

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 15 NOVEMBER 1905

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 15 NOVEMBER, 1905.

The SPEAKER (Hon. Sir A. S. Cowley, *Herbert*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

QUESTIONS.

SECTIONAL EARNINGS ON RAILWAYS.

Mr. HAMILTON (*Gregory*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

1. What has been the loss or gain in working expenses on the Emerald to Springsure Railway each year since being opened?

2. What has been the additional loss of interest on capital expenditure on the above railway each year since being opened?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. A. Morgan, *Warwick*) replied—

1 and 2. Statement showing the loss on the Springsure Branch Railway each year from the date of opening to 30th June, 1905—

Year.	Loss after Providing for Working Expenses.	Total Loss after Providing for Interest on Capital.
1886 (Two months) ...	£ 391	£ 720
1887	2,935	5,930
1888	3,814	8,474
1889-90	3,885	8,676
1890-91	3,467	8,259
1891-92	2,635	7,427
1892-93	1,026	5,833
1893-94	1,697	6,518
1894-95	971	5,795
1895-96	1,315	6,179
1896-97	1,466	6,380
1897-98	1,152	6,081
1898-99	2,027	6,982
1899-00	237	5,218
1900-01	1,056	6,063
1901-02	621	5,679
1902-03	1,468	6,477
1903-04	1,132	6,144
1904-05	805	5,821

BUSH FIRES IN CHARLEVILLE DISTRICT.

Mr. P. J. LEAHY (*Warrego*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

1. Is he aware that severe bush fires have occurred in the Charleville district, and that whole runs and sections are in consequence without grass?

2. Does he know that lessees attribute these fires to the railway trains?

3. Do engine-drivers and firemen clean the fireboxes of the engines and shovel out live clinkers and ashes while the trains are travelling?

4. If so, will steps be taken to stop this practice?

5. Will the Government compensate the pastoral lessees and selectors whose grass has been destroyed by fires caused in this manner?

6. Will the Government in these cases convey stock free of charge by rail to places where grass can be obtained?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

1 and 2. The District Engineer, Roma, reports that bush fires have been burning for some time between Charleville and Mungallala, and so far as he could ascertain, the fires started some distance from the railway line.

3 and 4. Engine-drivers and firemen have special instructions not to clean the fireboxes or throw out clinker while the train is travelling.

5 and 6. See answer to No. 1.

ROMA MINERAL OIL COMPANY.

Mr. LESINA asked the Secretary for Mines—

1. Does the Minister know that the members of the Roma Town Council are all, or nearly all, directors of the Roma Mineral Oil Company?

2. Are the town clerk and his assistant the secretaries of the company?

3. Are the company's offices in the Roma Town Hall?

4. Does the Minister know that, to quote the words of the company's prospectus, "5,500 shares will be issued as fully paid-up shares to the promoters as payment for their interest in the mineral lease as well as the Government grant of £2,500"?

5. Does he know that if the company strikes gas or water the supply of gas and water in the Roma Town Bore will almost certainly be cut off?

6. Should this happen, will the Government agree to compensate the Roma people for this loss either by a grant or by agreeing not to demand payment of the £7,000 lent for the purpose of laying on gas from the bore?

7. Will the Minister, as promised, lay all papers in connection with this matter on the table of the House?

8. If the papers do not contain the names of all the members of the syndicate to which the grant of £2,500 was made by the Government, will the Minister endeavour to obtain this information?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. J. W. Blair, *Ipswich*) replied—

1. No definite knowledge, but have heard that such is the case.

2. Letters have been received by the department from the Roma Town Council, signed by G. L. Crystal, as clerk of the council, and also from G. L. Crystal, as secretary of the Roma Oil Boring Company.

3. Have no knowledge.

4. No. A copy of the prospectus has not been furnished to the department.

5. No.

6. Matter may receive consideration should contingency arise.

7. Yes.

8. Yes.

UNEMPLOYED AT WOOMBYE.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*) asked the Treasurer—

Is it true that certain unemployed men who have settled at Woombye and are at present in such a destitute condition that they are living on wallaby and pumpkins, have applied for rations and tools to the Treasurer and been refused?

The TREASURER (Hon. W. Kidston, *Rockhampton*) replied—

I have not heard of any settlers at Woombye being in such destitute circumstances, nor has any such application been made to me.

Mr. LESINA asked the Treasurer, without notice—

If these men apply for rations and tools will he give consideration to their claims?

The TREASURER replied—

Yes. Consideration is always given in such cases.

IDERAWAY ESTATE SPECIAL PURCHASE BILL.

PROPOSED INTRODUCTION.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. T. Bell, *Dalby*), it was formally resolved—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the desirability of introducing a Bill to make provision for the purchase of the Ideraway Estate, in the Burnett district, for settlement under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Acts, 1894 to 1901.

THANE TO GOONDIWINDI RAILWAY.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved—

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

(1) That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension of the Goondiwindi branch line, from Thane to Goondiwindi, in length 101 miles 14 chains, as laid upon the table of the House on Tuesday, the 31st day of October, 1905.

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

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS, in moving the resolutions, said: Next to the railway which the House assented to yesterday—the Richmond-Cloncurry line—he regarded the proposed line through the Goondiwindi district as the most important railway enterprise which the State could undertake at the present time. (Hear, hear!) It would secure for their railways and for the port of Brisbane the trade of a new province. The district to be opened up was rich in resources. It was not a district in which there was merely one industry. It was a district of varied resources, and in which varied industries might be successfully prosecuted. In the country to be traversed there were timber resources equal to anything in the coastal or interior districts. He knew of no district in Queensland in which there were finer belts of hardwood, particularly spotted gum and ironbark, than in the district on the Herries Range, 10 or 12 miles west of Thane. There would be no difficulty in obtaining sufficient sleeper and bridge timber to construct this railway, or, indeed, the construction of a railway right through to the South Australian border; and he looked forward to the time when the forests of that district would be drawn upon for the supply of railway sleepers for export. The district was also rich in mineral resources. In the Thane's Creek, Talgai, and Canal Creek districts gold had been found in considerable quantities, and those who were competent to form an opinion had expressed the view that the gold-mining industry of the district would be as active some day as it was up to the time when the Gympie rush broke out and attracted the miners from Thane's Creek and Talgai. Silver was also found, and at least one mine had been worked at a profit. The trade of the district in which that silver-mining was carried on would come to the line the construction of which he was now proposing. But, while these industries were important, they were not more important than, if indeed they were as important as, the agricultural industry which would be developed by the construction of the railway. In proposing it to the Committee, he felt that he was labouring under a disability in speaking to members, very few of whom, unfortunately, had had an opportunity of visiting the district. He could have wished that a very large number of members had had the opportunity of visiting the Goondiwindi district. Had that been the case, he was quite sure that his task in recommending the proposal would have been very much lighter than it was. The district was a very fine one. Its capabilities for agricultural development were equal to any district on the western side of the range, save and except perhaps those immediately abutting on the foothills of the range. Hon. members were aware that considerable agricultural development had already taken place in the Texas district, where the tobacco crop of Queens-

land was grown. The quality of the leaf was excellent, and it commanded top prices in competition with the best tobacco grown in Australia. [Mr. LESINA: Grown by Chows chiefly.] He hoped the day would come when that objection would be removed, and they would see the industry prosecuted successfully by white labour. Tobacco was grown all along the valley of the Severn, from Texas to Inglewood. The soil had also proved beyond question to be admirably adapted for the cultivation of wheat. It was light in character compared with the heavier soils of the Darling Downs; but the wheat grown on the light soils of the Severn and Macintyre Brook country was of better quality than the wheat grown on the richer soil of the Darling Downs. Besides being capable of producing tobacco and wheat of good quality, it was equally suitable for the production of root crops and hay. Then there was the pastoral industry. The country had long been known as one of the best of Queensland's wool-producing districts. Wool grown on the Macintyre country had always commanded a high price on the London market, and that the country was well adapted for woolgrowing was proved by the fact that there was a large number of grazing selectors in the district and that the majority of them were doing remarkably well. He would point out that between the 29th parallel of south latitude—that was the southern border of Queensland as far east as Mungindi—and the 25th parallel there were more sheep depastured than in any similar area in Queensland. [Mr. GRAYSON: It can carry ten times as heavily.] That was undoubtedly the case. In 1895, a few years before the drought, between the 29th and 28th parallels there were 3,500,000 sheep depastured; between the 28th and 27th parallels there were 1,136,000 sheep; between the 27th and 26th parallels there were 1,159,000; and between the 26th and 25th parallels, 1,597,000 sheep. Those numbers had been diminished by the drought, but it was still true that between the 29th and 28th parallels there were more sheep depastured than between any other two parallels in Queensland. The line would traverse a district already settled, and it was capable of supporting a very much larger population. It would open up a large area of country suitable for agricultural settlement. Taking Texas, on the Severn River, as the most easterly point that would be influenced by the construction of the railway, they had the whole of the Texas country already occupied and cultivated. Proceeding north and west to Inglewood and Beebo and Wyemo, all the country between the Brook and the Severn in the neighbourhood of Lagoon and Terra Mellis was adapted for agricultural settlement, and capable of supporting settlement as close as that which obtained in the Darling Downs country. Indeed, for certain purposes, it was better adapted for agricultural settlement. Round about there was a very large area suitable for wheat and tobacco growing. There was also a very large area north of the line. The Lands Department had prepared a map showing the area of Crown lands available and the area of land contained in leases which would shortly fall due, all of which would, in the course of time, be made available for close settlement. [Mr. MACARTNEY: Have you that map available?] It had not been reproduced, but he would show it to the hon. member. Much of the trade of the district, unfortunately, already went to Newcastle and Sydney. To show to what extent that was the case, he would refer to the figures which had been obtained from the Customs Department a few years ago, when the line was last before the House. The return supplied to him by the Customs authorities some five years ago showed that the value of the trade from

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the border districts which passed to the New South Wales railways and ports was £166,000 a year. He had not been able to obtain the same information now, owing to the closure of the border Customs stations, but he had no reason to believe that the volume of trade had diminished to any extent. Possibly it had increased. However, the figures he had just quoted should be taken seriously into consideration by the Committee. The bulk of the trade of the district now went to Newcastle and Sydney, and, unless the Parliament of Queensland supplied the district with the railway communication for want of which it had so long been languishing, the remaining portion of the trade which Queensland now retained would also go to Newcastle and Sydney. The fact that the bulk of that trade had already left them was entirely their own fault. While they had been idle, their neighbours to the south had been active. If hon. members took the trouble to look at the railway map of Queensland and New South Wales which he had had prepared by the Railway staff, they would see how active their neighbours had been in their efforts to capture the trade of the Southern district of Queensland. [Mr. LESINA: Are we not all brothers now under federation?] They were all supposed to be brothers in that Committee, but at times they did not display that brotherly spirit which one would expect to characterise such an Assembly. (Laughter.) He was afraid the brotherly spirit or the federal spirit did not enter very largely into business, and the States were as keen in looking after their own interests to-day as they were before federation was consummated. Already New South Wales had built a railway to Bourke, and they had a branch from there to Brewarrina. Further east there was a line to Narrabri and Moree. A branch line was now under construction to Wallgett, and a branch from that branch north-westerly to Collarindabri. Collarindabri was only 50 or 60 miles south of the Queensland border at a point nearly due south of St. George. Moree was almost due south of Goondiwindi, and there was also a line to the eastward from Moree to Inverell, due south of the most southern point of Queensland at Mount Haystack. In addition to all those lines, they had surveyed a line from Moree to Boggabilla, just across the border from Goondiwindi, and another to Mungindi further West. Already their neighbours had spent more than £3,000,000 in constructing those lines to the vicinity of our southern border; and that in itself was evidence of the value they attached to the trade of that portion of Queensland territory; and he was disposed to think—though he would not openly say so—that our neighbours were to some extent influenced in extending their railways so near to the Queensland border by the fact that they would have to depend not only upon the trade of their own territory, but that they would also be able to gather some trade from the district to the north of the border. It was not reasonable to suppose that the attraction of a 70-mile belt of country to the north of their railways was sufficient to justify so large an expenditure of public money, and, had there not been trade from across the border to secure, some at least of those lines would not have been built. The real object, of course, was not the trade of the narrow strip of New South Wales territory, but the vast trade of the territory between the rail heads of the New South Wales railways and the Western railway in Queensland—trade which Queensland, in its want of wisdom in the past, had neglected from a railway point of view. Queensland had all the advantage of position. Moree, which was the most northerly point of the New South Wales railway system in that district, was 513

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miles from Sydney. The distance from Goondiwindi to Brisbane by the railway now proposed and the existing line would be 290 miles, showing a difference of 223 miles in favour of Brisbane as the shipping port for the trade of the district. [Mr. KRINA: How far is Moree from Goondiwindi?] About 75 miles. The district was a very fine district, and our safeguard hitherto had been the fact that the road to Moree traversed heavy blacksoil plains, and was not trafficable in wet weather. Though our neighbours had spent so much money in building so many railways threatening our border districts, it was clear, on looking at the map, that the expenditure of the small sum of money required to build this line would place Queensland in the position of being able to hold her own against the efforts of New South Wales to capture our trade. It must be quite clear that one line running parallel with the border would effectually checkmate the New South Wales lines, numerous as they were, which impinged at right angles to our border, particularly when the objective of this line—Goondiwindi—was only about 291 miles from Brisbane, whereas the nearest distance to Sydney by the most direct route from Moree was [4 p.m.] 513 miles. He had already referred to the trade existing, and indicated the possibilities of development from a pastoral, agricultural, and mining point of view, and he said again unhesitatingly, as he had already said in the Chamber on more than one occasion, that the best interests of the State and the interests of the port of Brisbane demanded emphatically that this railway should be constructed. And not only those interests but the railway interests of the State called for the construction of the railway, and in that opinion he was supported in emphatic terms by the Commissioner for Railways. [Mr. LESINA: Which report? The made-to-order report or the other one?] The made-to-order report? [Mr. LESINA: Yes, it differs very much from the other one.] He was sorry that the hon. member had made that reflection on the Commissioner. [Mr. LESINA: The Commissioner is a very weak man, you know.] It was a very gross reflection. The Commissioner's advocacy of this railway was not a matter of to-day or yesterday, and if he had to draw the deduction from what the hon. member said—that the report was written at his (Mr. Morgan's) suggestion or dictation—he would have no difficulty in answering the suggestion—a very base suggestion—by quoting from a report by the present Commissioner for Railways ten years ago, when he was the general traffic manager. He hoped the hon. member would give him his attention. [Mr. LESINA: I am listening.] Mr. Thallon, reporting to the Railway Commissioners ten years ago on the subject of railway communication with the South-western districts, said—

I prefer the Warwick route because the distance from the seaboard to the rich district south of St. George and Cunnamulla is shorter than *via* Charleville or Yeulba. The distance *via* Charleville to Cunnamulla will be 618 miles, but as it will be necessary to go south of Cunnamulla to make sure of the trade, we may put it down at 650 miles. The distance *via* Warwick to the Warrego would be 568 miles, and if the Ipswich-Warwick line were constructed only 500 miles. The same proportions apply in the case of the district south of St. George. The traffic to and from these districts being competitive, the rates must not be based on mileage but on the New South Wales rates to and from Sydney, so that the residents will not suffer, so far as freight is concerned, on account of the circuitous route if Charleville be adopted; but the department must lose in having to work 650 miles for the same amount as it might charge for 500 miles, and the inhabitants would have a standing grievance in the greater time occupied.

Two railways could be made to the district south of St. George and south of Cunnamulla—namely, one from Yeulba, 140 miles, and one from Charleville, 160 miles, total 300 miles; and these (although they would not

touch the Goondiwindi district) would, I believe, secure the present competitive trade; but in the long run they would prove feeders to New South Wales, and after all be not much less than the length of one line from Warwick. I am strongly of opinion, therefore, that our additional railway should run east and west—not north and south—and so secure the trade to Brisbane for ever and ever. The line should run from Warwick to Goondiwindi, or near it, thence as near the border as may be consistent with the policy of making a good, serviceable, cheap line.

