now that the Commissioner was present, and that was whether Mr. Pagan's letter was placed before the Cabinet, as there was a memo. on it "Hold over." The country should know that. He contended that the correspondence when published should have been published with the memos. upon it, just in the same way that Sir Horace Tozer in 1894, when certain documents were challenged, published the whole of them with every memo. attached. He asked whether the matter went before the Minister and Cabinet in that way, or whether it was held over altogether? Another thing he should like to know was the reason for employing outside engineers instead of the engineers of the department.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That has been replied to over and over again.

Mr. FISHER: Not once had that question been answered. He desired to know whether Mr. Pagan's letter went first before the Minister and then before the Cabinet, and also why there were no initials of Ministers published with the correspondence?

Mr. BELL: Do let us get on with some other business.

Mr. FISHER: What he wished to know was why, that being such a big thing, the Minister did not send up one of the best engineers in the service to make a report on the matter? It was shameful the way the Government treated the report of one of their officers. It really seemed as if, when an honourable and capable public servant submitted a report which did not suit their views, they denounced him and said his report was not reliable. The Government was becoming humiliated, and no independent professional man would care to work long under them. If Mr. Pagan's estimate was wrong, it was their duty to have sent up another capable engineer to check his facts and figures. As a matter of fact Mr. Pagan was a most capable man, and his experience in mountainous countries like Mexico and South America, eminently qualified him to form a sound judgment on the matter.

Mr. BELL protested against the saturnalia of verbosity on the part of hon. members opposite. The discussion was quite out of order. The question had been discussed at great length on a motion for adjournment, and again on the motion for the second reading of the Bill for prolonging the tenure of office of the Commissioner for Railways, and now they were having it all over again in Committee of Supply. After the decision of the Crown Law Officers that the lease was illegal the matter was dead; and if the Opposition wished to review the administration of the Railway Department with regard to that lease they should bring forward a distinct motion condemning it, and not take up the whole of the time

and prevent other hon. members from ventilating real grievances. He had sat there since 3 o'clock waiting to mention a matter which would not take more than five or ten minutes to settle, and the hon. member for Aubigny, whose constituents were vitally interested in railways, had been waiting for hours with a similar object in view; and yet they were compelled to submit to listen to the long speeches of a number of members whose sole object, in his opinion, in debating the matter at such great length was electioneering pure and simple. He would ask the Secretary for Railways why it was that the return he moved for, and which the House agreed to, on the 12th October last, asking for a statement of the receipts and earnings per mile on the section of railway from Gowrie Junction to Roma, and from Gowrie Junction to Warwick, had not been tabled?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The return the hon. member asked for—extending over twelve months—would be a very voluminous one, involving a great amount of labour. He had asked the hon. member if he would be content with the returns for three months. If he would he would try to get the returns tabled to-morrow or the following day.

MR. BELL regretted the returns were not circulated, because that was perhaps the only opportunity he would have of referring to them. His object in calling for them was to show—

At two minutes to 11 o'clock,

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

Quorum formed.

MR. BELL: He regretted that the return had not been tabled, because there would be no other opportunity for him to discuss the

[11 p.m.] matter he wished to refer to. What

he wanted to bring to the notice of the Committee was—what he believed the return would have clearly demonstrated—that, for some reason or other, the line which ran west from Gowrie Junction was infinitely less well served with railway conveniences than the line which ran through Warwick and thence to the border. Although it was not a pleasant assertion to make, he had some reason to believe that political influence played a large part in the superior conveniences which residents between Warwick and Wallangarra enjoyed over those who lived on the Western line. He believed, in other words, that if Warwick had not enjoyed as its representative the prominent politician who represented it lately, and the prominent politician who now represented it, it would be less well served than it was to-day. If the hon. member would investigate the matter, he would find nothing to justify the comparative inconveniences which residents along the Western line enjoyed as compared with those on the Southern line. He found, from the returns which were embodied in table II. of the Railway Commissioner's Report, that the section of railway from Gowrie Junction to Cunnamulla gave a net return on capital of £2 15s. 10d., while the line from Gowrie Junction to Wallangarra gave a return of 16s. 7d. On that return there was no justification for the superior time-table which inhabitants along the Southern line enjoyed. The sole reason, in his opinion, that the South-western line had enjoyed better conveniences than the Western line was to be found in the superior political advantages that that district had of late years enjoyed in regard to representation in that Chamber. If there was any other explanation he should be very glad to hear it. About four or five months ago a deputation, consisting of about four or five members of Parliament, waited on the Secretary for Railways with regard to the matter, and that gentleman promised to go into it and give a reply. He

should be sorry to say that the hon. gentleman did not go into it; at any rate, the deputation never received a reply, and the time-table continued as it was without any alteration. One or two hon. members made further representations to the hon. gentleman, and, after a time, they were assured there was no real cause for the agitation. The agitation was continued, and at length they were told that the reason better facilities were not given to residents on the Western line was dearth of locomotives. He believed that was the position of the matter at present. They were also assured that when additional locomotives arrived they would have a better train service on the Western line than they had at present. It had taken a considerable time to elicit that information from the representatives of the Railway Department; but he was glad they had got so far on. If there was a dearth of locomotives why was it that residents along the line from Dalby to Roma should be made to suffer, and that residents along the Southern line have the benefit of the poverty of the Railway Department? He did not know where the justification could be found. He could not find it in the tables, nor did he expect he should find it in the more detailed information which the hon. gentleman said he hoped to be able to give to-morrow, and which he should have been able to give to-day, seeing that the House asked for it as far back as the 12th of October. As far as his information went, it seemed to him that the superior advantages which the Southern line had enjoyed were due to the superior political advantages that that portion of the country had enjoyed of recent years.

