Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 16 DECEMBER 1909

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, 16 DECEMBER, 1909.

The SPEAKER (Hon. J. T. Bell, *Dalby*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

PAPERS.

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

Return to an Order, relative to moneys paid to barristers and solicitors for services in connection with the State, from 1st July, 1907, to 30th June,

1909, together with the nature of services, made by the House, on motion of Mr. Murphy, on the 6th December.

Despatches conveying His Majesty's assent to Acts passed during the first session of 1909.

QUESTIONS.

ROCKHAMPTON HARBOUR BOARD.

Mr. HAMILTON (*Gregory*) asked the Chief Secretary, without notice—

Has his attention been called to a paragraph in the *Daily Mail* this morning, relating to the financial position of the Rockhampton Harbour Board——

Mr. MANN: That is why the third reading was pushed through.

Mr. HAMILTON:

That they are at the end of their tether, and the finance committee were practically instructed to bring in a report recommending their coming down to Brisbane to borrow another £10,000; also, that there will be a deficiency of £5,000 next year. Is it his intention to go on with the Port Alma Railway Bill in the face of a statement of that kind?

The PREMIER (Hon. W. Kidston, *Rockhampton*): This is rather a large number of questions to ask at one time, without notice.

Mr. LENNON: You are quite ready for them.

The PREMIER: With regard to the first one: Has my attention been called to an article in the *Daily Mail*? The answer is—

No.

Mr. HAMILTON: I advise you to read it.

The PREMIER: Will the hon. member let me answer his questions? Then—Do I know that they are at the end of their financial tether?

No, I do not. As a matter of fact, I know that they are in a very good financial position.

(Hear, hear!) As to whether I know that they are likely to ask for another loan of £10,000, I do not know——

Mr. HAMILTON: Read the *Daily Mail*.

The PREMIER: But if they are asking for a loan of £10,000, they are in a quite good enough financial position to get it.

Mr. COYNE: And anything else they want.

TEMPORARY CLERKS IN RAILWAY DEPARTMENT.

Mr. LENNON (*Herbert*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

1. What is the rate of pay of temporary clerks in the Railway Departments of the Northern, Central, and Southern divisions?

2. What is the rate of overtime paid (if any) in such divisions respectively?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. W. T. Paget, *Mackay*) replied—

1. Very few temporary clerks are employed at any time. Those men now at work are receiving from 7s. 6d. to 8s. per day in the Northern division, and from 6s. to 10s. per day in the Southern division. None are employed in the Central division. There is no fixed scale for temporary clerical work, the men being paid amounts commensurate with the services performed.

2. Overtime for wages staff is calculated at 25 per cent. more, and Sunday pay at 50 per cent. more, than the ordinary rate. Temporary clerks are seldom called upon to work overtime.

GOLD REEFS EXPLORATION COMPANY.

Mr. McLACHLAN (*Fortitude Valley*), for Mr. Lesina, asked the Secretary for Mines—

1. Has his attention been drawn to the account in the *Sun*, of the 12th instant, of the audacious mining swindle perpetrated by the manager and directors of the Gold Reefs Exploration Company on the English investing public?

2. Does he propose to take action in the matter by prosecuting those responsible for the swindle?

The SECRETARY FOR MINES (Hon. J. G. Appel, *Albert*) replied—

1. Yes. Account founded upon cable report sent to London by Chief Secretary's Department at instigation of Mines Department for information of intending investors.

2. There is no legal machinery by which such suggested action could be initiated. The action of the Mines Department is limited to exposure of incorrect and misleading accounts.

RABBIT BOARDS ACTS REVIVAL AND CONTINUATION BILL.

MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL.

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

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN STATE SCHOOLS REFERENDUM ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

The PREMIER, in moving—

That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the Religious Instruction in State Schools Referendum Act of 1908, by altering the time at which the referendum poll shall be taken—

said: I may just say, though it is unusual for any explanation to be given at this stage of a Bill—which is usually a formal stage—that circumstances have arisen which make it undesirable to take this referendum at the same time as the Federal election. And what is far more important, the Federal Government being unwilling to permit the referendum to be taken at their polling-booths, I think that this House, having approved of the referendum, we are under a moral obligation to make provision for the holding of the referendum at another date.