The residents of the St. George and Cunningham districts would doubtless be as well served by an extension of the New South Wales lines from Narrabri and Bourke, and they would probably cost less. Possibly that will be done if the long-talked-of federation comes about, but the port of Brisbane would, in that case, lose the trade for ever, and it is not to be thought of by Queenslanders.

That was a complete answer to the interjection made a few minutes ago by the hon. member for Clermont. [Mr. LESINA: He knows this proposed line to be a fraud—it is no good.] What was the history of this railway? The money for its construction was included in the Loan Estimates in 1884. The plans of the first section were submitted to Parliament in 1886, and passed by the Assembly, but were rejected by the casting vote of the Presiding Chairman in another place. It might be interesting to quote a brief passage from the report of the Council Committee, to whom the plans were referred in 1886. This was paragraph 1 of the report—

The evidence taken shows that the construction of a border railway is sound public policy, because it will retain within the colony the trade along the border of Southern Queensland which now passes to and from New South Wales.

The committee concluded with a recommendation that the line be constructed. The proposal failed in the Council for the reason he had stated, by the casting vote of the Chairman. A year later the plans were again submitted to the Assembly, but a minority of the House successfully stonewalled the motion for their adoption. He had a distinct recollection of what transpired, and there were some interesting incidents of the stonewall of the plans on that occasion. There was a combination between the squatters and the people interested in rival routes, and the result of the combination was that the adoption of the plans was blocked, and the matter remained until 1889, when it again came forward as the subject of the communication which he had just read from the Commissioner for Railways, Mr. Thallon, who was then general traffic manager. As to whether the route now proposed was the right route to adopt for this railway, he thought there could be no doubt, but he would just like to quote a passage from the report of the chief railway surveyor, Mr. Lethem, the officer in charge of surveys at the time, who made an inspection of this and other routes for the proposed railway to the South-west. Mr. Lethem reported that the Warwick route was the most free from prickly pear, and had the largest extent of settlement, that the prospects of further close settlement were greater on the Warwick route than any other, and that the Warwick route was the best route to secure the border trade. Those were the findings of that officer, and he thought those who knew him would know that he was an officer to whose recommendations the very greatest respect should be paid. In 1901, the late Government brought down the plans of the first section from Warwick to Thane; the House approved of the plans, and the line had been built. It had been working a little more than twelve months, and the financial result had been better than in the majority of cases of branch lines. The line had not only paid working expenses, but had returned something over $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the capital invested. He would point out that that line was only 25

miles in length, not nearly long enough to influence the trade of the Goondiwindi-Macintyre debatable district, to which this railway was projected. He had not the least doubt that when the line was taken to Goondiwindi a large proportion of the trade now lost to Queensland would be recovered, and that the line would realise the anticipations the Commissioner had formed of it. The Commissioner had written him only a few months ago in these terms—

I have the honour to draw your attention to the attached extracts from the Sydney daily papers, which show that pressure is being brought to bear on the New South Wales Government to extend their lines from Moree to Mungindi and Boggabilla. The avowed object is to capture the Queensland trade, and it is gratifying to read that the Minister who received the deputation pointed out that this was not a proper object. It is, indeed, a most improper one, especially as this State is now extending its lines westward from Warwick, not to gain New South Wales trade, but to accommodate the very district in Queensland which the Sydney deputationists seek to capture.

As nothing definite has been done, and New South Wales cannot possibly gratify the deputation for a considerable time, I would recommend that we push on our Western line from Thane as quickly as possible.

I enclose a map of the Southern portion of Queensland and the northern part of New South Wales, from which can be seen at a glance the railways now built and under construction.

It would be seen therefore that the Commissioner and the officer in charge of surveys, who had both been over this district, had been so impressed, not only with the importance of recovering the trade which had been lost, but with the possibility of developing a very much larger trade than now existed there, that they had no hesitation in recommending the construction of this line. He had himself no hesitation in recommending it to the House. He was one of the few members who had had the opportunity of travelling through the district, and he knew it intimately. [Hon. R. PHILIP: What about the agricultural land?] He had not the least hesitation in repeating that this line was probably the best railway enterprise, after the Cloncurry extension, to which this State could address itself. The leader of the Opposition had asked him what about the agricultural land. He had already indicated that there was a large area of high-class agricultural land in the district which would be served by the railway. From Texas right down the Severn to the junction of the Brook, and right down the Macintyre to a point west of Goondiwindi, there was a large area of excellent agricultural land. As far as the Texas and Inglewood districts were concerned, the production almost wholly was tobacco, the only crop which would stand the long land carriage to a market. Excellent wheat was grown, but it was quite impossible to grow it at a profit if it had to be sent 80 miles by road to a mill, but there was no doubt whatever that with railway communication the area of land devoted to wheatgrowing in these districts would be very largely increased, to the benefit not only of the district, but of the whole State. He did not, however, rely upon his own opinion in that matter, but proposed to quote the opinion of an officer who visited the district some years ago, who was sent down to report upon its agricultural capabilities and the feasibility of adopting an irrigation scheme. The Macintyre River was probably the best inland river in the State of Queensland, and one of the best in Australia, the supply of water being larger and more reliable than could be found anywhere else in Queensland. [Mr. MAXWELL: Who was he sent down by?] He was sent down by the Government of the day. The officer was Mr. Peter McLean, the late Under Secretary for

Agriculture, who was then inspecting land commissioner. Mr. McLean, in the course of his report, said—

There is a considerable tract of Crown lands north-east of and distant about 6 miles from the township. The soil is a black friable clay, easily worked, and well adapted for any sort of cereal crops. Brigalow Creek, which is a break-away from the Macintyre River, divides the Crown land from land which has already been alienated. This creek flows in a north-easterly direction, and falls into the Weir River in the parish of Bloomfield.

There are a large number of extensive waterholes in this creek; but from what I could learn from old residents in the district none of them are of a permanent character, and, to judge from observation, I should say none of them are very deep. Still, it is just possible that this creek could be made a receptacle for the storage of water for irrigation purposes, as there could be no difficulty in pumping water from the Macintyre into it.

The whole of the land in this part of the district is very flat, and to all appearance level; but its suitability for irrigation purposes could only be determined after careful survey; and as Mr. J. B. Henderson, Hydraulic Engineer, accompanied me for the purpose of reporting on the water supply, I will leave him to deal with the feasibility of irrigating the land.

For about a distance of 18 miles in an easterly direction from the township and about the same distance north there is a large quantity of very good land. The soil in some places is a black friable clay, easily worked, and in other places a rich brown loam of superior quality. There is very little plain, except in the vicinity of the Goondiwindi pre-emptive. The country consists of open forest and light scrub. The timber on the forest land is silver-leaved ironbark and box, and in the scrub it consists principally of brigalow, sandalwood, native hop-bush, and cypress pine. There is a very extensive scrub about 15 miles from the town, through which the road between Bengalla and Goondiwindi passes. The soil is a brown loam, well adapted for agricultural purposes; it would be easily worked if the timber was all removed, and would, I am confident, stand a dry season much better than the heavier black soil. In flood seasons a good deal of this district is under water, in some places to a depth of 2 feet.

For 12 miles west of the town, in the parish of Callandoon, the land has all been alienated.

Beyond that the Crown land between Callandoon Creek and the river consists of open forest, heavy rich black soil, and a few low sand ridges. Very large areas of this country are under water at flood time, in some places to a depth of 6 feet. The timber on the forest land is silver-leaved ironbark, box, and beeah.

On Winton run the country consists of open forests and belts of scrub. The soil is fairly good, but not so heavy as the soil between Callandoon Creek and the river. The timber in the forest and the scrub is similar to that in other parts of the district.

There is a large area of excellent agricultural land in the neighbourhood of Goondiwindi, and if it is possible to bring the land and the water together heavy yields of cereals and other crops would be the result.

I saw maize growing on a farm a few miles from town equal to fully 60 bushels per acre, and I was told a much higher figure had been reached. I also saw some very fine potatoes and pumpkins grown on the same farm. Fruit grows very well in this district, proof of which I witnessed on visiting an orangery about 2 miles from town. The trees were loaded with fine fruit, and gave no sign of any disease.

I took samples of the soil from different parts of the district and brought it with me to Brisbane for the purpose of analysis. As I have already stated, it is impossible to venture any opinion on the suitability of the district for irrigation purposes in the absence of proper surveys as to levels and computations by a duly qualified engineer as to the water capacities of the Macintyre River. As to the latter, Mr. Henderson will be able to supply the necessary information.

To judge simply from the appearance of the features of the country, and in view of the large area of really excellent agricultural land in this district, I should say that few places in the colony better adapted for the initiation of an irrigation scheme could be found.

And as the subject of irrigation is one of paramount importance to the agricultural interests of this colony, I am of opinion that steps should be taken at once to have proper surveys made, and if it is found, as I believe it will, that the lay of the country is such as to admit of the proper distribution of water over the land

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and an irrigation scheme is carried out, it will soon be proved that the cultivation of the soil is an industry which will repay the cultivator and be of immense benefit to the colony.

But while I believe the initiation of a system of irrigation would prove to be successful in this district, I think it only right to point out that in the absence of railway communication the land is practically shut out from *bona fide* settlement.

Those are the opinions of Mr. McLean. Hon. members who knew that gentleman were aware of his capacity to form an opinion, and he thought Mr. McLean was an authority who would be accepted by the majority of hon. members of the House. He would only briefly refer to the report of the Commissioner for Railways, who strongly recommended the construction of the line, and that without delay. He said—

STATION ACCOMMODATION.—Stations will for the present be provided at Canal Creek, 65-miles, Inglewood, Bengalla, and Goondiwindi; but it is fully intended that, as the land is taken up and the agricultural industry develops, extra stations will be provided.

WATER SUPPLY.—Permanent supplies of good water for locomotives can be obtained at convenient intervals—namely, Canal Creek, Inglewood, Bengalla, and Goondiwindi; these places being respectively 36, 73, 98, and 125 miles from Warwick. Good water can be obtained within a reasonable distance of the line at many places besides these, but those indicated divide the distance fairly equally.

The Commissioner also stated that the probable receipts would be sufficient to pay interest and working expenses, and contribute about £10,230 to the general interest bill. He also said—

POPULATION.—On inquiry at the Statistical Branch, I find there are 2,475 persons in the shires of Inglewood and Waggonba and 800 in the municipality of Goondiwindi. The schools in the district, including Provisional schools, have an enrolment of 436 scholars and an average attendance of 340.

The rainfall was good. The average rainfall at Inglewood for the last twenty-five years had been 28 inches, and that at Goondiwindi 26 inches. The whole of the rolling-stock required would not involve an expenditure of more than £5,000, as the rolling-stock now engaged on the line to Thane's Creek would prove sufficient for working the new line. In conclusion, the Commissioner strongly recommended the construction of the line, and added that the work should be undertaken "without delay." He contended that an excellent case had been made out for the construction of the railway, and he submitted it to the House on its merits. It was a line that should have been constructed many years ago, and he had not the least doubt that it would have been constructed but that it had the misfortune of being made the subject of party political contention. As a result of that, not only the interests of the district, but the interests of the State, suffered, and suffered severely. He hoped the House would correct the error made nineteen years ago, when the plans were approved by the Legislative Assembly, but were rejected by the Legislative Council. He submitted the railway in the interests of the State and in the interests of the port of Brisbane, and he sincerely trusted that the House would pass it. [Honourable members: Hear, hear!]

HON. R. PHILP (Townsville): He quite admitted that if the line were built, and was a success, that the port of Brisbane would benefit much more by it than Warwick would. He did not know why the people of Warwick had been after this line so much, as they would not benefit in the slightest degree by its construction. The position he occupied was that he was a member of the Government which built the line to Thane's Creek, but whether the position was now opportune to finish the construction of the line to Goondiwindi he was

not in a position to say. For the last two years the Government had reversed the policy of their predecessors in regard to the construction of railways, and were always crying out about the enormous amount of the public debt of Queensland—about £70 per head. The Premier himself had said the debt was appalling, and yet he was going to revert to the policy of his predecessors and add to that debt. So far as building railways were concerned, he was sorry that they had stopped building them. If the present Government had brought down a railway policy two years ago, it would have been a better thing for Queensland. There would not have been so many unemployed, and, notwithstanding their increasing debt, it would have been a better thing for the State. But the Premier was the leader of a party which did not believe in building railways, did not believe in borrowing, did not believe in selling land, and did not want any more people here. He was very pleased now to see that the Premier had reversed his policy in the matter of building railways. It was a good thing to go on building railways if there was a possibility of them paying. He did not think there was much in the argument about the enormous amount of trade that was going to New South Wales, because if they looked at the map they would see that there was a lot of unoccupied country through which the railway was to run. He understood there was some good agricultural land there, and that was the only reason why he would vote for the construction of the line. He did not take any notice of the fairy story which the Premier told them about their trade going to New South Wales, as he did not think there was any trade going there at all. What was 100 miles in the matter of carting wool? It was nothing. [The PREMIER: It is about 70 miles to Moree.] How many sheep were there in that district altogether? Were there a quarter of a million? Mr. Thallon in his report gave an estimate of the revenue that would probably be derived from the railway, and he made a comparison between this line and the Cunnamulla line. But the Cunnamulla line passed through some of the finest sheep country in Queensland. The country round about Goondiwindi did not compare with Cunnamulla country at all for sheep-growing. [The PREMIER: Yes, it does. You do not know it.] Well, look at the map, and see the country between Charleville and Cunnamulla. There was not any vacant land there at all, but in the district which was traversed by this line there was a lot of vacant land. This country was tried for sheep forty years ago, but it was very poor country, and they could never make it pay. It was not the wool traffic that would make it pay. There was good agricultural land there, and it was not a great distance from Brisbane, and that was all that would make it pay. It had a fair rainfall, and they would be able to get it settled. If they got it settled, it would be all right, and that was what they wanted to do, to promote settlement and encourage agriculture. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You cannot get that without a railway.] He admitted that. It was wrong to say that the building of the line was the subject of party politics. He voted against the proposal to build a line to Thane's Creek twenty years ago, because there was nothing to justify them in building a railway there at that time. There would have been no traffic for the line then, but things were altered now, and he believed that the country was capable of settling a good agricultural population. The Government had done nothing for two years in the direction of railway construction, although they were told that

everyone was crying out for the construction of this line. He did not know much about the country himself, although, if he believed the stories that were told him then, it was not as good as the Premier said it was. [Mr. LESINA: Is there much private land along the line?] He did not think so. He believed that for a distance of 40 miles from Thane's Creek it was very poor land. Most of the land there was in the hands of the Crown, but when they got further towards Macintyre Brook most of the land was selected. [The PREMIER: At Inglewood—yes.] On the whole, it was the best line, after the Cloncurry line, of the three railway proposals submitted by the Government. It was in a fairly good rain belt. On the whole, it was a good thing to commence the construction of some public works again, and as nothing better offered at the present time they could go on with this railway. He believed it was a better railway than the one from Cattle Creek to Dalby which was passed last year, or even the railway from Degilbo to Wetheron, which was also passed last year. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You proposed to build the Dalby-Cattle Creek line yourself.] He asked the House to vote the money, but he knew more about the country now than he did then, and was wiser now. At any rate, the Goondiwindi line was a better line than either the Dalby or Degilbo lines. The Dalby-Cattle Creek line went through privately-owned land, and the people who owned that land ought to pay for the railway. In all agricultural districts he considered that the divisional boards ought to borrow the money from the Government at 4 per cent. and build the railways, and make the people benefited pay the interest on the amount borrowed. The late Government had inaugurated that principle in other lines. At Beaudesert the people built the line themselves. Then on the Northern rivers, from Ingham to Stone Creek, on the Johnstone River, and also at Cairns and Port Douglas, the people, having no hope of getting railways built by the State, borrowed the money and paid interest on it, and built the line themselves. That was the best system where agricultural lands were in private hands. In the present instance a great deal of the land in the district through which the line would pass was held by the Crown, and if that land was wisely administered they would be able to sell it and get sufficient money out of it to pay the cost of building the railway. That was the only reason why he should vote for it.

Question put.