MR. FISHER: That is a charge against the Commissioner.

MR. BELL: He did not know who to charge it against. He did not desire to say anything unpleasant about the Commissioner, or the Traffic Manager, or anyone else. He recognised their merits, and, on the whole, what the department did; but what little investigation he had made had not afforded him any information of a satisfactory character. His quarrel in this matter was entirely with the Minister; the deputations went to him, and all the representations he (Mr. Bell) had made had gone through him. It was not a good practice, although it was frequently done, to repeat rumours that came to one's ears; but he had heard a rumour that a train to Warwick which was put on very largely through the influence of a gentleman who had passed away was found to be most unremunerative, and was, by the direction of the Commissioner, abolished. Yet owing to some of the magic there must be in the present political influence of the town of Warwick, or those who represented it, it began to run again, and still ran in all its naked emptiness. Nothing which had ever fallen from the Minister had distinctly explained the state of things which existed. The assurance that when the department obtained more locomotives something would be done in the matter was only a slight explanation. It was unjust that people along the better paying line should be made to suffer the inconveniences they did. He found the hon. member for Cunningham had got a motion passed asking for the earnings per train mile and other particulars of the traffic between Gowrie Junction and Dalby, and although he did not wish to make any unfair accusation against the Secretary for Railways, he was under the impression that that motion had been put on the paper at the instigation of the hon. gentleman.

HON. A. MORGAN: No; at my instigation.

MR. BELL: He regretted that it had been moved at the instigation of the hon. member for Warwick or any other man. It instituted a

parallel which was absolutely fallacious. What he was contending for was a better train service, not merely between Toowoomba and Dalby, but between Toowoomba and Roma; and to lead a red herring across the track by asking for that return was nothing more than a blind. There was nothing in the returns of the department which justified the inferiority of the train service between Gowrie Junction and Roma, and the sooner the hon. member brought that state of things to an end, the better it would be for his reputation as the railway administrator.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS admitted that the hon. member for Dalby had headed a deputation to him on the matter some months ago, and had complained about the train service mentioned—that the service from Gowrie Junction to Dalby was inferior to that between Gowrie Junction and Wallangarra. He had promised to make inquiries into the matter, and he had done so. He found that the only way in which he could accede to the request of the hon. gentleman was by putting on an additional train, which would mean a very considerable sum of money in the course of a year. The matter had been left in abeyance until quite recently, when he had an opportunity of again looking into the matter, and he had ascertained that with a little addition to the rolling-stock the department would, they hoped, be able to meet the requirements of the hon. gentleman in the very near future. He admitted that, judging from the returns, the line from Gowrie Junction to Roma paid very much better than the line from Gowrie Junction to Wallangarra. He assured the hon. gentleman that as soon as the additional rolling-stock was procured, the department would endeavour to provide the better train service he desired.

Hon. A. MORGAN: Providing for one at the expense of the other.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It would not interfere with the other service.

Hon. A. MORGAN: The hon. member for Dalby had gone out of his way to make unfair comparisons.

Mr. BELL: He did not know whether that intimation was intended for him or not.

Hon. A. MORGAN: It was.

Mr. BELL: Then the hon. gentleman should make his interjections so that they could be heard without any suspicion of being *sotto voce*. It was impossible for him to draw attention to the inequalities and inequities in the time-table for the Western line without instituting comparisons with the Southern line; and he repeated the comparison. That was the only effective way in which he could call attention to the inconveniences which were experienced on the line from Gowrie Junction to Roma, which had existed for a number of years; and he protested against the inferiority of that train service. He said deliberately, and he would say so on any platform in the colony, that it was owing to the political influence of the late Premier—the Hon. T. J. Byrnes—that Warwick enjoyed the present comfortable time-table that it did. That was the general feeling amongst people who travelled on the Western line. He did not make the statement to disparage the late Hon. T. J. Byrnes, for whom he had the greatest respect.

Mr. DAWSON: It looks like it.

Mr. BELL: If he had the same influence he would undoubtedly endeavour to secure the most elaborate and comfortable time-table for his constituents that it would be possible to get. There was nothing in the returns of the department, or in the administrative necessities of the department, to justify the Western line being

placed in an inferior position to the Southern line. He was glad to hear the Minister announce that reparation would be made in that respect shortly.

Mr. FISHER: The hon. member for Dalby had politely made one of the grossest charges against the Commissioner that had ever been made in the House, and he grossly accused a late illustrious member of the House of getting an unnecessary train to his own electorate. The hon. member said he did it with the utmost respect, but he (Mr. Fisher) would rather lose his temper in making such a charge and use strong language in a less guarded way, even if he had to withdraw it afterwards. The whole tenor of the hon. gentleman's speech was that members representing the Cunningham side of the Downs had more influence and power at headquarters, and therefore got a better train service than he could. It was a most serious charge to lay at the door of the Commissioner. It almost amounted to a charge of corruption—that he was benefiting himself in some way.

Mr. BELL: That is an unfair suggestion.

Mr. FISHER: If that was not so, he would withdraw that remark. The only argument the hon. gentleman had used was that the Warwick and Cunningham representatives had more political power than he had, and for that reason they obtained a better train service, which he said was not as warrantable as the better service he asked for. He repeated that about four times, and if that was so, the charge should be met by the Minister for Railways in order to protect the Commissioner, and if he did not meet it, the sooner he vacated his office the better.