Mr. MURPHY: This House approved of it being taken at the Federal election.

The PREMIER: Hon. members know that I myself am opposed to any change being made in our Education Act. (Hear, hear!) But with regard to this referendum I think it is a question on which the people of Queensland should be allowed to speak.

Mr. HAMILTON: Do you intend to have polling-booths, returning officers, poll clerks, and all that sort of thing all over the State?

The PREMIER: I think that members of this House are unanimous in the opinion that it would be exceedingly undesirable to hold a referendum on this question at the time of a State election.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LENNON: Nothing of the sort. It should be held then.

The PREMIER: Members agree that it should be held at some other time than at the time of a State election. That is why this Bill is brought forward—simply to allow provision to be made for that to be done.

Mr. LENNON (*Herbert*): The Chief Secretary has stated that this House approved of taking the step which he now proposes. I remind the hon. member that when the matter was under discussion in this House some eighteen months ago a large number of members on this side of the House urged the hon. gentleman not to allow such a business as this to be held on the Federal election day. (Hear, hear!) The Federal members have quite enough to do to look after their own business, and it would be an unfair thing to foist on them a contentious subject of this sort, which might cloud the issues

submitted to the people at the Federal election. The hon. gentleman ignored the good advice that was tendered to him on that occasion, and he practically admits now that that advice was good at the time it was tendered to him. Instead of taking the advice then tendered, he decided to have the referendum held at Federal election time, but now he proposes to hold it at some other time, and to fix a special day for the holding of this referendum. This, as you know, means the necessity of involving the State in the expenditure of a very considerable sum of money, which I think is totally unjustifiable. This matter has been dragged out for a long time, and in the end the hon. gentleman can see that the referendum cannot be held on Federal election day. Why not let the matter stand over till the next State election day? (Hear, hear!)

The PREMIER: Or even later?

Mr. LENNON: Or even later. (Hear, hear!) I accept the hon. gentleman's suggestion. What I say is that, if you hold the referendum on a day specially set apart for the purpose, it will unnecessarily involve the State in a very considerable expense, and there are a large number of people who do not take sufficient interest in it to record their votes in the matter at all. (Hear, hear!) But if you decide to take the referendum at the next State election time, then the people will be alive to their interests, and they will be able to cast their votes for or against this proposal. I hope that the good sense of this House will show that it is not a desirable thing to saddle the country with a totally unnecessary expense, but instead to take the referendum on this question at the time the State election arises.

Mr. COYNE (*Warrego*): I just want to say that I am going to oppose this motion to-morrow unless there is a proposal made that those who are asking for this referendum will bear the expense of it.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KEOGH (*Rosewood*): I do not agree with what the leader of the Opposition says, that we should hold this referendum on the State election day. I think it would be unfair to take this referendum at the State election. (Hear, hear!) When this question was before the House before I said that I did not think it was fair to hold the referendum at the time of the Federal election, and I also said that it should not be held at the State election. I am very pleased to see that the Federal authorities have put their foot down against it. The ministers of religion want to get the teachers to teach the Bible to the children because they are too lazy to do it themselves. (Laughter.) I received a circular this morning from the Bible Association asking me to support this matter. Well, I am not prepared to support it. (Hear, hear!) I shall certainly vote against it, because I do not believe in it. If religion is to be taught, it should be done at the mother's knee. That is the proper place for it to be taught, and not in our schools. I am not going to vote for it.

Mr. MURPHY: If a few more members on that side took the same stand, he would not be able to "gag" it through.

Mr. KEOGH: Nobody will be able to "gag" me on this question. (Opposition laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order, order!

Mr. KEOGH: It is proposed to teach the Bible in the State Schools, and by whom? We have many good State school teachers. I do not deny that they are good men, but they care nothing at all about religion. And why should we give them an opportunity of teaching doctrines which they really do not believe in themselves. (Hear, hear!) It is a very bad thing, indeed. I trust, at all events, that the Premier will not accede to the wishes of the deputy leader of the Opposition and hold this referendum on a State election day. I am decidedly opposed to that. At the recent election I had a good deal to contend with. (Opposition laughter.) Religion was the bone of contention at that election, and it was said that I was an Irishman and a Roman Catholic. I glory in the fact that I am both. That was the great question which arose at that election. If this referendum is going to be held on the State election and an opportunity is given to these people to again try to put their dirty little actions forward, well it will be all the worse for parties holding the same views as I do. I am decidedly opposed to it.