HON. E. B. FORREST: He was surprised that hon. members opposite, especially those who were interested in Warwick [4.30 p.m.] and the surrounding districts, did not have a few words to say on this Bill. [Mr. GRAYSON: We want the railway. We do not want to stonewall it.] They were told by the leader of the Opposition that the railway was likely to do more good for Brisbane than any other place. He believed that himself also, but he did not agree with the leader of the Opposition when he said that it would not do much good to Warwick. He considered it would do good to Warwick; he was glad that it would do good to Warwick, and because of that everyone interested in the Darling Downs should vote for it. So far as Brisbane was concerned, he never entertained the slightest doubt about it doing good to Brisbane, and it was the duty of the commercial world of Brisbane to support the construction of the line by every means in their power. He hoped, therefore, that they would soon see the border railway an accomplished fact. With

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regard to the route, the construction of the line from Warwick to Thane's Creek practically settled the difficulty—if there was a difficulty—that afternoon. That line should never have been built to Thane's Creek if it was not intended to go on to Goondiwindi. The House would be stultifying itself now if it stopped at Thane's Creek. The Government had been too long thinking about introducing more railway proposals, but he was pleased to see that there were now some to be proceeded with. Mr. Thallon, in the last paragraph of his report, as a justification for the construction of the line, said—

For the reasons that this line will promote closer settlement, will utilise a large area of rich land which is now practically idle and therefore of little value to the State, and will retain Queensland trade to Queensland ports, I strongly recommend its construction, and that without delay.

They could not have a stronger recommendation than that. Notwithstanding the few words that fell from the hon. member for Clermont, he (Hon. E. B. Forrest) would say that the Commissioner was a man whom everyone believed in—[Mr. KENNA: Not everyone.] He was a practical man and a man everybody believed in. The Commissioner went over the ground some years ago, and again in the last fortnight, and in his report he strongly recommended the construction of the line, and without delay. [Mr. HARDACRE: What about some years ago?] The Commissioner also recommended this line ten years ago, as they heard the Premier read out that afternoon. Mr. Thallon never spared himself in his expressions in favour of this line. Everybody knew his attitude as far as that was concerned. There was another reason which was worth considering when they were talking about the construction of this line, and that was, as the Premier said, that the New South Wales people were trying to take the trade from the district. He did not agree with the leader of the Opposition when he said that the trade there was not worth looking after, and that New South Wales would not bother about it. They would not be spending money to come nearer to the Queensland border if there was not something in it. New South Wales had had experience of the trade in that district, and because of that they knew its value. If it was of value, then it was worth looking after. He was in New South Wales the other day, and he visited Newcastle, and there was no doubt that they were very anxious to get the trade there from Queensland. They saw in the papers last week that the construction of a line from Moree to Garra—it did not appear on the map, but it was a place halfway between Moree and Murrumbidgee—had been approved of, and the preparation of the plans was authorised. New South Wales knew that that trade was worth looking after. They had got a good share of their own trade and were now after Queensland's trade. [Mr. FORSYTH: What is the value of the trade?] He could not give the figures, but when the question was before the House before, some years ago, the figures were given. [Mr. J. LEAHY: How many sheep are there?] It was in a report some years ago that it carried 1,500,000 sheep. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Nonsense! There are not more than 500,000.] It would carry far more than that. [Hon. R. PHILIP: There is good agricultural land there.] He was glad to hear that there was good agricultural land there, as he knew himself that there was a good deal of land there that carried wool. They did not want merely one industry in constructing railways. They wanted several industries, and if there was agricultural land there as well, he was glad to hear it. This

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was a line for self-preservation, because there was not the slightest doubt that unless it was built their trade from that district would go to New South Wales and especially to Newcastle. It had gone there in the past; it was still going there, and would continue to go there. As it was a line of self-preservation, they could not start it one day too soon. [Mr. HARDACRE: Will it pay?] The Commissioner, Mr. Thallon, was an expert; he said it would pay, and he was prepared to believe him. The people of New South Wales had no right to get trade from Queensland, and this State should take every step in her power to keep it. Since federation there was all the more necessity for having the trade in our own hands. [Mr. LESINA: The falling down of the interstate barriers has allowed the trade to flow in its natural channels.] This was the natural channel, and the construction of this railway would make it flow in its natural channel. What was the good of spending money in improving their river and harbour, and inducing steamers like the Orient boats to come here unless they were going to see that the trade which belonged of right to Queensland was kept here? From a conversation he had with Mr. Reid, of the Orient Company, when in Sydney the other day, he learned that that gentleman was perfectly content with the prospects of his company through coming here, and he was sure that other lines would follow in time. While no one could say what the Federal Government would do two years hence in regard to renewing the mail contract, he did not think there was any chance of the Orient Company's boats not being a permanency here. In addition to that, they had established wool sales in Brisbane, which were now an undoubted success, and now that the Orient boats came to Brisbane, more of the principal buyers found it suited them very well to attend the sales here. The building of this railway would bring large quantities of wool to the Brisbane sales. Some remarks had been made about alternative routes. Some years ago a Royal Commission was appointed which went into the question of alternative routes to Goondiwindi. He did not agree with the conclusions arrived at by the commission, but he was not one of those who considered that its appointment was a waste of money, because then a great deal of very valuable evidence was taken. Altogether fifty-four witnesses gave evidence regarding the question of routes. Of these eighteen favoured Warwick, twelve favoured Pittsworth, eight Yeulba, five Dalby, four Roma, three Stanthorpe, one Yeulba *via* Surat, one Dalveen, one Treverton, and one made no recommendation. The commission stated—

It must, however, in fairness, be said that the Warwick route would open up as much or more good Queensland country *en route*, and that it would reach the border districts sooner—that is, more to the eastward—than any of the other proposed routes; but these advantages are discounted by the all-important consideration of through mileage to Brisbane.

Then, further on, they said—

They have not failed to perceive that the respective merits of the Warwick and of the Pittsworth route are in many respects very evenly balanced.

They accordingly recommended, by a majority of 3 to 2, in favour of the Pittsworth route; but, as he had pointed out, the balance of testimony among the witnesses was in favour of the Warwick route by 13 to 12. Then, of the railway experts who were examined, Messrs. Thallon, Drew, Lethem, Stanley, Drake, and North were in favour of the Warwick route; Mr. Gray, the late Commissioner, favoured the Pittsworth route, Mr. Geo.

Phillips the Yeulba-Surat route; while Mr. Andrew Patterson made no recommendation. He trusted that the resolution would be passed, and that the railway would be constructed without any unnecessary delay. He intended to support it.

Mr. GRAYSON (*Cunningham*): The Government were to be complimented on bringing forward such a railway policy. He was quite of opinion that the proposal to build this line would be the right policy in the end. The railway had been before Parliament for the last nineteen years. When the £10,000,000 loan was passed, it included a sum of £250,000 for the construction of a line from Warwick to Goondiwindi, but through some political manoeuvring it was not built. Some members had privately stated that the line was likely to traverse some very poor country. According to the Commissioner's report, the first 40 miles would traverse ridgy country, but, from his knowledge of that country, he should say it was the best grazing land in Queensland. It included Glenelg, Canal Creek, and Ashgrove stations. Those three stations were stocked with sheep, and Ashgrove was an aggregation of grazing farms which had recently been purchased by Mr. W. B. Slade, one of the best sheep-breeders in Queensland. After he sold Glenallan, he was on the lookout for a property suitable for sheep-breeding, and he purchased Ashgrove, and he was told that Mr. Slade was running one sheep to the acre on his 30,000 acres. At the end of the 40 miles referred to by the Commissioner there was magnificent agricultural land to Inglewood, and there were several very prosperous farmers there, some of them having been settled there for the last twenty-five years. One of them—a Mr. Charles—had nearly 200 acres under wheat. He had to carry that wheat to Warwick, about 70 miles. When the line was constructed, every inch of the country which the Commissioner characterised as ridgy would be taken up by dairy men. Already he had received inquiries from the sons of farmers around Warwick wanting to know when the land would be resumed. It was not proposed to build a line into the wilderness. Already there was a large amount of settlement, and there had been for many years, and that settlement was increasing yearly. In the Texas district there was a very large amount of prime agricultural land, more suitable for the growth of tobacco than any other land in Australia, and when the railway was completed he predicted that there would be four times the area under tobacco that there now was. [Mr. LESINA: Grown by white labour?] Certainly. As soon as the line was built he was sure there would be dozens of white men who would enter upon the industry. The present long dray carriage was the only thing that had deterred white men from engaging in the growth of tobacco hitherto. In the Inglewood district the line would traverse some very large stations, such as Warroo, Whetstone, and Bengalla. There were tens of thousands of acres of that land suitable for the growth of all kinds of cereal crops, and there was not a single acre that would not be snapped up by *bonâ fide* settlers when it was thrown open. There were now two cheese factories erected at Inglewood, one by a leading dairy company in Brisbane, although Inglewood was 50 miles from Thane Railway Station. [Mr. KENNA: Is that the Silverwood Company?] The Lowood Company—Messrs. Howes Brothers. There was no doubt that when the line was completed other butter factories would be erected as well. A few years ago the late Mr. Kates, shrewd business man as he was, had it in contemplation to

erect a flourmill at Goondiwindi, 160 miles distant. There was a large settled population along the proposed line. According to the statistics he had received, the population of Goondiwindi was 800; in the Shire of Inglewood—which included Texas—there were 1,900 people, and in the Waggamba Shire Council 575, making a total population of 3,275. There was also a large area between Thane and Glenelg, in the Rosenthal Shire, and, taking that into account, he thought he would be quite safe in saying there was a population of at least 4,000 between Thane and Goondiwindi. [Mr. KENNA: Does that include Chinamen?] It did not include Chinamen. He thought the hon. member for Bowen had Chinamen on the brain. There was a large quantity of first-class agricultural land in the vicinity of Goondiwindi. In the Inglewood district there were 1890 acres at present under cultivation. In fallow there were 434 acres, wheat 763 acres. Competent authorities stated that the wheat produced in the Inglewood district was superior to any other grain produced in the State, and he could bear out that remark. He knew

[5 p.m.] from local millers in the Warwick district, that when the Inglewood wheat was brought down to Warwick it was kept for seed purposes, as it was clean, and, being grown in virgin soil, was free from foreign matter, and most magnificent grain. He predicted that when the line was built it would be one of the greatest wheat-growing districts in the State. [Mr. HARDACRE: What about drought?] The rainfall of the district was quite sufficient for growing grain. The fact of 763 acres being under wheat this year proved that the farmers in the district were quite satisfied to grow that crop. They were labouring under difficulties with regard to delivery. They had to cart the wheat 50 miles now, but prior to the line being constructed to Thane, they had to cart it 75 miles to Warwick. [Mr. HARDACRE: What about maize?] They had 172 acres of maize, and 280 acres of hay, grain fodder 74 acres, vines 4 acres, gardens and orchards 26 acres. The Inglewood district grew fruit splendidly, and would be a fruit-growing district before many years. In the Texas district, which the line would serve, there were under crop, 1,312 acres—wheat 198 acres, maize 223, and tobacco 679, and the district had been proved to be splendid for wheat-growing. While he was up there farmers brought wheat all the way down, about 80 miles, by dray, and took back flour and bran offal. In Texas they grew wheat, oats, barley, maize, English potatoes, pumpkins and melons, tobacco, and hay of all kinds. That proved beyond doubt the suitability of the land on the route for agricultural purposes. At Inglewood they had 1,890 acres under cultivation, of which, 763 acres were under wheat, 133 acres maize, 73 acres rye, English potatoes, tobacco, hay, grain, fodder, vines, gardens, and orchards, 34 acres. That district was also one of the best pastoral districts in Queensland. In the Goondiwindi district they had 1,933 horses, 10,921 head of cattle, and over 231,000 sheep. In Inglewood there are 2,250 horses, 13,548 head of cattle. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Where is that?] That is the police district of Inglewood. There are 106,787 sheep. In the Inglewood and Goondiwindi districts the total number of sheep is 337,880. In the Texas district they have got 1,147 horses, 7,787 head of cattle, and the sheep returns are not down. The late Mr. Kates, who was the representative for Cunningham some years ago, was in treaty with people at Goondiwindi with the idea of erecting a flourmill. He predicted, when he first went up to reside in Roma, that the Maranoa would be a great

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wheat-producing centre, and was laughed at, but the result was that to-day there were 60,000 acres under wheat. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Where is it?] There was a good crop last year, and there would be half a crop this year. [Mr. J. LEAHY: I hope there will.] He believed the Goondiwindi district was quite as capable of producing grain as the Maranoa, and it had as good a rainfall, and equally good land. Callandoon and Welltown Stations were in the vicinity of Goondiwindi. Part of Welltown had been resumed two or three years ago by the late Government, and thrown open for grazing farm selection, bringing as high as 6d. an acre rent per annum. This proved the capability of the land in Goondiwindi, not only for agricultural, but for grazing purposes, and when this line was completed, as he hoped it would be very shortly, there was no doubt that Inglewood and Goondiwindi would become one of the greatest wheat-producing centres in the State. Land was cheap, free from prickly pear, was well watered, and there was every inducement to encourage settlement. Better than all, the land was nearly all Crown land, very little of which had been alienated. For instance, Glenelg was a large property, not one acre of which had been sold. Every acre was leasehold, and as soon as the lease expired there were lots of people waiting to go and take it up for grazing farms. He had no hesitation in giving his support to this railway. He did not look upon this line as a Warwick line. [Mr. LESINA: It is Warwick all over, every inch of it.] This was a national line, that would assist Brisbane more than any other place in the State. It would bring more trade to the port of Brisbane, encourage settlement, and increase the producers in the State. He hoped that the House would favourably consider this proposal, as he believed it was a line that in a very short period would pay not only working expenses but interest on the loan.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowoong*): He had listened with considerable interest to the speeches made this afternoon, and also read the reports of Mr. Thallon, not only recently, but some time ago, and he was prepared to give this proposal his support. To some extent it would be a benefit to Warwick, but taking a broad outlook it would be a line of great importance to the State generally. He did not think the line would be a great permanent benefit to Warwick, but thought, with other hon. members, that it was more likely to be a permanent benefit to Brisbane and the port. It was a line which was necessary towards the completion of the full railway system of the State, and it would do much to protect us from the aggression which we were suffering from the other side of the border. When one looked at the New South Wales railway maps they must be impressed with the fact that the authorities there had it in mind to take as much freight as they could from this State. One saw the New South Wales lines bending towards Queensland on every point with a township on the border as the terminal point, and they must be convinced that they were not taken in that direction unless it was intended to get the freight arising from those points. Now, this line would checkmate that, and, in addition, we would derive some advantages from areas on the other side of the border which were not convenient to the New South Wales railway systems. Of course, we did not extend our lines with a view to attach trade of that sort, but if it came that way it would be a factor in making it a paying line. Rival routes had been mentioned, and the hon. member for Brisbane North, Mr. Forrest, spoke

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very strongly on the question of the Pitt-worth route, the Warwick route, and other routes, which were the subject matter of inquiry by the Royal Commission, but it seemed to him that the question of the rival routes was disposed of when we passed the line in 1900 to Thane's Creek, it was settled for all time, and it was immaterial what the recommendations of the Royal Commission were. The line had gone 25 miles in the direction which it was now intended to continue it, or more than a fifth of the distance, and they could not ignore that fact, and must follow the line commenced. He thought the Premier had succeeded in making out a strong case in favour of the line, and not only that but he thought the Commissioner would be guided by the action of Parliament on a previous occasion. He would have liked the Premier to have given them some information as to the cost of construction of the line. Mr. Thallon gave an estimate based on various data, and talked of taking out the 40-lb rails on the existing portion of the line, and relaying them with heavier ones. The hon. gentleman had said nothing about that, but the difference in expense meant a considerable sum, and it would only have been fair for the Premier to have expressed his views on that point. It was not necessary for every member to go through all the details on the discussion of the motion. For the reasons advanced, he intended to support the resolutions.