Mr. BELL: Nothing that he had said warranted the hon. member talking of corruption. If he thought the Commissioner or any officer in his department was guilty of corruption, he would not wait till the Estimates came on, but he would at once table a definite motion on the subject. He had said nothing that reflected on the honour of the Commissioner or the Railway Department. The hon. member, he supposed, was fully aware that in every country in the world there was such a thing as political influence—whether conscious or unconscious—and if the hon. member said he did not know that, he would go as near as the forms of the Committee would permit to say that he did not believe the hon. member. He repeated that he believed the superiority of the Warwick time-table was due to political influence, and in saying that he was saying nothing which reflected on the honour of the Commissioner. If he was able to bring the same influence to bear, he would endeavour to bring about a similar superiority for his part of the country. He certainly did not want a lecture, even from the ex-Secretary for Railways, upon a matter of that kind. When he had a charge to make, he would make it straight enough.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*) asked how the hon. member for Dalby could say that political influence had been exercised without at the same time implying, directly or indirectly, that the Commissioner had been influenced? He understood the hon. member to say that influence had been exercised, and that the party upon whom it had been exercised had acquiesced in that influence.

Mr. DAWSON (*Charters Towers*) thought they ought to know from the hon. member for Dalby, whom he accused of exercising political influence and whom he accused of submitting to the exercise of that political influence. When a gross charge of that nature was made, the hon. member should mention the names of those whom he accused.

Mr. BELL: He had no intention of responding to the invitation of the leader of the Opposition. It seemed a most extraordinary thing that the leader of a party whose chief stock-in-trade was bringing charges against public officers and against members sitting on the Government side, and whose chief hope of getting on to the Treasury benches was by making accusations—it was almost amusing that the leader of that party should attempt to lecture him for making the assertions he had. He advised the hon. member—though he was not likely to accept any suggestion from him—that the sooner he took the beam out of his own eye the better.

Mr. DAWSON: He had not attempted to lecture the hon. member. He had simply asked for information, and if there was any truth at all in the hon. member's statement he was prepared to assist him in getting matters remedied. If the hon. member was not prepared to substantiate his charge he had no right to make it.

Mr. STORY (*Balonne*): He represented the terminus which was the most distant from the starting point of any line in Queensland, if not in Australia; and he wished to call the attention of the Secretary for Railways to the necessity for providing more comfort in travelling those long journeys. He was quite aware that all that sort of thing could not be done at once, and they were quite willing to wait their turn; but a journey of thirty hours, without lavatory carriages, and without a plentiful supply of water in the hot weather which they had to endure out West, was a very great trial. He trusted the hon. gentleman would make what improvements he could in that direction as soon as possible.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He had already stated that the department was fully alive to the requirements of the different lines of the colony. They were doing all they could to improve and increase their rolling-stock, and he hoped that at an early date the travelling accommodation would be very much better than it was now.

Mr. FISHER: What about the Warwick and Dalby business?

Mr. DAWSON: We want to know something about that—a gross charge has been made.

Mr. BRIDGES (*Nundah*): It appeared that the Commissioner was something like their wives. It was said that a man could abuse his wife as much as he liked, but if anyone else stepped in there was trouble. If he had started to abuse the Commissioner earlier in the evening very likely hon. members opposite would have defended him, and they would have been able to get home early.

Mr. FISHER: You have got seventeen trains daily down your way.

Mr. BRIDGES: If there was any political influence, it was not down his way. The hon. member might be able to work the Commissioner, but he had never been able to do so. For the last month they had been listening to abuse of the Commissioner; and to-night, when a member on the Government side hinted that there was some political influence brought to bear on the Commissioner, the other side was up in arms. He was not going to complain of the Commissioner, although he never gave his district anything. It was the duty of the Commissioner to protect the public purse, and he was glad the Commissioner had backbone enough to say "No" when he was asked for what was unreasonable. He, with others, had tried to get the Commissioner to reinstate the men under him, and he was glad to see that every man had been reinstated, but it had

not lessened the abuse of the Commissioner.

Instead of hon. members trying to [11 30 p.m.] plunder the Treasury, they ought to try and protect the Treasury. His trouble was that there were so many people outside anxious to get into the railway service, because they said there was better pay to be got there than outside, and they thought he had some influence in the matter; but if they knew how little he had they probably would not go to him. As far as the discussion on this vote was concerned, he thought hon. members might as well, instead of addressing the Chairman, begin with "Fellow Electors," the same as they did on the stump, and proceed on those lines. With regard to the Railway Department, he thought they should give the Minister and the Commissioner credit for what they had done. There was not one man who had suffered from retrenchment since 1893 that had not been reinstated, and he gave credit to the Minister and the Commissioner for having fulfilled the promise made in regard to this matter.

Mr. DAWSON: He would like hon. members not to cloud the issue raised by the hon. member for Dalby—one of the most prominent and influential private members of the Chamber. That hon. member had made a serious charge against the Railway Commissioner—or some of the prominent officials under him—with regard to political influence being brought to bear upon the railway authorities to specially favour Warwick in its time-table; and the hon. gentleman said that this political influence was first exercised by the late Hon. T. J. Byrnes, and was still being carried on. As a friend of the late Hon. T. J. Byrnes, he repudiated anything of the kind, and he thought it was only reasonable that the Committee should know what member of the Railway Department was accused of being subject to this political influence. If there was any truth in the statement made by the hon. gentleman it should be stated definitely, so that those who were accused might have an opportunity of replying in their own defence. Why had not the Minister in charge of the department thought fit to reply to this serious charge? He thought the Committee were entitled to a reply from the hon. gentleman.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Did the leader of the Labour Opposition think he was responsible for the views expressed by the hon. member for Dalby?