The SPEAKER: Order, order! I have endeavoured to call hon. members to order several times, and I trust my efforts are not going to be unsuccessful.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. McLACHLAN (*Fortitude Valley*): It is quite refreshing to hear the hon. member for Rosewood get up and say he will not be gagged on this question. The inference to be drawn from that is that he has been gagged on other questions. (Opposition laughter.)

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Such as the Port Alma Railway.

Mr. McLACHLAN: I do not propose to follow the hon. member for Rosewood in his remarks. I just rose for the purpose of entering my protest against the motion introduced by the Premier. It seems to me that the object which the Premier has in view in introducing this motion is to prepare himself to satisfy the wishes of the minority of the people who are anxious to have a referendum taken on this particular subject.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: If they are in a minority, why don't you let it be decided?

Mr. McLACHLAN: On the last occasion when this question was discussed there was strenuous opposition given to it by members on this side of the House, but the measure was carried deciding that a referendum should be taken. Notwithstanding the fact that efforts were made to prevent the referendum being taken, even at the Federal election, the Premier and those who sat with him were very pronounced in their advocacy that this referendum must be taken at the Federal election. We had tabled the other day a return showing that the cost of holding the last election in Queensland was something like £7,000 or £8,000. The taking of this referendum at a time other than that of a general election may not cost £7,000, but it will cost a considerable sum. Why should the whole of the taxpayers of Queensland be subjected to that expense simply to satisfy a certain number of persons who are desirous of having a referendum taken on this question? One might reasonably expect that persons who are anxious to have this referendum would be prepared to foot the bill. My reason for rising is to protest against the proposal made by the Premier. Notice has been given this afternoon of a motion providing that the Assembly shall sit on Saturday morning for the purpose of discussing Government business. At the commencement of the session a lengthy programme of business was submitted to the House by the Government. In that programme were included a number of measures that we have not yet seen and are not likely to see this session, and yet here we have a measure which is not included in that programme—a most conten-

tious measure—and for the purpose of assisting the passage of this measure we are to be asked to sit another day in the week.

Mr. MANN: Yes; and if we do not pass it, he will starve us as he did the other day.

Mr. MURPHY: He cannot starve us with the Speaker in the chair. (Laughter.)

Mr. McLACHLAN: I am not going to enter upon that matter. I have here an extract from the *Courier* of this morning with reference to the referendum and the state of public business. The concluding part of it reads as follows:—

> With the exception of this Bill (that is, the Religious Instruction in State Schools Referendum Act Amendment Bill) the Government has pretty well exhausted the list of measures which it is proposed to submit to Parliament during the session. It had already been announced that the Public Service Superannuation Bill and the Police Offences Bill were not likely to come on again this session, and it is also stated that there will be no attempt to proceed with the Local Authorities Act Amendment Bill.

The Local Authorities Act Amendment Bill, which was foreshadowed in the Government programme for the session, is not to be gone on with; but this most contentious measure, which is not mentioned in that programme, is to be discussed, while other measures which would be of great service to the State are going to be allowed to go by the board. I do not intend to take up the time of the House any longer. I enter my protest against the Bill at this stage, and I will endeavour to enter a protest against it at every stage, in the hope that we shall be successful in defeating the Bill.

Mr. TOLMIE (*Drayton and Toowoomba*): I understand that the Government are committed to taking a referendum on this subject, either at a Federal election or a State election.

Mr. RYLAND: At a Federal election.

Mr. TOLMIE: Either at a Federal election or a State election.

Mr. COYNE: No, a Federal election only.

Mr. TOLMIE: If the Government do not take the referendum at a Federal election, they must take it at a State election in order to obviate the expense which has been so much spoken of this afternoon. I do not desire that a referendum should be made to the people at a State election. There are quite a sufficient number of complex questions to be decided at a State election without bringing this matter forward, and it is the same at a Federal election. We have a great many questions that create a great amount of difference of opinion between individuals at parliamentary elections, without introducing a question which always excites a certain amount of irritation. Why that should be I do not understand, because, generally speaking, we get on right enough when this question is not discussed.