Mr. BARTON (*Carnarvon*): With regard to the construction of this line, if every member knew the vast amount of freight we lost by postponing its construction they would be much surprised. The area of wheatgrowing or cereal land, taking it from Texas as far as Goondiwindi, and even as far as the Barwon, there was a more extensive area of country than the Darling Downs proper, which, as regarded cereal production, was quite equal to anything in the Roma district, and anyone who had been there would bear him out. He wished to remove any impression there might be that he had any personal interest in the construction of the line, as he did not hold an acre in that district, and was treating the matter from a public point of view. It was a district running right up to Goondiwindi, comprising land which produced tobacco of a quality equal to that grown in any part of the State, and which fetched twice the price of other tobacco grown here. The land along the border was also equal as pastoral country to any that he knew of, and the stock from that district always topped the market. He had seen cattle sold there which averaged £10, £11, and £12 per head in the mob. In the interests of the State, and in the interests of Goondiwindi in particular, it was a mistake that the line left off where it was. The construction of this line would tap the silver mine at Silver Spur, which contained silver equal to anything of the kind in the State. They did not hear much about it because it paid so well, and they had no occasion to puff it. He had the honour of opening the Goondiwindi show the other day, and had an opportunity of seeing the amount of trade that came from New South Wales into Queensland. He was surprised to see all classes of British and foreign merchandise coming in there. There were tons of it. He could assure them that they did not know how immense that traffic was. The district was suitable for cotton cultivation. Several of the farmers there had written to him, and he promised to try it, as he believed it would be a successful crop. The river at Goondiwindi was a beautiful one, and it flowed in a variety of ways. It skirted the

border all the way down, and it was full of fish of every possible description." He believed that when the line was built Brisbane would actually have a supply of fresh fish coming from there every morning. (Laughter.) [Mr. FORSYTH: That settles it.] (Laughter.) It made him thoroughly happy to see the House in such a good humour. (Laughter.) All these statements he was making were positive facts. [Mr. SOMERSET: Especially the fish.] He courted inquiry on anything he spoke about. There were appies growing in that district and cherries from which they had to take two bites. The railway from the border to Brisbane would be something like 290 miles, but from Sydney to Goondiwindi it would be something over 500 miles. The geographical position, therefore, showed that a stream of trade would flow into Brisbane. If hon. members had known as much before as they did now, they would never have voted against that line being built. It was one of the most important lines they had in the State, and would cause a great amount of settlement to take place there. He had no hesitation in saying that before long the population there would be three times what it was at the present time. As regards hon. gentlemen referring to the small rainfall there, he could assure them that it was as great as the rainfall on the Darling Downs. He had seen two small areas of country which gave a crop of 30 bushels of wheat to the acre in each area. The Government was doing the correct thing in bringing a matter like that forward, and he hoped hon. members would see it in the proper light.

Mr. SOMERSET (*Stanley*): The Minister for Railways had said that he regretted that more hon. members did not know this country. He could not say that he knew all the country this line would pass through, but he had been through parts of it, and would say what he knew about it. Of the country he had visited in the Goondiwindi district he could only speak in its favour. In 1885 he had inspected, and subsequently purchased for Mr. C. G. Tindal, of Ramornic, two runs on the Dumaresq or Severn River—Bonshaw and Gunyan stations. He saw Texas station, also Yetman, and had visited other stations on the Macintyre and Barwon Rivers, and had been out beyond Welltown. The only objection to the purchasing of the two runs under offer to him at that time was the large quantity of freehold land which had been purchased, and which had to be taken and paid cash for. In his opinion, however, the land was so good, and so well worth purchasing, that he bought those two runs—Bonshaw and Gunyan—which went to show conclusively what he thought of the land. The apple-tree flats on the frontage were magnificent; he had never seen finer anywhere, not even on the Barcoo. He considered there was a vast quantity of excellent land in that district.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Liechhardt*): He had come to the conclusion with regard to the adoption of railway proposals that there [5.30 p.m.] should be some better method of dealing with them before obtaining the sanction of members of the House. At present, the proposals were submitted to members who knew very little about the country, except what was down in the Commissioner's report. Before they adopted railway proposals they should consider whether they were likely to prove remunerative, and they should have some evidence that they would be so. One or two members who happened to be interested in a particular railway would get up and talk about the natural re-

sources that this particular railway would develop, and then in a few years' time they would find they were burdened with a railway that was not remunerative, and he believed that this would be one of that class. [Mr. COWAP: What about the Springsure Railway? That is unremunerative enough.] That had nothing to do with him. That was a political railway, and if he had been in the House at that time he would have voted against the building of it. Before they passed the railway they should see it was likely to prove remunerative. [An honourable member: What stronger recommendation can you get than that of the Commissioner?] That was only one expert. They should have a specially constituted body of experts who had had experience of such matters, and they could give their opinion to the House. [Hon. E. B. FORREST: You have got all that here in this report.] He would be willing to vote for anything that was fair and reasonable, but thought they should see that there was some prospect of this line paying. They should be told whether it would pay 5 per cent., 4 per cent., or even 3 per cent., and he could not see his way to conscientiously vote for this railway proposal, because he believed it would be an additional burden round the taxpayers' neck. The preponderance of the argument put forward that afternoon was not that the railway would be likely to prove remunerative, but that it would drag the trade that now went to Sydney down to the port of Brisbane. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not drag it. From Goondiwindi to Brisbane it is 233 miles, and from Goondiwindi to Sydney it is 513 miles.] That might be an exceedingly good thing so far as the port of Brisbane was concerned, but the House should not construct a railway that would otherwise prove unremunerative simply because it was going to bring trade that would go to Sydney into the port of Brisbane, and benefit a few commercial houses. Another argument had been put forth that it would bring the trade to Brisbane because the distance to Brisbane was much shorter than it would be to take it down to Sydney. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The distance is less than half.] It was understood that under the Interstate Commission there would be no preferential rates allowed on the railway, so that the railway freights would be certain to be less to Brisbane than to Sydney. But they had to remember that there were better harbour facilities and better commercial facilities in Newcastle, which was nearer still than Sydney. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It would still be 200 miles nearer to Brisbane than to Sydney.] The difference in freight would to some extent be counterbalanced by the extra commercial and harbour facilities at Newcastle, and he believed that the commercial houses of Newcastle and Sydney would take it upon themselves to pay the extra freight in order to bring the trade down into New South Wales. They knew that they could go to Sydney to-day and buy things much cheaper than they could purchase them in Brisbane, and they also knew that they could send their wool away from Sydney at a cheaper rate than they could send it from Brisbane. [Hon. E. B. FORREST: We want to stop that.] The building of this railway would not stop that. [Hon. E. B. FORREST: Yes, it will.] There was overwhelming evidence that it would not stop it. They were told that New South Wales intended to construct a further section of railway from Moree to Mungindi. Anyone who looked at the map would see that if that line were built it would get the trade of the whole district round Goondiwindi, because it would drain the district further west than the terminus of the Queensland line—that was so

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far as the trade of the port of Brisbane was concerned. With regard to the line paying, they had been assured that it would pay, because the Commissioner had reported that it would pay. The Commissioner had done nothing of the kind. While the report of the present Commissioner was vague and indefinite, and was not a favourable report on the whole, except in general terms, the late Railway Commissioner's report—the report was of a man equally responsible to this Commissioner—was absolutely and emphatically opposed to the construction of the line. [THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Mr. Thallon was over the country, and Mr. Gray was not.] He did not know anything about that, but he could not understand how a Railway Commissioner in a responsible position, when called upon to make a report to the Legislative Chamber, would report unfavourably on a proposal made by the Government without having been over the country. This was what Mr. Commissioner Gray said in his report of five years ago—

Beyond the terminal point there is, I understand, but little land available for agricultural settlement, and the country thence onward is entirely devoted to grazing and dairy farming until the line approaches Inglewood, where, I understand, agricultural land is again met with, but not in large areas.

I cannot conscientiously say that the prospects of this extension are encouraging, certainly not beyond the first 15 miles.

Further on he said—

I have so far refrained from drawing comparisons between the alternative routes from Warwick and Pittsworth to Goondiwindi and St. George because the proposed line has been referred to me as a branch *per se* to Thane's Creek. If, however, this branch is intended as a part of the projected extension to Goondiwindi and towards St. George, I should certainly be afforded an opportunity, after examining the district, of expressing my views, as from what I have heard of the country traversed by the trial surveys from Warwick and Pittsworth, the information in my possession is such that the Government should certainly hesitate before committing themselves to the construction of any very great length of line by either route, as I am clearly of opinion that neither line will be a profitable investment; under any circumstances the proposed extension should not go beyond the Toolburra Gates, say 14½ miles out from Warwick.

He then concluded—

I much regret that I am compelled to report unfavourably of the proposed extension, but I consider I should be failing in my duty to the State if I omitted to place as clearly as possible before the Government the financial prospects of this extension, and the extent of the liabilities involved.

How could they reconcile the two Railway Commissioners' reports? One report was doubtfully favourable—[THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No.]—and the other was decisively unfavourable. The present Commissioner came to the conclusion he did without having any data to go upon at all. [THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Did you read his conclusion?] Yes; he read the Commissioner's concluding statement; but the Commissioner said it was impossible to obtain a reliable estimate of what the revenue would be. What was the value of the conclusion arrived at from that sort of reasoning? It was absolutely worthless. Taking the figures given on page 56 of the Commissioner's report for last year, he found that, among the lines put out into the Western districts, the section from Hughenden to Winton only paid 7s. per cent. in one year during the last five years and £1 11s. 2d. last year. [MR. HAMILTON: That is ten times as much as the Springsure line paid in good seasons. There has been a drought all the time on the Winton line.] The fact that the Springsure line did not pay did not justify the construction of another

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line that would not pay. [MR. J. LEAHY: All the trunk lines pay. You should not take a section like that.] He admitted that the trunk lines paid very well, but their Western sections did not pay. If the hon. member's argument was to be taken as correct, and they were to take the lines as a whole, then they should extend the Western lines out to the middle of Western Australia into the great desert country. Everyone knew, however, that there was a limit to the remunerativeness of railways extended in the direction of rainless regions. The line between Hughenden and Winton did not pay, and neither did the section between Charleville and Cunnamulla. [MR. J. LEAHY: Both will pay well as soon as good seasons return.] (Hear, hear!) The line between Charleville and Cunnamulla was similar to the proposed railway with the exception that it was further from the coast; and, according to the returns, the Charleville-Cunnamulla line had entailed a loss to the State of £90,000 in working expenses and interest since its construction. [THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And yet, paradoxical as it may seem, it may have been a good investment for the State.] He quite understood that a railway which did not pay directly might pay very well indirectly; but the burden of proof with respect to the profitability of a railway lay with those who proposed it, and so far sufficient evidence was not forthcoming to justify the construction of this line. There was a great deal to be said in favour of the Pittsworth route, which was recommended by the Royal Commission. It would go by a far more direct route, and would go through splendid farming country for the first 25 or 30 miles. Only a few weeks ago the Secretary for Railways paid a visit to Pittsworth and the country round Yandilla, and, according to the Press reports, the hon. gentleman made a sort of promise that a railway would be constructed through that district. [THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Neither you nor anyone else can show me any such promise.] He did not wish to misrepresent the hon. gentleman, but there was a general kind of promise, and, as bearing out his belief, the hon. gentleman said that the large stations would have to be broken up into smaller areas. [THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I made no promise.] He accepted the hon. gentleman's contradiction. If the railway was constructed *via* Warwick, the possibility of a railway being built through the Pittsworth district would vanish. If the railway was constructed at all, it should be constructed by the route recommended by the Royal Commission. Whilst he was not unfavourably disposed towards this railway, he was not as strongly antagonistic to it as he was to another which was proposed. At the same time, it was nothing like as good a line as the one passed last night; and as they had not sufficient evidence to show that it would be remunerative, he intended to vote against it.

Mr. CAMERON (*Brisbane North*) was going to support the railway, because he believed it would be for the good of the country generally. He did not labour under the same disadvantages as some other members, because he knew the whole of the country very well, and he was perfectly convinced that the line proposed would be a benefit not only to Brisbane but to all Queensland. He did not think there was any necessity to say anything beyond expressing his intention to support the resolution.

* Mr. P. J. LEAHY (*Warrego*) had given a good deal of attention to this particular rail-

way. Whilst he was of opinion that it would not pay, he thought it would pay some interest, and that it would do something towards developing the country. He did not share to any considerable extent the optimistic views expressed by the Secretary for Railways. Moree was only 70 miles from Goondiwindi. [THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is 513 miles from Sydney.] But there would be no occasion for the people of the district to deal with Sydney, they could do their business with Newcastle, though he admitted that the distance from Goondiwindi to Brisbane was considerably less than the distance from Goondiwindi to Newcastle. They would also probably get some trade from a district stretching 30 miles to the south and 50 miles to the west of Goondiwindi; but that only meant an area of 1,500 square miles—an area equal to that of a couple of stations in the Cunnamulla district. The Cunnamulla country would carry almost as many sheep as the Goondiwindi country; but, notwithstanding the good quality of the land, he did not think that the trade in wool and supplies would amount to very much. Neither did he believe there would be any great development in the timber industry, although he was of the opinion that there would be some development in regard to agriculture and dairying. He certainly did not agree with the Commissioner for Railways that the proposed line was likely to pay £10,000 over and above working expenses. If any line could be made to pay 2½ per cent. in addition to working expenses, and at the same time assist in developing the country, the Government would be justified in building it; but he thought that all the facts should be put fully and fairly before the committee, and that they should not be deluded into the belief that a line was going to pay well. He did not think this line would pay better than the line from Warwick to Killarney or other lines which ran through much richer country. For a number of years there was a loss of about £1,000 on working expenses on the Killarney line. During the last year or two, owing to some manipulation of figures in connection with distances and that kind of thing, it showed an earning power of £1 or £1 10s. per cent., but even now it was run at a loss. Most of the other lines running into agricultural districts were in the same position, and, reasoning by analogy, they were not justified in assuming that this line was going to pay any better. But it did not necessarily follow that they should not pass the line. He was quite with the Government in their attempt to divert the trade of the district to Brisbane. Speaking broadly, the trunk lines in Queensland paid. The hon. member for Leichhardt referred to the alleged fact that there was a considerable loss on the railway between Charleville and Cunnamulla, but the hon. member must have known that the drought commenced almost immediately after the line was built, and was not over yet, so that no fair conclusion could be drawn with regard to the earnings of the line. Their true policy ought to be to link up the trunk lines; but, whilst holding that view, members representing Western districts should not oppose lines near the coast if it could be shown that there was a reasonable prospect of their paying working expenses and a small amount of interest. He thought that this line would pay working expenses and some interest, and that it would also assist in developing the country.