Mr. DAWSON: You can say whether they are true or not.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Was it his business to ask the hon. member whether what he had said was true or not? The hon. gentleman had brought certain complaints before him, not only to-night, but frequently before, about the want of sufficient travelling accommodation to the Western district.

Mr. BELL: Sufficient trains.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member had alleged certain reasons why the line to Warwick had got better railway facilities than the line to Roma. Was it any part of his duty to insist upon an explanation from the hon. gentleman? He was not in a position to question the hon. member as to the reasons he had for arriving at his conclusions. He was endeavouring as far as he possibly could to supply the wants the hon. member had brought under his notice, and he hoped to be able to do so.

Mr. DAWSON: The hon. member for Dalby made the charge that the Warwick district had been specially favoured by the Railway Department in regard to its time-table—not lavatory carriages and that kind of thing—but that there

had been a time-table specially compiled for the benefit of Warwick to the disadvantage of stations beyond Warwick.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Am I in any way responsible?

MR. DAWSON: He had asked the hon. member for Dalby if he would specifically state the name of the man whom he accused of being subject to this political influence. Apparently he was not willing to do so; but it was the duty of the hon. gentleman in charge of the department to say yea or nay, whether that accusation was true or not.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He was in no better position than the leader of the Opposition to judge whether the charges made by the hon. member for Dalby were true or not. He had no power or authority to force an explanation from the hon. member for Dalby; nor did he intend to attempt to exercise any such power. It was a matter entirely resting with the hon. member for Dalby, whether he thought it necessary or incumbent upon him to fall down upon his knees and enter into a lucid explanation of what his views were upon the question, to the leader of the Opposition. That was a matter entirely for the hon. member for Dalby and his own position in the House.

MR. BRIDGES and **MR. DAWSON** having risen together and addressed the Chairman, and the **CHAIRMAN** having called **MR. BRIDGES**—

MR. DAWSON thought he might be allowed to continue his remarks on the question. He thought he was entitled to some consideration from the Chairman in the matter.

THE CHAIRMAN: I must explain my position. The member who rises and addresses me first, I call upon that member.

MR. DAWSON: A very grave accusation had been made against one of the principal departments of the colony.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: These accusations have been made the whole evening.

MR. DAWSON: That accusation had not been made the whole evening. It was not a question between the hon. member for Dalby and himself, but what he wanted to know from the Secretary for Railways was, whether the accusation made by the hon. member for Dalby against the department was a true or a false one? The hon. gentleman said he did not know. But the hon. gentleman had his Railway Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner in the Government lobby, and could easily ask them whether the accusation was true or false, and he could then inform the members of the Committee. When a Minister could not himself answer a question asked on the Estimates, it was the usual practice for him to ask the officers he had in attendance in the lobby for the information required, and then give it to the Committee. That was only ordinary courtesy to hon. members asking the questions, and he now asked the hon. gentleman in charge of the Railway Estimates to go and ask his officials in the lobby whether the accusation that Warwick was specially favoured in its time-table was true or false?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS had no necessity to ask the officers of the department whether the accusation was true or false. He had been in office now for close upon two years, and he had never found any evidence whatever in the office of any corruption of the description mentioned by the hon. member.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. DAWSON: We have got it at last.

HON. A. MORGAN (Warwick): He was sorry to rise to take any part in the discussion, but under the circumstances he hoped the Committee would excuse him if he said a few words.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. A. MORGAN: He very much regretted that the hon. member for Dalby, in advocating the claims of the Western line to a better train service than it now enjoyed, should have felt called upon to institute comparisons between that line and the Southern line which were not justified by the facts. For himself, if he could in any way help the hon. member to get for the Western line the full measure of justice in the matter of trains to which the hon. member thought it was entitled, he should be glad to do so. But he did not think it at all necessary that, to help his case, the hon. member should have made an attack upon the Minister and the officials of the department in connection with the train service on the Southern line. There had been a statement made that the train service on the Southern line was good beyond the requirements of the traffic, and that it was so because up till a year or so ago the electorate of Warwick had been represented by a late lamented Premier, the Hon. T. J. Byrnes.

MR. BELL: And also that it is still influentially represented.

HON. A. MORGAN: The hon. member went on to say that the most favoured condition of things which had existed during the time the late Mr. Byrnes represented Warwick—and which the hon. member attributed to undue political influence—had continued since, and was still due to a similar cause. The Committee was justified in asking by whom the political influence had been exercised, and upon whom it had been exercised. He had represented Warwick since the late Mr. Byrnes's death, and he could tell the hon. member for Dalby, in all sincerity, that no undue influence had been exerted by him to get a train service for the Southern line greater than the requirements of the traffic justified.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. A. MORGAN: The hon. member, in instituting his comparison, forgot—or did not find it discreet to mention—that the Southern line was part of the intercolonial line, while the Western was purely a Queensland line; and that upon the Southern line the intercolonial trains ran, not for the convenience of the districts on either side of the border, but for the benefit and convenience of the colonies generally. Warwick derived the advantage of the through train service. It should also be remembered that there was a denser population on the Southern than on the Western line. Reference had been made specially to one train on the Southern line which the hon. member said had been taken off and restored through the political influence exercised upon the Minister and officials of the department. But it had been found necessary to run a second through train from Brisbane to Warwick, in order to make the service on the Southern line south of Toowoomba anything like a decent service at all. The hon. member for Dalby laughed doubtfully?

MR. BELL: I should think I did.