Mr. COYNE: That is a reason why the referendum should not be taken.

Mr. TOLMIE: That may be a reason why the question should not be introduced, but the Government have decided that the question shall be submitted to the people, and the people have a right to decide it if they wish to do so. I think it is a very wise proceeding on the part of the Government to propose that this question shall be brought forward at a time when there are no other conflicting questions before the country.

Mr. MURPHY: The people will not come along and vote.

Mr. TOLMIE: If they will not vote, that will exactly answer the wishes of those who desire to ascertain how many persons are interested in the question, how many desire the reform proposed to be introduced, and how many do not want it. I do not desire that a matter of this kind should be brought forward at a State election. We do not want the experience that our friend the hon. member for Rosewood has just said he passed through at the last election, and, if we do not want those experiences, we shall not take this referendum at a time when the State election is on. If we are sensible men we shall agree to the proposition submitted to us, and take the referendum at the time suggested, when there will not be that amount of bitterness engendered that is likely to crop up when other conflicting questions arise as well as this one. I think that any member of this House who is desirous that the people should live in peace and harmony with each other will endeavour to have this referendum taken at a time when no other question is before the people.

Mr. WIENHOLT (*Fassifern*): There is one suggestion that I should like to make in connection with this matter. If this House decides to submit this question to the country, and let the people decide it, I should like members to kill two birds with one stone. I should like them to submit to a vote of the people—if it is practicable to insert a provision in this Bill to that effect—the proposed Constitution Act Amendment Bill. I am opposed to that measure, because I do not think it is a fair thing for us to raise our salaries without taking into our confidence the people, who have to bear the burden.

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*): I am opposed to this proposal altogether. I think the Premier is creating a very unwise precedent in proposing to spend thousands of pounds of the taxpayers' money in order to satisfy a section——

The PREMIER: Of the taxpayers.

Mr. PAYNE: Yes, a section of taxpayers in this State. A few thousands of people are asking the Government to take a referendum, and perhaps in three years' time another religious body in the [4 p.m.] community will ask for another referendum, and if the Premier is a fair-minded man, he will have to give it to them. I am opposed to the referendum, because I think it is very unwise in a mixed community such as we have in Queensland to use the people's money in taking a referendum on this particular question. It is going to create no end of trouble, and this will not be the end of it.

Mr. MURPHY: It is only the beginning of it.

Mr. PAYNE: Some one will come along later on and ask for an alteration. It is the easiest thing imaginable to get signatures to a petition in Queensland, especially when there is some frantic religious idea in the minds of the people, and you (referring to the Premier) are doing one of the very worst things you can possibly do. I think, for your own sake, if you are going to remain in that position you should not agree to it, as you are going to create a precedent.

Mr. HAMILTON (*Gregory*): I would not have spoken at all only for the remarks of the hon. member for Fassifern. If that statement was not contradicted some people outside might think members were desirous of raising their salaries, whereas the Constitution Act Amendment Bill proposes to do nothing of the sort, it simply provides for what everybody outside thinks members have been getting. As far as that Bill goes, it simply provides that members' salaries shall commence from the day of election.

The SPEAKER: Order! I think the hon. member is digressing from the question before the House.

Mr. HAMILTON: I am simply replying to the hon. member for Fassifern. I state that it is not a rise in members' salaries. I do not think the Premier, by taking this referendum on some other day than an election day, is going to get a very widespread opinion from the people, because in the country districts people are not going long distances to record their votes on a question of this sort. He might get a pretty widespread opinion in the cities and towns.

The PREMIER: It is a very important question.

Mr. HAMILTON: It is not what you might call a question of national importance.

Mr. KEOGH: It is not a burning question.

Mr. HAMILTON: It is a question that the people are very divided upon, and until the Premier promised to introduce it, with the exception of a few people in the community, the question was dormant—there was no wide request for a referendum on the part of the people outside, and I fail to see why the Premier should put the country to the expense of £6,000 to £8,000, or whatever it might cost, to get an expression of opinion on this question. The motion carried here was that the referendum should be taken on an election day. I think it was proposed at the time that the Premier would utilise the Federal machinery—the same machinery that is being utilised at the Federal elections—in order to economise. Now he finds he is not able to use the Federal machinery; that he will have to have the State machinery, appoint returning officers, poll clerks, and everything else. Provided that the poll were not taken in the same booth or that the same machinery was not used, I do not see why the referendum could not be taken on an election day.