* Mr. MACKINTOSH was not at all opposed to the construction of this line, because he believed in expending money on railways that

were likely to develop the country. They had no great rivers in Queensland; and unless they provided other means of carrying their products to market, it was not possible for them to develop their resources. The construction would cost in round numbers £300,000. [THE PREMIER: No.] It was mentioned in the report that if old rails were used it would reduce the cost, but

[7 p.m.] as far as he could see it would be nearly £300,000. Although the amount was stated as £280,000, being an old contractor himself, he always added 10 per cent. for contingencies. He did not object to the construction of the line, if we could afford it. He had no doubt many members would agree with him that a great deal of money had been expended in wrong places, and he believed it would be much better to develop the resources of the country nearer home than going to Goondiwindi. He had listened attentively to the Premier's speech, and was delighted with his exposition, but there were certain matters in which he could not agree with him—first, in regard to the suitability of the soil for growing cereals and as to the land being free from prickly pear. In his opinion some part of the land was so thickly infested that it would not grow any more prickly pear. He knew a great deal about the production of cereals from the Southern border to the Gulf of Carpentaria, and he had seen land in the Gulf more suitable for such cultivation than this. Another point referred to was the trade with New South Wales. We were all taught to be charitable to our neighbours, but he agreed with the Premier that we were doing a good thing to secure our own trade and prevent it from going to New South Wales. Referring to the railway from Charleville to Cunnamulla, he thought that was a wrong step, as it was done with a view to attract the trade of New South Wales to Queensland. [MR. J. LEAHY: No.] But what was the result? The Queensland Parliament had to pass a Bill to tax wool that went across the border to New South Wales which should have come to Queensland, and he believed that railway was constructed in the interests of certain people to give them facilities to send their station produce to the port of Brisbane. But they would not do it voluntarily, and an Act was passed to compel them, which wrecked the Government. Traffic would go through its natural channels, and the trade around Cunnamulla and down there would go to Sydney, though the distance was possibly a little longer. The vested interests in that part of the country belonged to the people of New South Wales, and they would insist upon their produce going there. It was stated that this line would prevent the people of Goondiwindi from sending their goods to Moree, which he thought was a fallacy, as the Government of New South Wales intended to extend the line to Mungindi. Reference had been made to Mr. Thallon's report. Mr. Thallon was a gentleman for whom he had the highest respect, and he was above writing to the order of anybody; at the same time, it would take an experienced man fully a month to give a description of the productiveness of the large area between Thane and Goondiwindi in regard to the production of cereals. With regard to the high qualities of the country round Glenlyon, he quite agreed with the Premier that it produced a magnificent quality of wool, but look at the quantity! A fleece there went about 5 lb., which at 1s. a lb. would be 5s., but our other Queensland districts would produce 10 lb. at 8d. a lb., and it did not follow

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because it produced a fine wool it was better than country where the wool was of a coarser quality, as there was more of it. No hon. member was more favourable to the construction of means to convey the products of the country to the market than he was; we had not got the same natural facilities as in other parts of the world either by road or water, and we must construct railways, but we must be careful that the money was expended in the proper place, as we did not want to be paying an enormous amount of interest for bogus lines. We had millions of acres suitable for cattle, sheep, and dairying, and the great consideration was to get the most expeditious way to transmit these products to the markets of the world. He did not object to a railway being constructed to a mineral field to develop it, but they should have expert opinion that it was abounding with minerals which were profitable to the State and to those who invested their little all in it. Wherever there was good agricultural land it was impossible to go wrong in constructing a railway, and if the land was available at a reasonable price there would be no difficulty in getting population to follow. The Commissioner said there were about 45 miles unsuitable for close settlement. A great many people had charged him with objecting to the railway because it did not go from Pittsworth, but it did not matter to him personally whether it went from Pittsworth or not, as he had an interest in the general prosperity of the country, and would like the railway extended through country which would be settled upon and be productive enough to enable the settlers who were courageous enough to go upon it to make both ends meet. The Royal Commission, which was appointed at an enormous expense in 1900, was as competent a body of gentlemen as it was possible to get in any part of Australia. It had been mentioned this evening that the commission, by a majority of one, recommended that the line to compete for the New South Wales traffic should be constructed *via* Warwick. He admitted that on paper that was the case, but they must bear in mind that the extension through Pittsworth would go through 80 miles of country perfectly watered, the climatic conditions of which could not be excelled, nor the fertility of the soil equalled, in any part of the world. Two of the commissioners favoured the construction of the railway as part of the *via recta* for strategic purposes, because that would be the best railway in case any of the Japanese or any other Eastern tribe dared to invade either Sydney or Melbourne. In connection with the construction of the *via recta* railway, he understood that those who chose that route were opposed to the extension from Pittsworth, because it would mean that they would have to go down the Toowoomba range instead of proceeding *via* Cunningham's Gap. Taking into consideration the survey of that line, the track was three times longer than it would be if they took it through the *via recta* and Cunningham's Gap. He considered that the present line would cost £300,000, but he accepted the correction of the Premier that it would cost less, but estimates of railway construction were often given which were found to be wrong. He was pleased that the railway had gone as far as Thane's Creek, as it had done an amount of good. He would be pleased to see the line extended further if the country could afford it, but when they had only a small amount to spend in railway construction, why not spend it in the best places to promote close settlement? As for wheat growing, if the seasons were favourable it might be all right, but from what he saw of the district he did

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not think they could get 200 acres there in one block that was suitable for wheat-growing. He was sorry to say that they had not enough railways on the Downs. Ever since they had had constitutional Government the Downs had not been looked after as it should have been. He would draw attention to the fact that the Southern line was extended to Roma, the Central line to Longreach, and the Northern line to Hughenden, all on the State's own credit. If it had not been for that those districts would have no

[7.30 p.m.] railways at all, and, therefore,

why should they not consent to the lands there being sold to make railways in other districts, where they were very much required to promote settlement. There were a few acres of freehold intervening between the settlement about 10 miles from Pittsworth before they came to Millmerran. It was asserted as an excuse for not building the line that a squatting family there had secured a great deal of land, and if a railway were built there it would enhance the value at the taxpayers' expense, and the owners of that land would get the benefit of it. But it was not so long since the railway was built from Dalby to Cattle Creek through 30 miles of private property, and why should the people of Millmerran be penalised because there was an intervening strip of private property between them and the head of railway at the present time? Taking the Premier's correction, the proposal before the House was to build a line to cost £250,000, but for one-sixth of that sum he knew where they could build a line that would be the means of opening up some of the finest scrub and forest lands that it was possible to imagine. It could produce cereals of all descriptions. In the district of Millmerran and Turallin there were 82,000 sheep, the property of selectors; 3,200 head of cattle; and 700 horses. The pigs they kept for home consumption, so they were not taken into consideration. In the Grass-tree district there were 16,000 sheep, 400 head of cattle, 300 horses, and 300 pigs—making a total of 98,000 sheep, 3,600 head of cattle, 1,000 horses, and 300 pigs. From Millmerran and Turallin 18,500 bushels of wheat were carted to Pittsworth over 28 miles of blacksoil plain. At Grass-tree they had 440 tons of wheat. At Millmerran and Turallin they had 1,120 acres under cultivation; at Grass-tree, 1,540 acres. On Yandi'la station they had over 1,000 acres under cultivation—he had no information regarding the yield; but he was told they had about 80,000 sheep. The wool from those sheep, and from the 98,000 belonging to the selectors, had to be carried over the black soil. There was also a dairy factory of very extensive dimensions, and built on the newest principles; but what was the good of it in hot weather unless they had the means of expediting the transit of the manufactured product to market? It might take two days to take it to Pittsworth, but, if rain came on, there was no saying when it would get there. With reference to the promise which was stated to have been made by the Secretary for Railways in regard to the construction of a line through that district, he would quote from the report of the hon. gentleman's speech which appeared in the *Courier* of 22nd August last. The hon. gentleman, in the course of an address presented to him by a most representative body of settlers at Millmerran, said—

He quite recognised potentialities of the district, and he desired to congratulate the residents on the spirit and enterprise which had enabled them, in the face of many difficulties, to accomplish so much, for they had already accomplished much in the way of agricultural development. They said they wanted a railway, and

he was not surprised that they were looking with long eyes to the day when they would have railway communication. The development of the Downs in an agricultural sense had been due to railway communication, and to it was attributable the advance which had been made in dairying. Dairying had given a great fillip to agricultural industry and to portions of Darling Downs where there was railway communication. Some of the settlers in this district who were nearly 25 miles from the railway head, were trying to carry on dairying, and he admired their pluck and enterprise.

* * * * *
They wanted a railway, but there were a great many people in various parts of the State who also wanted a railway, and manifestly it was quite impossible for him to promise all those railways with any hope that he would be able to redeem his promises. The only way in which these requests for railway communication could be dealt with was upon their merits. The only promise he could make now would be that this application would be dealt with on its merits. Their claims would be considered with the claims of other districts, but he would frankly tell them that he believed that the district that could produce a better claim to railway communication than this must be a very fine district indeed. (Hear, hear!)

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A strong reason in favour of it was that it would make available not only land which had been alienated, but it would enable the Government to realise upon the land still in the possession of the Crown. (Hear, hear!)

* * * * *
So far as this railway was concerned, he would lay all the information he had before his colleagues, and when the time came for the consideration of the various claims for railway construction, he thought in competition with the other districts the claims of this district would be found sufficiently weighty to induce the Government to construct this extension. (Applause.) He had not the least doubt that if they should decide to build the railway the immediate result would be to give a greater impetus to close settlement in this district than any other thing could give. He would promise them that their claims would receive the fullest and most favourable consideration. (Hear, hear!) They must recognise, however, that the powers of the Government in matters of railway construction were strictly limited by the means at their disposal. The amount of loan money at the disposal of the Government was limited, and that would in itself be a governing factor in the amount of railway construction that they would be able to undertake. But it was highly desirable that they should endeavour, as far as possible, to push out railways into districts where the response would be prompt, and where it would take the form of closer settlement and increased production. This was one of the districts in which he thought the response to the increased advantages which railway construction would give would be immediate and most gratifying. (Hear, hear!)

Comment from him was unnecessary. The hon. gentl-man made a diplomatic speech without committing himself to the construction of the railway. He continued—

The possibilities of the district were practically unlimited and he could promise them that their request for a railway would receive very sympathetic consideration at the hands of the Government. Without making any definite promise, he hoped it would not be long before they had a railway to some central point. . . . He thought it would be the duty of Parliament to give them that railway communication. (Applause.)

He might mention what a prominent gentleman from Victoria stated with respect to the possibilities and fertility of that part [8 p.m.] of the Darling Downs from Pitts-worth to Millmerran, comprising a radius of 25 miles. This was the Hon. Mr. Edgar, a keen commercial business man, and a member of the Upper House in the Victorian Parliament, who said—

If they had this part of Queensland in Victoria he ventured to say they would have half a dozen railway lines running through it—(Hear, hear!)—and they would advertise it the wide world over. . . . There was a magnificent territory here, and the people already settled were trying to do their best, but they wanted a little Government assistance. They wanted the better facilities that a railway would give to enable them to compete with other producers who had those advantages.

Mr. Tolmie said that if he had a railway in his pocket this was the first part of the State which would get it, and Mr. Hutton, from Victoria, said something to the same effect. He was not against the construction of this railway if there was any possibility of it paying the money expended on its construction, but as a practical man he was not prepared to vote for the expenditure of extravagant sums of public money on projects which were not likely to pay interest. Gigantic sums had been spent on public buildings which it would have been better to leave until the country could afford to build them. He could remember the struggles which the settlers in the Pittsworth district went through for years, and it was a district most suitable for the production of cereal crops. There was also another district—Oakey Creek—in which Mount Russell Estate was situated, and he could assure them that it was the best wheatgrowing district in Queensland to-day. A railway from Oakey Creek, Jondaryan, or Gowrie could be built right through Happy Valley on to Mount Russell, all the way through thickly settled parts, and if the railway went through that it would be more thickly settled. The line would be perfectly level. Another could be built from Clifton to Ellangowan, *via* Goomburra and Freestone—or a tramway could be built as a feeder to the main line. They had 13,000 miles of light railway in France as feeders to the main lines, and they had the means of shifting wagons without removing the goods. If we wanted to put the land in Queensland to its proper use, we must be practical, and not go to the gigantic expense of building lines in barren country. Where struggling people had been in a district for the last forty years, we were bound to attend to their wants before going into a big scheme for a railway of questionable value. He was not opposed to the construction of a railway, but to the unnecessary expenditure of money which could be more congenially and usefully expended in making the pioneers of the country happy and prosperous, and enabling them to take their produce to market with the greatest ease and remuneration, and thus conduce to the general prosperity of the country.

* Mr. J. LEAHY (*Bulloo*): The hon. gentleman who had just sat down had his sympathy, and he thought that of most members of the House. He had been telling them what was his share of the spoil of the Darling Downs combination. Some people said that our railway system was all wrong; that we had started on wrong lines; and, if our predecessors knew as much as we did now the probability is that they might not have done a great many things which they did. He was quite prepared to admit that if our railways were to be built over again they would not be laid down on the exact lines which they are, as a great many railways and other public works had been built in the wrong place. But that was no reflection on the people who preceded us, and it was doubtful if we would have acted differently, and he thought that the Parliaments of the past compared more than favourably with the present Parliament. Probably, those who followed us would reflect very strongly on some of our actions, but he doubted whether they would have done wiser things than we were doing now. However, we had to take a thing which was done, whether it was done rightly or wrongly. Personally, he was opposed, in the first place, to the line going from Warwick to Thane's Creek. [MR. MAXWELL: Did not you introduce it?] The hon. member was wrong; he should support the line from Pittsworth as its proper starting place, but they could not shut their eyes to

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the fact that 25 miles had been constructed from Warwick to Thane's Creek, whether rightly or wrongly; so, if the line was extended, the proper course would be from Thane's Creek under the circumstances. That presented another question—whether the time had arrived to follow on that course at all? He was inclined to think that it was not, because a great many other parts of the State required railway communication with far greater urgency than this particular district. He did not think that the furthest portion of that district was more than 100 miles from a railway, and there were many districts in Queensland that would think they were very well off if they were that close to a railway. He was speaking now with regard to the West of Queensland where they had an enormous territory, a territory bigger than Victoria, and where they could hide Tasmania, and no one would know anything about it. That territory might just as well be in the Pacific Ocean as where it was, as it was not bringing in any revenue to the State. They should try and develop it and provide it with some means of enabling them to meet bad times and fight the droughts. It was districts like this that were so badly dealt with when they met with those natural disasters, but the Government did not seem to pay any attention in that direction at all. It was Sir Thomas Melleraith, he believed, who introduced the phrase that they should extend their railways out in the direction of the setting sun. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No; it was Sir Arthur Palmer, before Sir Thomas Melleraith's time.] Well, it met with the approval of Sir Thomas Melleraith afterwards, at any rate, and that was his idea, to extend the railways out. They must know that the amount of prosperity that they had enjoyed years ago, and the amount of prosperity they would enjoy in the future, would not be possible but for their Western districts. For the last five years they had had very severe droughts in the West, and things had been pretty bad, but he felt that prosperous times for the West would come again with a return of good seasons. When they did, money would be plentiful. There would be prosperity in the West, and everything would be in a flourishing condition in the coastal towns. To meet that they should extend their railways out in that direction. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We have already passed a resolution to extend a railway 200 miles in that direction.] Where was that? [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Cloncurry and Lilydale.] He was speaking of State railways. If he had the choice of voting for the construction of the Cloncurry and Goondiwindi lines he would sooner vote for both together than throw out one. The construction of the Cloncurry line would compensate twofold or threefold for the loss that would be sustained by the Goondiwindi line. He would have liked to see the Government bring in three or four more railway proposals. They had a proposal to extend the Northern line towards the setting sun, and another to send out the Central line. How was it that there was nothing about extending the South-Western line? The survey was complete to Thargomindah, and where was there any mention of extending the railway there? [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I heard you say yourself that the time had not arrived to build a railway to Thargomindah.] Nonsense! But there is not even any reference to the extending of the line there. They were going to build other lines to protect their trade, but what was the good of protecting their trade in a little pocket and leave a whole district without protection?