HON. A. MORGAN: That proved that the hon. member was unaware of the facts of the case. It was necessary to put on that extra train because without it it had been possible to get to Sydney from Warwick and back in the same time as the journey between Warwick and Brisbane involved. That was a condition of things which should not have been allowed to exist; and until the extra train from Brisbane to Warwick was put on, the communication between Brisbane and Warwick involved three days in order to get a reply to business correspondence. It was not surprising that the people of Warwick continued their complaints against that injustice until it had been redressed. Having got redress, he, as their representative, had continued to defend that train as justified,

not only in the interest of Warwick but also in the interest of the whole of the southern Downs, and he should continue doing so.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. A. MORGAN: He could assure the hon. member that he had exercised no political influence on the Commissioner or the Minister. He had no political influence to exercise. He had stated the case in what he conceived to be its full and fair light; and all he could say was that the Commissioner listened to his arguments, and, having seen the force of them, had granted the request made to him. The Commissioner was there to listen to the recommendations from different districts, to weigh their merits and demerits, and to act accordingly. Did anybody suppose that Mr. Gray would at his (Mr. Morgan's) instance run a train the whole length of the distance from Brisbane to Warwick merely to oblige him? What had the Commissioner to gain from him? A reflection had been cast upon the Commissioner and his office which was not justified. The hon. member also went out of his way to cast a reflection on the Minister. He said that some time ago he called for a return of certain earnings, costs, and percentages in respect of the railway from Gowrie Junction to Warwick, and that, singular to relate, a few days subsequently a motion in all respects similar, save that it related to the section of railway from Gowrie Junction to Dalby, was given notice of by the hon. member for Cunningham, and he suggested that that motion was prompted by the Secretary for Railways. Now, the motion of which the hon. member for Cunningham gave notice was drafted and prompted by him (Mr. Morgan); and he asked the hon. member for Cunningham to move it, since he could not do it, and he did that in order to checkmate the move of the hon. member for Dalby. He wanted the information in respect of the two sections of railway to be put side by side when it came to be made use of. As to the other matter to which he had already referred, he had not endeavoured unduly to influence the Commissioner, the Minister, or anybody in connection with the Railway Department in reference to the train service to Warwick, and he thought that those hon. members who knew Mr. Gray would agree with him that, if he had attempted to do so, he would have failed, and rightly failed.

MR. BELL: He felt much more ready to respond to the speech they had just listened to from the hon. member for Warwick than he did to the rather stand-and-deliver utterance of the leader of the Opposition.

MR. DAWSON: You have no right to make charges unless you can prove them.

MR. BELL: However much he might respect the hon. member for Charters Towers in other matters, he was not going to look up to him as an idol in parliamentary conduct and amenities. He had heard the hon. member, and some of those sitting with him, make charges as unfounded, probably, as had ever been made in any House of Parliament, without the slightest attempt to prove them in anything like a legal way; and yet when he brought forward a grievance the hon. member asked for the very refinement of proof. The hon. member for Warwick was rather demoralised by the luxuries he had been enjoying; he had become a kind of travelling Sybarite, and talked about Warwick not having a decent railway service. So the hon. gentleman went, and very properly went, to the Railway Department, and protested. Why, Warwick in the darkest days of its railway time-table was doubly better served than Dalby and the Western line beyond were. At the present moment, when the hon. gentleman wished to return to the bosom of his constituency, he

could leave by a train at half-past 7 in the morning, or by a train in the middle of the day, or by a train in the afternoon.

HON. A. MORGAN: No.

MR. BELL: He was under the impression that there were about four trains during the day by which the hon. gentleman could proceed to the town of Warwick.

HON. A. MORGAN: You are quite wrong.

MR. BELL: Probably the hon. gentleman did not count goods trains. He (Mr. Bell) was only too delighted when he could get a goods train to travel back to his constituency. At any rate to the electorate of Warwick there were at least two trains a day, and if they included goods trains there were three or four trains by which a person could travel from Brisbane to Warwick.

HON. A. MORGAN: No.

MR. BELL: On the Western line there were only two trains a day. A considerable portion of the traffic to Dalby and beyond went by a train which left Toowoomba at 6 o'clock in the morning, and which proceeded at an exceedingly low speed, and passengers travelling by it did so at their own risk. He said deliberately that the reason Warwick enjoyed a better time-table than Dalby and Roma was that it had more influential men as its representatives. In saying that he did not suggest that there had been any improper interference on the part of the representative of Warwick, either now or in the past, nor was he, in the slightest degree, disposed to reproach the Railway Commissioner, or the Minister, or the authorities in the department. It was human nature to be amenable to such influence, and if there were men on the benches opposite who held up their hands in holy horror at such a statement and said they did not believe it, then all he could say was that they were merely acting—if that was their attitude. All those hon. members who had long lines of railway in their electorates knew perfectly well the procedure that took place. The inhabitants agitated for an improved railway service; the agitation was constant and incessant; the representative of the district went to the Railway Department and stated his case, and an improved service was granted. But in the very nature of the case the probability of its being granted was increased if the man who made the representation was a man of importance in the political world. In making that charge he was not casting any undue reflection on the Railway Department. If he thought there was anything undue in their conduct that warranted severe censure, he should take another course in bringing it before the House. It was only on those grounds that he could find

any explanation of the undoubted [12 p.m.] extra convenience which Warwick enjoyed. The hon. member had talked about the train which left Brisbane at midday. That train was put on, no doubt, owing to the pressure of the inhabitants of Warwick. It was subsequently stopped, and it was owing to a recurrence of pressure from the inhabitants of Warwick that it was put on again. It presented, for the most part, a beggarly array of empty carriages, and in the ledger books of the department he ventured to say no justification would be found for its continuance. On the other hand the Western train was a paying train; yet despite its extra profitableness that line was, in comparison with the Warwick line, starved and ill-treated. They were told by the railway authorities that one reason for the unsatisfactory condition of things on the Western line was an insufficiency of locomotives. He admitted at once that that was a good explanation, but it was not a sufficient explanation of the prolonged neglect which the Western line suffered, because the better paying