Mr. COTTELL: It will cost just as much.

Mr. HAMILTON: We will get a wider expression of opinion. I am quite satisfied that the great bulk of the people will vote against this proposition; at the same time I do not see why, if the Premier wants to get a general expression, the poll could not be taken on an election day, but have separate machinery altogether—do not have the polling-booth anywhere near the general election booth—and the people then who came in to vote at the election could vote on the referendum. I am quite aware that it might complicate matters if the same polling-booths were used, and the same returning officers, and that was one of the chief objections of hon. members to having the referendum on election day—that the same machinery will be used. If they are going to use a different set of machinery, appoint polling clerks and returning officers, I do not see why it could not be taken on election day, but have separate polling-booths altogether. I think the money could be better spent in other directions and a referendum taken on far more important questions. If they were to take a referendum on that matter, why not include other great national questions and questions of great public importance?

Mr. RYLAND (*Gympie*): When this Bill was going through before, members of this party opposed very strongly that the referendum in regard to Bible teaching in State schools should be taken on the day of election. When the Bill went into Committee, Mr. Bowman, the leader of this party at that time, opposed it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He did not oppose a referendum.

Mr. RYLAND: He did not oppose a referendum, but he opposed it being held in connection with an election. Mr. Bowman, as reported in *Hansard* of 1908, page 450, said—

He desired to move an amendment by omitting the word "Commonwealth" on line 11, and inserting the word "State," and he did so for the following reasons: He did not think it a fair thing that they, as a Parliament, should ask that the question to be put to the electors should be submitted at the time of a Federal election. They themselves, evidently from what had been said, would find it unpleasant to have that particular question brought under the notice of the electors during a State election, and what was obnoxious to them as State members would probably be just as obnoxious if associated with a Commonwealth election. To his mind it seemed as if they were shelving the responsibility, and putting it on to the shoulders of someone else, so that it might not directly affect questions concerning a State election. His own opinion was that the referendum should be taken entirely apart from any election—that it should be decided by the people when there was no other question before the country.

That was the position taken up by Mr. Bowman at that time. We were opposed to having the referendum on the day of the Federal elections, and now the Premier comes along and finds that we were right at that time, as we are pretty well always right—(hear, hear!)—and the time is coming when the people will find that we are right. I pointed out at that time that—

The Home Secretary should do away with the provision that the referendum should be held either at a State or Commonwealth election.

I entirely agreed with my leader on that occasion, as I usually do on these questions. I said—

It was going to be one of the hottest and most keenly contested questions that had been before the people for a long time. It was going to fire the political heather, and he thought it should be considered apart from a general election. He, for one, would far sooner take the responsibility of having it held at a State election than put it on to the Commonwealth election. Then, again, there would be a difficulty in regard to the number of ballot-papers to be dealt with at a Federal election. There were the ballot-papers for the House of Representatives and also for the Senate. There might be a couple of dozen names, and three to be selected from them. Then, as at the last Federal election, there would probably be a vote or two to be given on some alterations of the Constitution.

I was quite prophetic as regards this question. I went on—

All those ballot-papers would be very embarrassing. There would be a "Yes" or "No" vote in connection with a proposed alteration of the Federal Constitution.

Which is just what is going to happen—

Many of the electors did not know what to do with that vote at the last Federal election, and if, in addition, they had to give a "Yes" or "No" vote in connection with Bible reading in State schools, and also vote for members of the House of Representatives and the Senate, there would be no end to the confusion which would prevail. Another matter he would like the Home Secretary to consider was this: He did not think the Federal authorities would be justified in having a vote like that taken during their election, and they might pass a law prohibiting it.

That is just what the Federal authorities are doing—they are not going to allow this referendum to be taken in connection with the Federal election—

He knew that the Commonwealth law would override the State law every time.

Things have come about as I forecasted they would do, and I think the Federal Parliament did the right thing in saying that they would not permit the referendum to jumble things up even more than they are. We have two more important referendums at the coming Federal election.