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The trade of the West was just as important to Brisbane as the trade of the coast. If the Premier was not going to extend the South-Western line he might have made some sympathetic mention of it, and he might have stated that the line would be extended in the future. The Premier, in introducing the proposal, had given them a description of the country, and told them a number of other things which in themselves were the merest forms of abstraction unless some deduction was drawn from them. But the hon. gentleman did not draw any deduction from them to show that it would be a paying line. That was what they wanted to know. Railway lines were constructed for three or four different reasons—for strategic purposes; for national purposes; for paying purposes, or to secure their trade—and they had to know on which of those lines the works were proposed. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I told you we were building this line for commercial strategical purposes, and to develop the country now lying idle there.] The question was how much could they afford to pay for building a line for strategical purposes. The very essence of business was to conduct it on lines that would give a profit, and that was the principle on which they should consider their railways. The hon. member for Cunningham had said [8.30 p.m.] that there were 200,000 sheep in the Goondiwindi district—that that was the stock returns of the Goondiwindi petty sessions district. He (Mr. Leahy) had some interest in the matter, and he knew that all the wool was coming from there to Brisbane, so that they had the trade already for Brisbane which they said they were going to get by building this railway. The whole of that country was not sheep country at all. If they looked at the map issued by the Railway Department they would see that there was a good deal of cattle country there. They did not keep cattle on country that was fit for sheep, in the Southern portion of the State at any rate. Assuming that this country carried 250,000 sheep, what additional revenue would they bring to the railway, assuming that each fleece weighed 4 lb. of scoured wool on an average. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How do you know those figures are correct? Were they taken lately?] Yes; they were taken last February. Even supposing that this district carried 500,000 sheep—he was sure the Goondiwindi petty sessions district would not carry more than that—what additional revenue would the carriage of the wool bring to the railway? If the line came from Moree to Mungindi, the district beyond Goondiwindi would be far nearer to that line. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It would be far nearer to a port by the Goondiwindi line.] Yes; but there was such a hedging around with conditions—giving with one hand and taking with the other—that it was extremely difficult to see where they were in the matter. Some of those New South Wales politicians, if they treated Queensland in the way in which it had been treated since federation, would see that they would take away a lot of that trade. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If that is used against us we can use it against our neighbours. We have the advantage of the geographical position.] He admitted that the trade along our own side of the border was the trade of Queensland. He had always said so, and he was prepared to make any reasonable sacrifice to preserve that trade for the State. Supposing that district carried 500,000 sheep and each sheep grew 4 lb. of scoured wool, that would only amount to 800 tons of wool. Suppose it cost

£1 a ton to bring that wool over that railway: that would be £300 altogether. Why that was not sufficient to pay the engine-drivers on the railway. And they would not get very much from the agricultural point of view. What did they find in connection with people engaged in agriculture on the Darling Downs? In many places they were engaged in grazing sheep instead of growing corn or other cereals. When those people were growing crops instead of growing stock that was the time to extend their railways out. Whether a farmer would grow crops or not depended to a large extent on the man's family. If he had sons over fourteen years of age he could put them to the work, but if he had to pay the standard wage he would not be able to do it, as it would not leave him any margin of profit. If people who had agricultural farms on the Darling Downs used their farms for grazing stock, how could they expect the people who took up land further out to use their land for agriculture? With reference to the working expenses and maintenance, seeing the Killarney line of 28 miles cost £6,000, he could not understand how the Commissioner could estimate that the expenditure on a line of 101 miles would be only £9,000. The line was intended to cut into the New South Wales trade to some extent. He did not think that was a good principle to adopt. They should be satisfied if they secured their own trade. [THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Who said we wanted to cut into their trade? Several hon. members on the other side said so, but he was very glad the hon. gentleman challenged the statement, because if they adopted that principle the people of New South Wales would be entitled to do the same thing. It was far better to make an amicable arrangement with the New South Wales Government by which a kind of scientific frontier would be established and useless expenditure saved to both States. Personally, he thought it would be better not to proceed with the line in the meantime. There were other portions of the State more in need of railways. He was exceedingly glad that the Government were going on with some public works, which, if they would not be reproductive, were introduced on a supposition that they would pay. For a long time many hon. members on the other side were opposed to the spending of public money. Some of them might say that this would not increase the national debt. While it was true that we were not going to borrow any more money, still, if it was not desirable to spend it in public works, the Government could purchase debentures, and thus reduce the national debt; so that in any case it had the effect of increasing the public debt. He was glad to see that hon. members sitting behind the Government were at last coming to the conclusion that one of the ideas they had supported for so long was nonsensical, and that they were coming back to the policy of the Government which they had denounced when sitting in opposition. He made those remarks not in any spirit of bitterness, for he was very pleased to see the change. The resolution was not a party question. His only objection to the line was that he did not see that it was going to pay in the near future. In fact, he did not think it would pay working expenses for some years unless something unforeseen turned up. He hoped the Government were not going to stop the Northern line if this line was not passed. Taking the two lines together, anyone would certainly be more than justified in supporting the motion.]

Mr. RANKIN (*Burrum*) intended to support the resolution, although it struck him that the

whole thought and energy of the Government was being devoted towards the construction of lines of railway towards the setting sun. The Government deserved credit for having administered the affairs of the State so far on economical principles. There were two factors which governed a railway policy. One was whether a railway would pay, and the other was what assistance it would give to land settlement; which of the two was the more important he was not prepared to say, but if this line was not going to pay immediately, as was contended by the hon. member for Bulloo, the Government might reasonably turn their attention to some lines lying much closer to their door that would pay from the very start. In his electorate they had been struggling for years to secure a very small extension from Cordalba to Booyal Scrub, a distance of 15 miles, at an estimated cost of £34,000. The construction of the line would open up something like 100,000 acres of splendid land, 6,000 of which were capable of growing sugar. A portion of that area would be placed under cane immediately, and would produce a great deal of freight for the main line. It would also touch a very large timber district, which would give a great deal of traffic. Then it would also traverse one of the best limestone fields in the Wide Bay district. In that district 17,000 or 18,000 tons of limestone were used every year, most of which was brought from a considerable distance.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think it will be in order to advocate lines in other districts on this occasion. I allowed the hon. member for Cambooya to argue at considerable length in favour of an alternative route to the present proposal. It was quite in order for him to do that, but I do not think it will be in order for other hon. members to speak in favour of lines in other districts, except by way of incidental reference.

Mr. RANKIN: The line under discussion would cost about £250,000, and it was within the province of any hon. member, he thought, to raise his voice against such a large expenditure when he was able to point out where a less expenditure would be productive of greater revenue. Apparently, the policy of the Government had been to propose railways in the North, Centre and South, while other portions of the State were ignored. The Darling Downs must be supplied with a railway, whilst other districts, whose members were more silent than the representatives of the Darling Downs, got nothing. He understood that the policy foreshadowed was not complete. [THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Hear, hear!] Well, if any other railways were brought in, he hoped the line he had mentioned would be borne in mind. He would support the resolution, because he understood the line would lead to a considerable increase in settlement, and, if the report of the Railway Commissioner was to be relied on, the line was likely to prove payable.

* Mr. FORSYTH (*Carpentaria*): The trouble with some hon. members was that they had not the information they ought to have. They had also conflicting reports regarding the line from Mr. Thallon and the late Mr. Gray, and the question was whose report they should take. In view of the conflicting opinions of two Commissioners, they should have been furnished with the report of some one outside the Railway Department altogether. Mr. Thallon said—

For the reasons that this line will promote closer settlement, will utilise a large area of rich land which is now practically idle and therefore of little value to

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the State, and will retain Queensland trade to Queensland ports. I strongly recommend its construction, and that without delay.

In his report in 1900 Mr. Gray said—

I have so far refrained from drawing comparisons between the alternative routes from Warwick and Pittsworth to Goondiwindi and St. George, because the proposed line has been referred to me as a branch *per se* to Thane's Creek. It, however, this branch is intended as a part of the projected extension to Goondiwindi, and towards St. George, I should certainly be afforded an opportunity, after examining the district, of expressing my views, as from what I have heard of the country traversed by the trial surveys from Warwick and Pittsworth, the information in my possession is such that the Government should certainly hesitate before committing themselves to the construction of any great length of line by either route, as I am clearly of opinion that neither line will be a profitable investment.

Then Mr. Thallon said that there were hundreds of thousands of acres of good land around Inglewood, whilst Mr. Gray said he was given to understand that little, if any, land beyond a point 25 miles out from Pittsworth was fit for agricultural settlement until Inglewood was reached. There was no doubt the Secretary for Railways had given the Committee a good deal of information, but the principal reason many members intended to support the line was not so much because it was going to open up a large quantity of agricultural land as that it would divert from the New South Wales railways a good deal of traffic which rightly belonged to Queensland. The Secretary for Railways had stated that that amount of trade was worth £165,000, but what they wanted to know was how much this railway would get from the carriage of those goods. The late member for Balonne, Mr. Story, knew the country intimately, and in 1900—page 2448 of *Hansard* for that year—he said—

But what has been the result? The woolsheds that supply the material for the carriage on the railway—the larger sheds at Thurungoona, Timenbarra, and others—are 40 or 50 miles from Cunnamulla and about 120 miles from Bourke terminus, and so the extension from Charleville to Cunnamulla has absolutely stopped the border traffic in that district. Though the border itself, which only consists of a wire-netting fence, is half-way between Cunnamulla and Bourke, Cunnamulla has secured the whole of the trade by that extension from Charleville. In 1895 there was £146,000 worth of Queensland produce went across the border to Bourke, and was carried over the New South Wales railways; in 1898 there was not one single sixpence worth went across, so the whole of that immense amount of trade was secured to Cunnamulla, was carried over our railways to Brisbane, was handled by Brisbane merchants, and the whole of the stores for the same district went from Brisbane, and the trade is now entirely Queensland and Brisbane trade.

He was not raising this question because he was against the Bill, but they had not got sufficient information before them. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have more information about this railway than

[9 p.m.] about any railway passed in the House for twenty years.] There was not sufficient information as to cost, and the Commissioner said it was impossible to give an estimate. Mr. Thallon stated that the total cost of the working expenses of the railway would be about £18,000, which included maintenance, locomotive expenditure, and interest at 3 per cent. on capital, and that the line would have a revenue of £28,000, which would leave £10,000 towards the cost of working existing lines. Did the Premier honestly believe that this estimate would be realised? There was no other line in Queensland which would come out on the same basis. The Townsville line passed through the very best land in Queensland. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Oh, no.] It passed through Charters Towers

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and Ravenswood, and only paid £4 9s. 7d. per cent., and yet Mr. Thallon said this particular line, which was only agricultural and pastoral, was not only going to pay working expenses and 3 per cent. on capital invested, but give £10,000 as well. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are wrong there—I think you have misread the report.] If the revenue was £28,000 and the expenses £18,000, it left £10,000. Where was there a line capable of showing a surplus like that? The Killarney line did not do so. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is no comparison.] It was closely settled with farmers, and was one of the very best districts in Queensland, every inch of which had been taken up and utilised, while this land was not, and he did not believe we were likely to have a surplus of £10,000. Even if it paid 2 per cent. in addition to the expenses, it would do remarkably well. The Thane Creek line went through a good deal of country taken up by farmers, and probably the Killarney line would be developed and pay better than it was doing at present. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is doing very well.] He thought the general consensus would be that if this line paid working expenses, without interest, it would do remarkably well. These figures were misleading; he did not believe in them at all, and, to be a guide to enable them to arrive at a conclusion, they should be given correctly. There was not a single man in the House, the Premier included, who could possibly believe that this line would pay the whole of the working expenses and interest, and show £10,000 to the good. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is at least one line paying more.] The only line paying more was that running from Townsville out West, which had the advantage of the Charters Towers and Ravenswood Goldfields. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Mount Morgan is paying.] That was only a small branch line. He challenged any hon. member to say that he honestly believed that the figures were correct. [Mr. TOLMIE: Do you think the Commissioner does not honestly believe them?] He thought he had made some mistake in the figures. Could the hon. gentleman show him any line in Queensland which paid on the same basis as this agricultural line? [Mr. TOLMIE: It is not an agricultural line.] It was an agricultural and pastoral line. He had no objection to the line, and if it was likely to pay it should be built. The House desired to further the interests of the agricultural and pastoral industries for the purpose of bringing revenue and opening up the vast area of country which we had, but it was unfair to try and induce them to pass a measure on such a report. It was more than probable there would be a deficit of £20,000, which would have to be borne by the country. The late Government was blamed for building so many railways which would not pay. There was no doubt the Cloncurry line would pay in the near future, but he questioned whether the line from Longreach to Stonchenge, or Warwick to Goondiwindi, was likely to pay for a considerable time, and if they paid 2 per cent. they would do remarkably well. A competent man should be employed to travel all over the country and find out all about it, even if it took a month to do so, so that they would know the actual state of the country. How could they pass this railway according to the report, as it passed through 40 or 50 miles of indifferent country? He believed in the Government running lines to agricultural districts comprising a large area of Crown lands. He did not intend to oppose the line,

but his impression was that it would not pay. They were simply asked to act upon false lines, as they had not got the information at their disposal which they should have. The line would cost £235,000, and a considerable amount of interest for some years would have to be found by the State. He would not be surprised if the consolidated revenue was burdened with £20,000 a year for some years to come, and he did not think the fact that they would have to pay that interest had been fully considered.

Mr. TOLMIE (*Drayton and Toowoomba*) was in accord with a great deal of what had been said by the hon. member for Bulloo, and he would have been inclined to support the construction of a line from Pittsworth to Goondiwindi in the first place, but the line had already gone into the wilderness some 25 miles. (Laughter.) It had partly gone through the worst country it had to traverse, and, with the exception of a few miles further, the line would tap one of the best producing districts in Southern Queensland. At the present time we laboured under considerable difficulty in bringing about land settlement. Although the Minister for Lands had told them there were millions of acres available for settlement, it was unfortunately too true that much of that land did not commend itself to settlers. [THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are aware that a great deal of land is commending itself to people now who would not take it a year ago?] He was quite aware of a great many people declining to take up land for settlement, but who were looking for something better. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Something softer.] It was only right they should have something softer. This line would open up many thousand acres of land which would be eagerly sought after, and the reason why he would like to see the line taken to that district was that it would save the land for the people of Queensland. The most difficult foe we had to contend against was prickly pear, which was spreading over our richest lands. It was making its way in the district through which this proposed line would go; but it had not yet taken possession, and if we could save that part of the country from prickly pear, we should do something for the State of Queensland. He thought the land would be taken up in small blocks and used for dairying and agriculture, and by that means the march of the prickly pear would be arrested. If the line did nothing more than that, it would more than pay the State for the cost of its construction. He did not think the hon. member for Carpentaria was correct in saying that the late Government were blamed for the construction of railways. [Mr. J. LEAHY: For increasing the national debt.] If they were blamed, it was for the want of construction of railways. [Mr. J. LEAHY: I sympathise with you—you did not get that line after all.] He was in the same position with regard to that line if he wanted it as when the hon. gentleman was in power. It was interesting to note that this line was advocated even fifty years ago. He noted in the *Courier* files for 1835 that a motion had been brought forward in New South Wales that an address be presented to the Governor in Council praying that His Excellency the Governor would be pleased to place the sum of £3,000 on the Estimates for the purpose of obtaining a survey and an estimate for the construction of a line from the head of the Brisbane River, at Ipswich, in the direction of New England and the district beyond. The arguments which were adduced fifty years ago were sound to-day. It was then contended that this land

would be available for close settlement, and that it would be an extremely wrong thing to send people out into the wilderness to cultivate this land and give them no access to market. People who would willingly take up that land were prohibited from doing so because they knew that the cost of taking produce to market would not enable them to grow it at a profit. He would have been pleased indeed if the Premier had seen his way to include in his railway policy a number of shorter lines in districts which could be made available for settlement. There was no district which needed a railway more than that referred to by the hon. member for Cambooya. He hoped the Premier would see the necessity of carrying out a railway in that district, as it would settle people on the land, and open up the lands which were bordering upon that district, which might otherwise be neglected and given over to prickly pear. [Mr. PAGET: You have not got a railway in your pocket?] No; if he had he would hand it over to the district he was referring to. There was another district which he would hand over his railway to, if he had one, and that was in the direction of Nanango, in the back country of Maryborough. There was a large population there who were desirous of settling on the land, and he hoped that before long the Government would be able to see their way to give facilities to these people to settle on the land. They must give facilities to people to settle on the land, otherwise they could not expect them to do it. He always advocated the construction of railways, but he thought if the lines were extended west that the West should pay something for them. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Look how much more they have to pay for their products than what you are paying.] They might have to pay six times more in the West than they did on the Darling Downs, but the Darling Downs producers were paying quite enough in proportion to the amount of stuff they produced, and the Western districts should do the same. [Mr. LEAHY: What about the starving stock rates?] If the necessity for starving stock rates was shown to the Commissioner, they would find that his sympathies were just as strong towards the pastoralists as they were three or four years ago, when he provided starving stock rates. If the line proposed were constructed it would be instrumental in developing a portion of the country that would give an almost immediate response to any capital that might be employed in developing it, and that was what they wanted in every part of Queensland.