lines should be the better served. The hon. member stated that it was he who instigated the hon. member for Cunningham to ask for that return. The suggestion was a distinct evidence of the hon. member's sagacity, but it had no bearing on the point he wished to prove. He was contending for a better service to Roma, and not merely to Dalby. The hon. gentleman picked out a small section of the line and asked for a return concerning that, but he had no doubt, as compared with Warwick, Dalby would not show a good return, yet taking the whole of the Western line all the way to Roma he would challenge comparison with Warwick. He was glad to have had the intimation which had been given by the Secretary for Railways.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. A. Rutledge, *Maranoa*): He could not say that he was entirely satisfied on behalf of his constituents with the amount of railway communication with Roma, and he had done what he could to induce the Commissioner to afford a better service, but he had not yet been able to secure for his constituents the advantages of increased communication. He was very sorry the hon. member for Dalby had referred to the question of influence being brought to bear on the Commissioner, and he regretted his deduction that there was no influential representation of the Western district. He took that as a very poor compliment. He thought he was not altogether without political influence, but he had never yet expected to be able by reason of the occupancy of his high office to induce the Commissioner to do what he thought, in the best interests of the country, he ought not to do. He intended, however, to keep on pegging away, and in the end he hoped to succeed. But he could not agree with the hon. member that there was a possibility, by reason of the nature of the representation of a constituency, of inducing the Commissioner to do what his own judgment told him he ought not to do. He regretted that the hon. member was betrayed into making that accusation against the Commissioner; and in defending that gentleman he did not desire to express any dissent from what the hon. member said as to the insufficiency of the service to the Western district. He was prepared to go on trying for a better service, and hoped eventually to succeed.

Mr. HARDACRE: The righteous soul of the hon. member for Dalby waxed indignant at the luxurious accommodation provided for Warwick as against Dalby. Why, his (Mr. Hardacre's) mouth watered at the sumptuous repast of two trains a day.

Mr. BELL: It had been pointed out to him that he had made a verbal slip in referring to two trains a day to Dalby. He meant two trains a week, which started in the morning. For the rest, passengers could travel on two other days in the week, which landed them on the Darling Downs, beyond Toowoomba, and up to Miles and Yeulba in the dead of night. On the other days of the week the method of getting beyond Toowoomba was so tedious and tortuous that he could not venture to explain it to hon. members.

Mr. HARDACRE could assure the hon. member that the trains that ran to Emerald landed passengers in the middle of the night, a circumstance which was to be very much regretted, as Emerald was one of the most pleasant localities on the Central line. He had another grievance with regard to the Western train service. The mail train started from Brisbane on Friday night for Gladstone, and was met there by the "Barcoo" going to Townsville, where she arrived on Monday morning; yet travellers going to Emerald, which was 500 miles nearer, did not reach their destination till

Tuesday morning. That was a grievance which concerned the whole of the Central district, and one which badly wanted rectifying. Another grievance was the second-class accommodation on the Central Railway, which had been complained of over and over again. What he called the "grid" seats—a sort of wooden lattice-work—were horrible to travel on, and yet persons had to sit on them for thirty-one hours in a journey of 400 or 500 miles. He would suggest that those seats be at once removed, and chopped up for firewood. With regard to the wages of lengthsmen he was glad to find that they were to be restored, but he wished to point out that the question of wages and salaries was not in the hands of the Commissioner, but of Parliament. The Act of 1888 distinctly declared that all wages, salaries, and allowances to employees should be such as Parliament should from time to time appropriate for that purpose. The Commissioner had power to make regulations, but he had no power under the Act to do anything with regard to wages. That had to be determined by Parliament which appropriated the money that should be paid.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Parliament does not fix the vote of wages.

Mr. HARDACRE: The Government prepared the Estimates, and Parliament had the power to reduce them. "The Commissioner shall pay such salaries, wages, and allowances as Parliament shall from time to time appropriate" was what the Act said. So Parliament had the power, not only to appropriate the total amount, but the wages.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You do not find wages set out in the Estimates.

Mr. HARDACRE: He knew that. The Act said salaries and wages.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are wrong.

Mr. HARDACRE: He knew he was right. Neither under the principal Act nor under any amending Act had the Commissioner power to alter or reduce wages. He did it for convenience' sake, with the advice of the Minister; but Parliament had the fixing of them. The power had never been handed over to the Commissioner. It had always been retained by Parliament. He wanted to get some definite answer, because the men had been told they were to get their wages. In a copy of the *Queensland Times* of the 16th of June last he found a report of an interview with the Minister, in which it was stated that the object of that deputation was to get the wages fully restored, because it was understood that in the proposed new regulation some would not be fully restored. The Minister then said that the wages should not only be restored to every individual in the service prior to 1893, but to those who had entered since.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He should like to put the hon. gentleman right on a point of law, and he thought he ought to know a little about the reading of an Act of Parliament. He was of opinion that, according to the section the hon. member had quoted, the Commissioner had the power to appoint and dismiss officers, and he prepared the Estimates of what remuneration or salary should be paid to any person whom he chose to employ. That was submitted to Parliament; and if it voted that money, it was paid to the person or persons employed. Parliament had the power to reduce the vote; but it must appropriate the money which the Commissioner asked for before it could be devoted to the purpose for which it was asked. This House had no control whatever of the question of the salaries to be paid to railway servants. He did not grudge the hon. member whatever credit he might acquire from posing as a friend of the railway men, but he was as great a friend

of the men as they had, and had used all the influence he possessed—and he believed he had as much influence personally as the hon. member—on their behalf. He was as anxious as the hon. member that they should get justice. He had represented to the Commissioner again and again what he thought was a fair thing with regard to the wages they should get.