The PREMIER: That is the real trouble.

Mr. RYLAND: The incorporation of the agreement into the Constitution, to which I hope all hon. members will say "No." Then there will also be the question of the taking over of the State debts by the Commonwealth, to which I think everyone will say "Yes." As regards the referendum in connection with the Bible

in State schools, I am going to vote for the changing of the date fixed in the Bill to another date, but not the date of any election. In fact, I do not care how long in the distant future the Premier may fix the date on which it is to be taken—he might make it ten or fifteen years.

The PREMIER: Say at the time of the Greek Kalends. (Laughter.)

Mr. RYLAND: He may make it as long as he likes, but I will vote against it being taken in connection with either the Federal or State election.

Mr. MULCAHY (*Gympie*): With my colleague I supported the Bill for the referendum, but I am particularly pleased to see that it is going to be separated from the elections altogether, because if it was held at either a Federal or a State election the sectarianism which has already been shown would be more intensified. I welcome this change, and am very pleased——

The SPEAKER, who, owing to hon. members conversing in loud tones, had repeatedly called "Order, order!" said: I wish to impress on every member in this Chamber, more especially on the Secretary for Railways, the hon. member for Rosewood, and the hon. member for Aubigny, that when I give a call to order I expect every member to cease conversation at once.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MULCAHY: I am particularly pleased to see that this referendum is going to be held apart from elections altogether. I will say no more. I believe, and I always have believed, that the people of this State have a perfect right to settle this thing in their own way. If an opportunity is offered, I think it will be settled, but if we refused to allow a referendum to be taken, there would be an agitation got up, and the people would not be satisfied. I am going to support the introduction of this Bill.

LIEUT.-COLONEL RANKIN (*Burrum*): There is one thing I am sure that every member of this Chamber does not believe in, and that is repudiation. We have made a promise by passing the Act in 1908 to take a referendum on this question.

Mr. COYNE: At a Federal election.

LIEUT.-COLONEL RANKIN: That does not get away from the fact that we have promised to take a referendum, and it is a reasonable thing for the people to expect us to fulfil our promise. A great deal has been said about the expense, but the expense would be practically the same if it was taken at a Federal election as it would be if it was taken any other day. Personally, I do not think it is wise to have it on an election day of any kind, but I think it is fair to the people that we should take the referendum on some day apart from an election.

Mr. MANN (*Cairns*): The Chief Secretary this afternoon gave notice of motion for an additional sitting day, and I just tell him frankly that he will require it all before he gets this little motion through, and perhaps a little more. I must express surprise at the Premier bringing forward this motion, inasmuch as when this side of the House moved to have a referendum taken in connection with the Port Alma Railway, it was refused, and one hon. member also spoke about taking a referendum on the Constitution Act Amendment Bill. I intend to move that a referendum be taken on the Port Alma Railway Bill in connection with this. (Laughter.) Now, if it is a fair thing to spend, say, £5,000 of public money in connection with a referendum as regards Bible teaching in State schools, would it not be worth while to spend a few extra pounds in getting papers printed to take a referendum of the people as to whether it is wise to sink £250,000 in a mud hole at Port Alma? I would also like to mention that in order to find time for this little measure members on the other side gagged this party on other measures.

The PREMIER: Not from that point, but on general principles.

Mr. MANN: They gagged us in order to allow such a measure as this to pass. I will just briefly trace the history of this measure. You, Mr. Speaker, were a member of the Cabinet at the time, and will bear me out in what I say. The first man who made a promise to the church people with regard to the Referendum Bill was Sir Arthur Morgan. At that time the Premier was bitterly opposed to any such thing, and said that if any Referendum Bill was introduced it should be a general Referendum Bill. But the church got hold of him; he became a convert; he gave up all his old evil ways, and under the soothing influence of the church he agreed to a referendum.

Mr. WHITE: You ought to be very glad that he has given up his old ways.