Mr. HAWTHORN (*Enoggera*) thought every hon. member of the House could, with confidence, give his support to the construction of the railway to Goondiwindi, more particularly himself and the other city and metropolitan representatives, from the fact that it would mean a great increase in the trade to Brisbane from that portion of the country. When they heard the Premier say that five years ago it was estimated that New South Wales was getting £166,000 in trade from that district every year, they would be justified in doing anything that would bring that trade to Brisbane. It had been the object of the Chamber of Commerce, and other persons interested in Brisbane, to try and get this trade away from New South Wales. It was not as though they were doing anything that was against the Federal Constitution, or that was unneighbourly, because the trade was really Queensland trade. By force of circumstances, and the position of New South Wales railways, they had been unable to get this trade, which really belonged to Brisbane by right. In any case, they were not doing anything that was

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uncharitable to New South Wales. From the Commissioner's report, it appeared that there was a large quantity of agricultural and pastoral land in that district, and they wanted settlement and population. There was a great demand for agricultural land at present, and it was the duty of the Government and the members of the House to give facilities for encouraging settlement and giving land where there was land available. Although they had a large amount of Crown land throughout Queensland available for settlement, very little of it was what might be called agricultural land, and at present there was certainly a dearth of land of that description. The advantage of this railway was that the bulk of the land it passed through was Crown land. A good many areas would practically be falling in shortly, which the Government could resume, and, in the case of those where the leases were longer, the Government would have power under the 1902 Act to reassess and value that land, because under section 11 it was enacted that whereby the erection of any public works in any district the Minister was of opinion that the value of the land was being increased, he had the power to ask the Land Court to reassess the rent, and, if necessary, to increase it. The Commissioner strongly recommended the line, for the reason that it would promote closer settlement, would utilise a large area of rich land which was now practically idle, and therefore of little value to the State, and would retain Queensland trade to Queensland ports, and he strongly recommended its construction, and that without delay. Under these circumstances, the Premier had done well to bring the legislation before the House. From what he could see, there was very little opposition to the proposal, and he would have great pleasure in recording his vote in support of the resolution.

* Mr. JONES (*Burnett*) considered that all railway lines should be constructed on the merits of the district, into which they penetrated, and to gain this knowledge they were guided by expert opinion. It was far better to construct railways under that system than by building them at the instigation of the members who represented the district, as had been done in the past. The member for Leichhardt quoted from Mr. Gray's report in opposition to this line, but, if Mr. Gray's reports had been followed in every instance, they would have had very few agricultural lines built. The leader of the Opposition must have had Mr. Gray's report in his mind when he said that the Degilbo line was not a good one. The leader of the Opposition had no personal knowledge of that district. [Mr. FORSYTH: Will it pay?] If it was extended further, he was sure it would pay. The line was not completed yet, so they could not tell whether it would pay or not. The member for Carpentaria said that a number of the lines that had been built recently were not paying, and he evidently referred to the Kingaroy line. [Mr. FORSYTH: I did not.] That line produced £600 of revenue a month, and it was likely to pay. This was a line that should be extended, and the further it was extended the better it would pay. He would like to see these lines constructed by day labour. [Mr. FORSYTH: Pass the railway first.] He would like to say something about the wages first. The men engaged on the line should be paid a fair wage for their work, and he was sorry to say good wages were not paid on the Wetheron construction. In his opinion, the fault rested with themselves in not seeing that a minimum wage clause was

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inserted in the proposal. Last night they passed a railway that would open up a vast mineral field, and the line they were asked to sanction that day would open up a large agricultural district. He had some knowledge of that district, as he had travelled from Inglewood to Texas and Goondiwindi; it was very good country, and he thought the line would pay. He had much pleasure in supporting the proposal, because the resources of the district warranted the extension of the line to Goondiwindi.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): This constituted the second proposal in the Government railway policy, and it was one which he believed, next to the proposal to extend [9.30 p.m.] the line from Longreach to Stonehenge into the rabbit-infested country, was the least deserving of support. [Mr. KERR: Have you ever been to Stonehenge?] No; but the Commissioner condemned the proposed railway right out of hand. The Government, in the declaration of their railway policy, were going on something the same lines that were adopted at the time of the £10,000,000 loan—that was, giving a railway to the North, Centre, and South. The two railways to Cloncurry and Stonehenge were just given to the North and Centre so that the Premier might get through this railway in which his constituency was interested. It was a political railway, and Warwick was written all over it. There was one peculiar fact in connection with the Government's railway policy. The Minister for Lands recently had a railway constructed in his district, and the Home Secretary had one passed in his district. The Premier wanted this one in his district; and the other one, from Longreach to Stonehenge, was one in which the Treasurer and the member for Barcoo were interested. (Laughter.) It would appear as if these particular persons held a caucus meeting and decided amongst themselves how they would divide these railways between them. The hon. member for Barcoo, for his loyal support to the coalition and for keeping them in power, was to be rewarded by the construction of a railway from Longreach to Stonehenge. Mr. Blair, the editor of the *Bulletin*, had consistently supported the construction of the line from Longreach to Stonehenge, and he had induced the present Treasurer to support it also.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. LESINA: When a railway proposal was brought forward, he could criticise the Government on the whole of their railway policy.

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member that he will not be in order if he discusses any railway proposal other than that now before the House.

Mr. LESINA: He would not dispute the Chairman's ruling, because it might lead to a long debate, and he wished to get home early. (Laughter.) The Premier and the hon. member for Bulloo both pointed out that they were not very anxious that it should go abroad, but the railway was to prevent certain trade going to New South Wales. If that trade did go to New South Wales, then it went by its natural channel; but the Premier, with his protectionist superstition, was anxious to divert that trade from New South Wales to Queensland per medium of this railway. [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He is anxious for the trade to go to its natural port.] To talk about another State taking away trade was a barbaric notion

which characterised people at different times. What harm did New South Wales do if she did take Queensland trade? The man that sold his wheat or his wool in Sydney did not sell them for nothing. The idea was to take the trade through Brisbane, so that certain Brisbane merchants and middlemen would be engaged in receiving the hides, wool, and all that sort of thing. It was the old protectionist superstition, which was just as rotten applied in this way as when applied to the tariff. Trade was the most natural thing in the world, and the freer it was the better it was. It was said that if this line were constructed the trade of Queensland would be advanced. How would it? If the line were taken to Mungindi, it would not junction with the Queensland line. They had a junction with the New South Wales railways at Wallangarra, but that was not a paying line. Tenterfield was only 11 miles from the Queensland border, and although it was 200 miles nearer to Brisbane, the produce from there went to Sydney, because it was the most natural channel for it to go. The trade would go to New South Wales if it belonged to that State. That was proved by the argument of the hon. member for Bulloo, which was unchallenged and was unrefuted. The 280 miles of railway which the Government proposed to construct would cost something like £600,000, according to the Commissioner's figures, but that estimate was likely to be largely exceeded. At £3,000 a mile, the three lines would cost £840,000. That meant that the whole of the loan fund would be absorbed, and any hon. member who asked for a railway during the next four or five years would not be able to get it unless they again resorted to borrowing. [Mr. J. LEAHY: Cannot we sell land?] If they sold land at 10s. an acre to pay for the three railways, they would need to sell 1,680,000 acres; and, as they could not sell more than 500,000 acres in one year, it would take nearly three and a-half years to sell enough land. Now, where would the money come from to build the little line that the hon. member for Burrum spoke of, if he voted for this line? He would have to wait until another Parliament was elected, and the hon. member might be at even a greater disadvantage then. Every hon. member who had promised his constituents to endeavour to secure the construction of a railway should vote against this proposal, because, if they voted for this railway in the constituency of the Secretary for Railways, and for the railways wanted by the Treasurer and the Home Secretary, the chances were 10,000 to 1 that they would not get the lines they wanted for the next four or five years unless the Treasurer resorted to borrowing. If the line was started from Pittsworth, there would be 30 miles saved in distance. That represented, at £3,000 a mile, £90,000—or £60,000, taking the cost at £2,000 per mile. If the hon. member for Burrum voted against this proposal, he would place the Government in the position of being able to devote £34,000 of that amount to the building of the line he mentioned. The railway would cost £250,000, and that would not pay. He was not going to tie himself up like that. If he and other hon. members voted for this railway, every time any of them asked the Government for a railway they would be told that they had reached the limit of their tether in regard to expenditure of public money. As the Treasurer could not sell more than 500,000 acres in any one year, they would have the Secretary for Public Lands asking Parliament to give him power to sell another 500,000 acres a year, and perhaps he might propose to reduce the price to 5s. an acre, as he attempted to do during the first

session of this Parliament. This railway alone would absorb the whole of the land they could sell in one year. Then the Cloncurry and Stonehenge lines would have to be paid for out of the loan fund, and that would leave very little to construct any other line. The Government had promised in their programme to construct various lines into agricultural districts. What about those lines? Not one of them could be built with the exception of the line from Dalby to Cattle Creek, which went through 30 miles of private property, and no attempt was made to secure a betterment. That was the sort of policy they were supporting. What did they get out of it? Whilst the Treasurer was getting everything for his rapacious constituency, Labour members who supported him got nothing. Before the hon. gentleman was twelve months in office he deliberately took £43,000 off the Estimates for the construction of a line from Clermont to Blair-Athol, from which mine the Government got thousands of tons of coal for the Central Railway and on every ton of which they lost 10s. On page 7 of the Treasurer's Financial Statement he said—

Public sentiment in regard to Governmental expenditure has been vitiated to such an extent as to render a return to a sane financial policy the most difficult and unpopular task that any Government can undertake. Nevertheless, it is essential that Queensland should refrain from borrowing, at least for a number of years, until she has recovered a sense of self-reliance, a consciousness of being able to stand on her own feet.

It is evident, however, that in a young country like Queensland, where there is a constant and natural demand for reproductive development work, a certain amount of provision must be made for it year by year. To meet that legitimate want and yet avoid further borrowing is the policy of the Government. Clearly, if we are to accomplish so desirable a purpose, we must not only husband our available loan money, but we must find some means of adding to what I may call our capital account.

The hon. gentleman had husbanded the available loan money by dipping into the funds to the extent of £26,000 for the Orient Company. Next he took out several thousand pounds for the Secretary for Public Lands for the Dalby-Cattle Creek Railway. Then the Home Secretary wanted several hundreds of thousands of pounds for the construction of a line to Cloncurry. He got his little slice. Then the Treasurer and the leader of the Labour party asked where they came in, and Mr. Blair, of the Rockhampton *Bulletin*, wrote half a dozen leading articles asking where he came in. Then the Secretary for Railways said, "Well, if you support the Goondiwindi line, I will give you the Stonehenge Railway." As a matter of fact, the Secretary for Railways would not have cared if the Cloncurry and Stonehenge lines had been thrown out provided he got this line, which would not pay. All those calls upon the loan fund would very soon exhaust it, and the question was how was it to be replenished. As he pointed out, the Treasurer was going to sell land wherever he could, and pay the proceeds into the account created by the Bill which he fought the other night. When Parliament met next session the Secretary for Lands would introduce a Bill to sell the public estate at 5s. an acre, and, knowing that he could obtain parliamentary sanction from a pliant majority, he might increase the area to 1,000,000 acres.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. gentleman will not open up the question of sales of land on the resolution now before the Committee.

Mr. Jackson.]

Mr. LESINA: As he would have an opportunity of dealing with that question when they were discussing where the money was to be obtained from for the construction of the various lines proposed by the Government, he would say no more at present except to say that there seemed to be no other construction to be placed upon the Government policy than that it was their intention to build these railways in Ministers' constituencies by means of land sales. He was opposed to that kind of policy. There was a good deal of superstition about railways not paying. Railways paid indirectly if not directly, because they assisted settlement, and their construction should be undertaken; but the argument that this line was constructed for commercial and practical purposes

[10 p.m.] was not justified. From a commercial point of view this railway would not pay. He would like to see some of the shorter lines undertaken which had been passed on different occasions. [Mr. J. LEAHY: You were not satisfied when we were going to build the Blair Athol line.] He was not enamoured with the Blair Athol line, and if he thought it was not going to pay he would vote against the proposal. He would always oppose political railways, although most of the railways built in the State had been political railways. Then, as an alternative, it had been suggested that a line should be taken from Cannamulla to Bourke, and that the trunk lines should be connected. He believed if all our trunk lines could be immediately connected, a great advantage would result; but to undertake isolated constructions like this to the New South Wales border, when a border line was constructed to Wallangarra, was an evidence that the idea that they were going to tap the New South Wales trade was fallacious, not based on experience, and a weak justification for the line. The arguments of the Premier were not convincing, and although they had the report of the Commissioner in favour of it, there was room for doubt, as a previous Commissioner recommended an entirely different starting point. The Premier asked them to take the present Commissioner's report and put their faith in the construction of the line, but when they came to deal with the next railway line they would also take his report, and throw it out as readily as they passed this one.

* The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS thought that no man who had got the ordinary decent instincts of a civilised man could make the speech they had just listened to and sit on the same side of the House as the hon. member did. [Mr. LESINA: It is a non-party question—the Premier told us.] He judged that, not merely by the deliverance they had just heard from the hon. member, but from a dozen other speeches he had made. [Mr. LESINA: I will say what I like.] No matter how openly or secretly hostile any member might be towards the Government, no one who had what any civilised man termed decent feelings should ever sit on the same side of the House as the Government did who delivered that speech. Some scientists said that every action we performed we could trace to some ancestor or other, and that the longer we lived the more we discovered that the ruling principle in life was heredity. He would have to turn to some explanation of that kind for a satisfactory solution of the reason which induced the hon. member to take a course so thoroughly opposed to the whole party and sit where he did. [Mr. LESINA: You are not in order, you know.] He was in order, and would say so until the Chairman called him to order. If the hon. member did what was always done in Parliaments in the British Empire, and decided

[*Mr. Lesina.*

to sit behind the men who represented his political ideal in the Chamber, instead of sitting at the end of that back cross-bench, he would go bang across the floor of the House and sit immediately opposite, and directly behind the hon. member for Bulloo. [Mr. LESINA: Ah, ah!] The hon. member for Bulloo, for some reason—[Mr. J. LEAHY: Is this the question before the House?] [Mr. LESINA: Of course it is not.]—for some reason or other—

Mr. LEAHY rose to a point of order. Was the Minister in order in this diatribe against himself and others, because if he was he should have to reply to him?

The CHAIRMAN: I am not aware that the Secretary for Lands has made any undue allusion to the hon. member for Bulloo. The hon. member for Clermont has made an attack upon the Government, and I think the Minister is in order in replying to it.

Mr. LESINA: He is making an attack on me; his reflections are of a personal nature.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: "How the galled jade winces." He had said nothing which justified the use of the word "diatribe" by the hon. member for Bulloo. [Mr. J. LEAHY: You are always classing myself and the hon. member for Clermont together.] He had an admiration for the hon. gentleman's undoubted ability—he had his defects, but undoubtedly he was a man of distinct ability; and he must congratulate him on having for a brief period been a kind of magnet to a "will o' the wisp" parliamentarian like the hon. member for Clermont. However, he rose to deal with one or two remarks which fell from the hon. member for Bulloo, but before he did that he would just, by way of farewell—[laughter]—deal with the hon. member for Clermont. [Mr. JENKINSON: You cannot shake him off that easily.] [Mr. LESINA: I will hang on until I see him outside this House driving a lorry for a crust; that is all he is fitted for; he will never make half a crown at the bar.] That is very hard. [Laughter.] He had had it thrown in his teeth before that he had made unduly large sums at the bar, although he felt he never made one-half as much as he would have liked. Now he was said to have made nothing! The hon. member for Clermont opposed the construction of this line chiefly on the ground that it was not going to pay. He reiterated that over and over again, and said we were throwing the money away, and appealed to his political leader on the other side in his remarks. [Laughter.] He appealed to the memory of hon. members as to whether during the last two or three days they had not heard the hon. member, with great emphasis, laying down the principle that it was absolutely fallacious to attempt to gauge the value of a railway, by the question that he reiterated to-night in regard to this line, as to whether it was going to pay or not. He said that lines would pay indirectly by numerous indirect channels which were not visible in the ledgers of the Railway Department. [Mr. LESINA: All other things being equal.] And he came forward to-night, with even a more lightning-like change than ordinarily distinguished him, and took an exactly opposite line of criticism with regard to this railway. What was wrong with this railway in the eyes of the hon. member was that it proceeded from the Government? He would leave the rank and file of this new party and go to the head of the party, the hon. member for Bulloo. [Hon. R. PHILP: This is burlesque.] The hon. member for Bulloo was in an embarrassing position, because if he hit out too hard at the Government on this railway he was striking against himself and hitting some of his own side.