Mr. HARDACRE: You have not given the law.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He had given the interpretation of it, and he should know a little about it.

Mr. HARDACRE: You don't.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Commissioner was the sole person that fixed the wages.

The PREMIER: The hon. member complained loudly about the extra advantages the North possessed over the Centre in the matter of mail communication with Brisbane. As a matter of fact, the Centre had three mails a week from Brisbane, leaving on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday nights, and going right through to Longreach.

Mr. HARDACRE: With a break of nearly three days.

The PREMIER: That was on one occasion only; but that could only be got over by working on Sundays.

Mr. FITZGERALD: You should pay the Western men more wages if they run more trains.

The PREMIER: They were paid more than the Southern men. The North only got one mail a week from Brisbane; but because it happened to leave on Friday night, the same as the Central mails, and went right through to Townsville, and because the Commissioner did not work his men on Sundays, in order that the mail should not be detained at Rockhampton, the hon. member complained. He thought the Central people were very well off.

Mr. HARDACRE did not object to the service to the Central portion of the colony. An extra train might leave on Saturday night. The Attorney-General was very ungenerous in stating that he (Mr. Hardacre) wanted to make out that he was the only hon. member who had dealt with the restoration of the railway men's wages, because he never begrudged any hon. members any credit for what they had done in the matter.

Mr. J. HAMILTON (*Cook*) pointed out that a deputation of hon. members on his side of the House, of which he was one, had, over a year ago, waited on the Minister for Railways, and urged the restoration of the wages of the railway men, and the Minister then promised that the wages of those who were employed previous to 1893 would be restored to what they were before the reduction. This was long before the deputation of which the member for Leichhardt formed a part had approached the Minister. He appealed to the hon. member to say if that was not correct.

Mr. BARTHOLOMEW (*Maryborough*): He had refrained from speaking before, in order to enable the Railway Estimates to go through. He objected to the Railway Commissioner and his officers being kept in attendance such a length of time, because that would interfere with the business of the department. The Railway Department was the most important in the colony, and all the haggling and talk kept the officials from their work. Out of consideration for them, they should allow the Estimates to be proceeded with and finished.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He had fulfilled his promise with regard to the restoration of the wages of these men to the letter. As the hon. member for Cook said, a deputation of members on the Government side had waited on him on the matter, and he then made the promise which, as he had previously

explained, he had completely fulfilled. This wrangle was unseemly, and would have a bad influence on the country; and, in order to prevent a repetition of it, he would again confer with the Commissioner, and do his best to effect a complete restoration of the wages of these men if the circumstances of the colony warranted it.

At 12:39 a.m.,

The CHAIRMAN: In accordance with Standing Order 171, I call upon the hon. member for Bulloo, Mr. Leahy, to relieve me in the chair.

Mr. LEAHY took the chair accordingly.

Mr. W. THORN thought the matter had been debated quite sufficiently. He was pleased to hear the remarks of the Minister that the wages of the men in the railway service prior to 1893 would be restored.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They have been restored.

Mr. W. THORN: He was glad to hear that. He objected to young men being kept on probation and given lower pay than men who had been nine or ten years in the department, but who did inferior work.

Mr. FITZGERALD (*Mitchell*) complained that the Secretary for Railways had not fulfilled the promise he made at the beginning of the year to the railway employees in the Central district to improve their position. The old rate of wages had not been restored, in accordance with the hon. gentleman's promise.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS contended that he had done more than he had promised, as he had got the time during which men were kept at the lower rate of pay reduced from five years to three years; and the employees in the Central district received 6d. a day more than the men in the Southern district, while the men in the Northern district received 6d. a day more than the men in the Central division. He again promised to confer with the Commissioner, and see if some of the disabilities that were said to exist could not be removed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL had protested against the artificial distinction drawn between men who had been three years in the service and men who had recently joined the service, and he was pledged to bring about the abolition of that system.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*) wished to correct the Secretary for Railways. Prior to 1893 there was only a six months' period of probation. He believed the Secretary for Railways had endeavoured to carry out his promise, but he blamed him for his speeches that evening about the unrestored grades. He accepted the hon. gentleman's promise that he would confer with the Commissioner.

Mr. FITZGERALD: I certainly will not accept the promise. We cannot trust him.

Mr. HARDACRE hoped the hon. gentleman would make any changes he might decide to make date from July last. He also asked the hon. gentleman not to forget the bridge carpenters and painters, who had received no increases at all.

Mr. FITZGERALD reiterated that the Minister had not adhered to his promise in its entirety.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Carpentaria*) protested against the continued reiteration of hon. members. There was no doubt hon. members had some cause of complaint, as the members of the deputation understood there was to be a complete restoration of the rates of 1893. It was hard that a man should have to wait three years before he could receive the same pay as another man who did exactly the same work. If a period of probation was necessary, six months was ample. He contrasted the pay of various classes of employees in 1893 and at the present time. Some good

would be done by the conference between the Minister and the Commissioner, but, at the same time, those gentlemen deserved credit for what they had already done. The returns showed that the colony was advancing, and the Commissioner deserved credit for the way he worked the department.

Mr. LESINA called attention to the appointment of the Chief Mechanical Engineer, Mr. Nisbet, and asked for information in regard to that secret appointment. A valuable officer of thirty years' standing had been made a scapegoat of by the department. Mr. Horniblow, who was formerly in charge, received £650, while Mr. Nisbet was to receive £1,000 per annum. The locomotive branch was reorganised after the inquiry into the boiler explosions, and Mr. Nisbet was appointed in charge without applications being called for. The Commissioner insulted every locomotive engineer in the colony by certifying that there was no one in the service competent to fill the position. The hon. member proceeded to comment upon Mr. Nisbet's appointment in London, and to his previous connection with the Westinghouse Brake Company. He was certain that the Secretary for Railways had nothing to do with the appointment beyond registering the decree of the Commissioner. He believed the appointment was made to cover up the negligence of the Government in starving the department for the last eight or ten years. He wanted to know what reason, beyond what was stated in the correspondence laid on the table of the House, had led to Mr. Nisbet's appointment. A Royal Commission was required to inquire into the working of the department. He asked what local firm had secured the placing of an order for eight boilers with Baldwins in America. It was stated that a member of the Upper House had some connection with the matter. The court of inquiry did not condemn Mr. Horniblow in any way in connection with the boiler explosions, their recommendation being that a competent boilermaker inspector should be appointed, instead of which the Commissioner had recommended the appointment of a man who had been connected with the Westinghouse Brake Company for ten years.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS explained that the appointment of Mr. Nisbet was the result of the inquiry into the boiler explosions. No reflection was cast upon Mr. Horniblow, and he had made no complaints. The Commissioner got the best available mechanical engineer. All the information was given in the correspondence laid on the table. [The hon. gentleman then read the Commissioner's report on the matter.]

Mr. JENKINSON (*Wide Bay*) protested against the statement read by the hon. gentleman. The evidence taken by the court of inquiry proved that the locomotive branch was starved, and the fault was not Mr. Horniblow's. The court of inquiry had never recommended such an appointment as that of Mr. Nisbet, and the appointment was unwarrantable.

HON. T. MACDONALD-PATERSON asked for the adjournment of the debate. It was unwise to discuss the Estimates in detail. £1,000 was not too much to pay a man with the experience of Mr. Nisbet.

Mr. LESINA was not satisfied with the explanation of the Minister. The evidence showed that it was the department which was responsible for the explosions, and not Mr. Horniblow. For years Mr. Horniblow had reported on the necessity for something being done at the Ipswich railway work-shops, in order to render it possible to effect repairs there. Mr. Horniblow had frequently protested against the starving of the department, which eventually caused the

boiler explosions. Mr. Horniblow had been badly treated. [The hon. member quoted from the evidence of the Commissioner, Mr. Horniblow, Mr. Darker, and Mr. Pigott in support of his statements.]

Mr. McDONNELL (*Fortitude Valley*) contended that the whole difficulty in the Railway Department was the result of the starvation initiated by Mr. Mathieson. Shortly after Mr. Nisbet's appointment that gentleman went to the other colonies to engage certain officers for the department, and he wished to know whether any of the appointments had yet been made?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No.

Mr. McDONNELL: He hoped that the Commissioner, while taking steps to secure the best possible officers would give the preference to Queensland men.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The applications were now being considered, and preference would be given to competent Queensland men.

Mr. KERR referred to the dangerous condition of some of the locomotives on the Central line, and expressed the opinion that, if the court of inquiry on boiler explosions had followed up their conclusions, they would have put the blame for the condition of the rolling-stock on Ministers, by whom the department had been starved.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS promised that the condition of the locomotives referred to by the hon. member would be inquired into.

Mr. STEWART said that the rolling-stock on the railways had been allowed to get into a disgraceful condition. He mentioned several items of expenditure charged to the loan fund which he considered ought to have been defrayed out of current revenue. He would like the railways to be managed as nearly as possible on the same principle as private lines, because he did not desire that State railways should be a failure.

Question—That there be granted for Railways, general establishment, a sum not exceeding £30,620—put and passed.

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair at 2:15 o'clock.

TRAFFIC BRANCH.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved that £213,985 be granted for traffic branch. He pointed out that the Estimates under this head were arranged differently from the form in which they appeared last year, with the view of simplifying the entries in the books of the Treasury Department. He also enumerated the various increases, which amounted to £23,215, and referred the Committee to page 88 of the Estimates, Schedule A, for details.

Mr. McDONNELL (*Fortitude Valley*) wished to know whether he could bring up matters connected with the traffic branch on page 88.

The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the vote now being dealt with was on page 88. If the matter the hon. member wished to bring up was in this vote he must bring it up now, as the vote for the general management had been passed.

Mr. McDONNELL understood at an earlier period that he would be able to bring it up at the next sitting. What he wished to know was whether the question of increasing the wages paid to the labourers in the Brisbane goods-sheds would be favourably considered?

Mr. BROWNE (*Croydon*) mentioned that some members had gone home under the impression that this vote would not come on till the next sitting. They had been misled by the manner in which the Estimates were arranged this year, the totals being given on page 86, and the details on page 88.

After some discussion, in which it was pointed out that the change had led to confusion,

The PREMIER admitted that it was confusing, and explained that the object was to save bookkeeping in the Treasury and in the Railway Department. Under the circumstances, he moved that the Chairman leave the chair, report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed ; the CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again at a later hour of the day.

MARSUPIAL BOARDS ACT CON-
TINUATION BILL.

MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council, returning this Bill without amendment.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes past 3 o'clock.