But if he had understood him correctly, he had based whatever adverse criticism he had to make to this proposal by comparing it to Western lines, and basing its capacity for paying on the fact that it would run through pastoral country. [Mr. J. LEAHY: I did not put it that way.] He was not prepared to deny the correctness of what the hon. gentleman said in that respect, and it was quite possible if this line was estimated as a purely pastoral line it might not pay. But this line was not a Western line; it ran through a vast area of country which would be exceedingly useful to the Lands Department in the immediate future. Although he was speaking as a member of the Government, he believed that one criticism more than another which might be brought against their railway policy for this session, was that on the surface there was apparently an ignoring of the necessity of building short coastal lines. [Mr. LESINA: The main features of all the lines are that they are in Ministers' electorates. You have not explained that yet.]

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask the hon. member for Clermont not to persist in interjecting while the Minister for Lands is speaking.

Mr. LESINA: I have only made one interjection.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has made a dozen interjections, and the Minister for Lands did not interrupt him while he was speaking himself.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: This line could not be considered on the same basis as a Western line, because there was a great area suitable for close settlement. During the past few weeks he had had inquirers from New South Wales saying they had had a good account of the country between Warwick and Goondiwindi, and wanted to know what chance there was of making a livelihood on the land. He told them that there was good country there as in any part of Queensland, but owing to its remoteness it offered less opportunities for settlement than other parts. Since then this railway had come on the board, and he welcomed the probable construction of the line, as it would put some thousands of additional acres at his disposal which he would be able to put before the applicants from the south, and soon, he hoped, before men coming from overseas, amongst which they could make their choice as localities in which to settle. [Mr. J. LEAHY: How long is it till the next election?] He was not aware of the relevancy of the interjection. There were about 1,000 square miles within the sphere of influence of this proposed railway which were available for settlement. [Hon. R. PHILIP: How much of it is good?] A great deal of it was good. Before the end of 1908 there would be about 500 more square miles available. If they were to attempt by direct means to ascertain whether the line was going to pay, they had to remember the pastoral leases in the neighbourhood, and the grazing farms, and when the periodical reassessments of these areas came round, if the Land Court did their duty, as he hoped they would, they would have additional rent from the owners of that country owing to the proximity of the railway. The hon. member for Bulloo said it was all very well to say they were going to build this railway through country which was purely pastoral, although some of the country through which the line passed was fit for agriculture. The hon. member also said, "Look at the Darling Downs and you will see sheep running to-day on places just the same as they ran there before there were any facilities at all." [Mr. J. LEAHY: Yes; in a good many cases.] But within the last twelve

months the Darling Downs had been undergoing a state of rapid transition, and so had other parts of the country. Any man who knew what was going on could see that in the immediate future the Darling Downs was not going to continue to be a sheepwalk. Apart from the large holdings, the disposition now was to breed lambs for export. These areas would not be kept as a sheepwalk just for the sake of growing the wool. Within the last three months—or even within three weeks—he had examples of country which for years on the Northern Darling Downs was considered second and third class pastoral country that no man would look at. Yet he was now negotiating—and had almost completed those negotiations—for getting that land taken up under the agricultural sections of the Lands Acts, and getting it taken up by thousands of acres. It was not in that part of Queensland alone that this was being done. It meant that they were getting new blood, with new ideas, into the country; and these men were showing the people here that the land, which had been lying idle, and supposed to be useless, had really a virtue in it hitherto unsuspected. So it would be in connection with the land on the route of this railway. What he rose chiefly to point out was that, as Minister for Lands, he welcomed the additional area of land that he was going to get by means of this railway for close settlement. If they looked at it from that point of view, and considered the people they expected to settle on the adjacent areas there, it was well worth while building this railway.

Mr. LESINA: The Hon. the Secretary for Public Lands was in the habit of frequently getting up lately and referring to the hon. member for Bulloo, Mr. J. Leahy, as his (Mr. Lesina's) leader. There was no connection with the hon. member for Bulloo and himself any more than there was between ordinary members of the Chamber. It was a cheap and cynical kind of way the Secretary for Lands had of repeating this thing until it became indecently bare. He (Mr. Lesina) had no leader at all. He had been asked by his organisation to repudiate the leader of the Labour party because he had allowed the Government to sell lands and introduce syndicate railways. He did not go that far, but he had no leader at all, and in these matters he acted solely upon his own initiative. [Mr. KERR: I do not want you.] He was guided by his common sense in commenting on matters that came before his notice. The Secretary for Lands considered himself a free lance when he was following the hon. member for Bulloo, but in a less worthy cause than his (Mr. Lesina's). He was not after a portfolio, like the hon. gentleman was, and that hon. gentleman would never have got a portfolio if he had not "turned dog" on the men whose money he spent before he joined the Parliamentary Labour party.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must not impute motives to other hon. members.

Mr. LESINA: He was not imputing motives. He was stating facts. He did not oppose the railway because it was not going to show a profit as a railway itself, because it might pay in other directions. The Secretary for Lands said the opening of the line would make many thousands of acres available. Available for what—for selling? The Secretary for Lands, who got up with such a flourish of trumpets to crush him (Mr. Lesina), forgot to answer the point which he raised—that this railway would be paid for out of land sales. He did not touch on that point at all, and no other Minister would touch on it, because it was true. That was a policy he

[Mr. Lesina.]

would not support, and he was consistent in opposing it. If there was anything radical introduced by the Government he would support it, and if there was anything conservative he would oppose it. His organisation at Clermont had carried a resolution which was practically a slap in the face for all those who wanted to injure him by the things they said about him. Another point which the Minister did not touch that he raised was that practically every railway proposal was

in the constituency of a Minister, [10.30 p.m.] or in an electorate in which a Minister was interested politically. The Minister, in introducing these proposals, did not even say that he regretted that there was not sufficient money to go on with any of the other railways—railways that were passed years ago, and nothing was heard of them now. Yet the Premier deliberately used his position as a Minister to take the loan funds from the railways that had been authorised, and expend it in his own constituency, and there was no protest raised against it except his (Mr. Lesina's). And because of that, up jumped the Minister for Lands in arms to deal out "stoush" to him for holding opinions contrary to the members of the Cabinet.

Mr. KERR: It was amusing to listen to the member for Clermont. Those who had been in the Chamber since that hon. gentleman had become a member would know that he attacked everyone he possibly could. The hon. member was very thin skinned that his name should be coupled with the hon. member for Bulloo. To use the hon. member's eloquent phrase, he dealt out "stoush" to everyone else, but he did not like it when it was dealt out to himself. The hon. member said that he had been asked by his constituents to repudiate him (Mr. Kerr). He thought that both his private life and his public life was a little above that of the hon. member for Clermont. He would be quite willing to stake his reputation against that of the hon. member at any time. If his reputation would not stand the light of day against that of the hon. member for Clermont, then it was time he was wiped off the face of the earth. If that hon. member wanted to deal out "stoush," he would find that others could deal it out to him.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I did not hear the hon. member make any personal allusions to you.

Mr. KERR: The hon. member said he was asked by his organisation to repudiate him (Mr. Kerr).

The CHAIRMAN: It was in a political sense.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: He spoke metaphorically.

Mr. KERR: There was an interjection made about his selection. It was true that he was interested in a selection 15 miles from Jundah and 40 miles from Stonehenge. It was said that the proposed railway went as far as the sliprails of his selection, but he could assure hon. members that it was 60 miles from his selection. He would challenge any member to prove that he had any influence in getting any particular railway put on the Estimates at the present time. He was going to support the proposal before the House. When it was proposed to build the line from Warwick to Thane's Creek he opposed it because the Commissioner reported against it. The then Commissioner for Railways, Mr. Gray, reported against it. The only railway in the batch which were proposed at that time which he reported favourably upon was the line from Dartmouth to Stonehenge, but the Upper House threw it out. If it had been built then, hundreds of thousands of sheep would have been saved during the drought. The present

[Mr. Lesina.

Commissioner reported favourably upon the Goondiwindi line. The speeches of hon. members showed that New South Wales was extending her railways to the Queensland border, and that it was imperative that Queensland should extend her lines in order to retain to the State the trade that legitimately belonged to it. He believed the railway ought to be built. He was not in a position to say whether it would pay interest, as he had not been over the country and knew nothing but what was contained in the Commissioner's report with respect to its capabilities; but, with a view to securing trade which belonged to Queensland, he intended to support the resolution.

Mr. J. LEAHY: The Secretary for Lands commenced with innuendo and wound up with abuse. Abuse was not argument, and innuendo always appeared to be cowardly. The hon. member adopted a rôle that was frequently adopted of late on the other side, and coupled his name with that of the hon. member for Clermont. He had nothing to do with the hon. member for Clermont, and never had had anything to do with him. If the hon. member wanted advice from him he was perfectly prepared to give it, but he did not think the hon. member was likely to ask him for advice. There was one thing about the hon. member for Clermont, and that was that when he sat in opposition he was the brilliant leader of the Labour party, and received acclamation on several occasions. With regard to the Secretary for Lands telling the hon. member to come over and sit behind him (Mr. Leahy), after first denouncing him, if the hon. member for Clermont did come over and sit behind him, he would not be in any worse position than the hon. gentleman himself, who used to sit behind him. He did not know whether the hon. member for Clermont was guilty of all the things he was charged with by members on the other side, but he could not be any worse than the hon. gentleman when he was sitting behind the late Government. He (Mr. Leahy) had never "paired" with the hon. member for Clermont when Ministers wanted his support very badly, and at a time when the hon. member for Clermont was a political "dead head." The hon. gentleman "paired" with the hon. member for Clermont and helped to put the Ministry out of office.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS rose to make a personal explanation. The hon. member was endeavouring to lead the Committee to believe that he "paired" with the hon. member for Clermont, knowing the hon. member to be away, and, therefore, a political "dead head." [Mr. KERR: You did not.] The statement was absolutely untrue. (Hear, hear!) Furthermore, if the hon. member for Bulloo was trying to lead the Committee to believe that he did a single thing to help to put the late Government out of office he was saying something that was equally untrue. (Hear, hear!) [Hon. R. PHILP: You left your "pair" with the leader of the Labour party.] Absolutely untrue.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. J. LEAHY: If the Secretary for Lands said that he did not know the hon. member for Clermont was in Adelaide, he accepted his word. The fact remained that the hon. member for Clermont was in either Adelaide or Melbourne. [The TREASURER: He was in neither of those places.]

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will not discuss that question. It has nothing to do with the question now before the Committee, and I do not think the hon. member is justified in making the charge he is now making against the Secretary for Lands.

Mr. J. LEAHY ought to be the judge of that to some extent. At all events, he was not going to dwell upon it at any greater length, but he thought he was entitled to reply to the remarks of the Secretary for Lands in first denouncing the hon. member for Clermont and then telling him that his proper position was behind him (Mr. Leahy). Was not that a reflection on him? [THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You know perfectly well it was not.]

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has now replied to the remarks of the Secretary for Lands, and I hope he will not pursue the matter any further.

Mr. J. LEAHY: With regard to political consistency, about which they had heard so much lately from the Secretary for Lands, if a cablegram appeared in the papers to-morrow announcing that King Peter of Servia had delivered a lecture denouncing regicide, it would be pretty much the same as for the hon. gentleman to denounce political inconsistency. [Mr. KERR: You ought to be a judge of that. What about Dickson?]

Mr. MAXWELL: The question of the "pair" between the Secretary for Lands and the hon. member for Clermont had cropped up many times recently. Well, he was responsible for that, and he had no hesitation in saying that he would have "paired" anyone on that occasion. [THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (addressing Mr. J. Leahy): You are bound to withdraw after that explanation. I had not the slightest knowledge of it.]

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I appeal to hon. members to maintain order.

Mr. J. LEAHY: If you stopped the Secretary for Lands, there would be no trouble.

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member for Burke that he is not speaking to the question before the Committee. If he wished to make a personal explanation, he should have asked leave.

Question put.

HON. R. PHILP thought it was time this matter was stopped. The Premier was responsible for all the washing of dirty linen they had that evening.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

HON. R. PHILP: He was there till half-past 11 the other evening over a similar thing—[THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is unfair.]—and after he went away the hon. gentleman brought on another matter. The night had been wasted by the hon. gentleman's own supporters. And for the Secretary for Lands, of all men, to lecture members on political morality, when they now found out that he went into the country, and instead of leaving his "pair" with his own party, he left it with the hon. member for Burke—a member of the Opposition! [Mr. MAXWELL: No.] He protested against this business. After this was done, he supposed the Secretary for Railways would bring on the railway to Stonehenge. [THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No. I am going to ask the House to adjourn when this resolution is passed.] They were all tired of this display from the Ministerial benches, but the Secretary for Lands should be the last member of the Committee to lecture anyone with regard to political morality.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not justified in making personal remarks. No reference has been made to the hon. member.

HON. R. PHILP: Everyone had been talking about everything but the question before the

Committee. The leader of the Labour party was talking about the Stonehenge railway all the time and replying to his followers.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Barcoo was charged by the hon. member for Clermont with having used undue influence in connection with the Stonehenge railway, and I think that was his reason for referring to that railway.

HON. R. PHILP: Every hon. member ought to be allowed to speak as he liked if the Chairman allowed one hon. member to do so. The whole debate had been out of order.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is entirely wrong in making a charge of that kind against me. I have not allowed hon. members to speak as they chose. I have kept them within the limits of the debate.

HON. R. PHILP: The hon. member for Cambooya spoke for an hour and a quarter, and nobody understood what he said.

The CHAIRMAN: I allowed the hon. member for Cambooya to speak with reference to a railway in his district because it was an alternative route to that proposed in the resolution now before the Committee, and I considered his remarks were relevant on that account.

HON. R. PHILP did not think anybody else did. The Treasurer ought to have something to say about this railway, because five years ago he treated them to a lecture on the immorality of building it. He (Mr. Philp) intended to support it because he was responsible for building the first section, and, having gone so far, he thought the line should be continued to Goondwindi. The Secretary for Lands informed them that there were 1,000 square miles of country lying vacant. The hon. gentleman ought to tell them why that land was vacant. Was that the sort of country they were asked to build a railway to? [THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is a lot of vacant country in Queensland at present because there is no stock.] The Committee had been treated with scant courtesy in the matter of information. They should have been supplied with reports from agricultural experts as to the character of the land. The Premier had allowed his followers to get up one after another and talk about everything but the railway.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

HON. R. PHILP: He hoped this would be the last of this sort of business. [THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You know I am not responsible for it.]

Mr. MAXWELL asked leave to make a personal explanation.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the Committee that the hon. member be heard?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MAXWELL: At the time the stamp duty proposals of the late Government were brought in, the hon. member for Bundaberg and he were walking up George street one night, and Messrs. Bell and Denham were in front of them. At the corner of Queen street Mr. Bell said he wanted to go away to some place, and he would like if a "pair" could be obtained for him. Mr. Denham asked him (Mr. Maxwell) to get a "pair" for Mr. Bell, and he said he would. At that time the hon. member for Clermont was either in Sydney or on the road to Sydney. He believed the present Home Secretary sent the hon. member a telegram to Wallangarra—[Mr. KERR: Hear, hear!—to get him to come back for the division, and he (Mr. Maxwell) was of opinion that the hon. member for Clermont would be back for the division. He thought it

Mr. Maxwell.]

would be quite safe to "pair" Mr. Bell with Mr. Lesina in the interests of the party, even if the hon. member for Clermont did not come back. Mr. Bell came to him afterwards and said that he had worked a dirty trick on him in "pairing" him with a "dead" man. He was not particular about that. If he thought the party would gain something by "pairing" him with a "dead" man he was prepared to do it. [The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It has just occurred to me that I informed the hon. member for Bulloo before I went away, and the hon. member acquiesced in my going.] [Mr. J. LEAHY: Yes; but I said, "Be sure and pair."]

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to certain resolutions.

The PREMIER moved that the resolutions be now agreed to.

HON. R. PHILP: Do I understand that the hon. gentleman is not going on with the other resolution to-night? [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No.] This is the only business? [The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes.]

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 11 o'clock.