Mr. MANN: I am not saying I am not glad; I am just telling what has happened. Now we wish that some of the same influence could be used—that Archdeacon Garland might use his influence to compel the Premier to bring in a referendum in regard to the licensing question. (Hear, hear!) If it is a fair thing to allow the church to have a referendum taken at the expense of the people, would it not also be a wise thing to have a referendum taken on the licensing question? I hope the Secretary for Public Instruction will use his influence and give him a little assistance in moving to have a general Referendum Bill passed through the House, to allow other institutions to take a referendum. I do not see why one particular body should be allowed to take a referendum and the same privilege not granted to others. On the first occasion when this matter was brought before the House I voted against it. At the next election I promised to allow the people to have a voice in the matter. When the Bill was brought in on the following occasion, I voted for it on condition that the poll was taken at the general election, because I did not believe for one moment—and the Premier himself, according to his speeches, did not believe—in spending a large sum of money in taking this referendum. I will dig up the Premier's speeches and read what he said on that occasion—where he said that he would not spend any money in taking a referendum of this kind on any other date than at a general election. Why did the Premier alter the date on which the referendum could be taken? The reason was that he thought the Federal election would be a fairly lengthy period away. We understood that the referendum could be taken at any election—State or Federal—whichever came first, but on looking at the Act afterwards I saw that it was fixed to be taken at the Federal election and not at the State election at all.

Mr. MACARTNEY: And didn't you understand that?

Mr. MANN: No; it was not in the Bill, and there was an amendment moved in the House. We never saw the amendment, and it was done with the usual trickery. I did not know what was done until I saw the Act as it was incorporated in the statute-book. In fact, I made a wager about it.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Oh, oh!

Mr. MANN: Yes; and when I looked it up I found that the clause in the Act was exactly as I gave it, but, on looking at the interpretation of "General Election," I found that I was wrong.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Do you accuse the Premier of putting in the interpretation afterwards?

Mr. MANN: Yes.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Did you pay the wager?

Mr. MANN: Yes, and you had the drinks. We have an hon. member rising in his place and saying that the same expense would be incurred if we took this referendum at the Federal election as would if we set apart a special day, because we would have to find our own buildings, our own returning officers and poll clerks, just the same in both cases. I agree with him that it would be the same. But when the Bill was passed, not a member of this House had the faintest idea that the Federal Government would refuse to allow the poll to be taken, so long as it was kept distinctly clear from the Federal polling-booth? It might be held in the same building, and the same officers might be employed; but the papers to be used must be so distinctive that no mistake could be made in regard to what people were voting for. I do not blame the Federal Government for refusing to allow this poll to be taken at the Federal election, because there are other referendums to be taken then, and if this one were added it would only lead to confusion. This House is not justified in passing a measure like this unless we get some guarantee from the people who are pressing for the referendum that in the event of their losing the referendum they will pay all the expenses. I would point out to the hon. member for Rosewood, who gagged me the other night in order to get this measure brought in, that when any poll is taken on the licensing question, if the people who ask for the poll do not get a certain number of votes polled they have to pay the expenses. The same thing should apply in this case. (Hear, hear!) Either that, or we should have a general referendum. I do not believe in allowing this thing to a church, or to one section of the community, without giving the same privilege to others, and allowing them to take a referendum at the State's expense also.

The SPEAKER: I should like to point out to the hon. member for Cairns that this motion proposes to introduce a Bill to amend an Act which is already on the statute-book in a certain direction. It is to alter the time on which the referendum poll shall be taken. Consequently, members must confine themselves to that.

Mr. MANN: I am glad that you reminded me of that, because we ought to give the matter more consideration at the present time, as when the Bill comes before us we will not be able to alter it in any direction. We should therefore stonewall this Bill now until the Premier promises to introduce another Bill. This is the only opportunity we have got to effectively stonewall this motion, because when the Bill is introduced we cannot introduce any amendment at all, and members on the other side may "gag" it through in spite of the opposition of members on this side of the House. I warn hon. members to take advantage of the position to-day, and to let the Premier clearly understand that if this is to be gone on with he can only get it through as he got the Port Alma Railway Bill through, and that is by the persistent use of the "gag," and by all night sittings. I would have no objection to the referendum being taken if the referendum were a general one.

The PREMIER: Is it in order for a member to talk openly about stonewalling in the House?

The SPEAKER: Do you rise to a point of order?

The PREMIER: Certainly.

The SPEAKER: I did not quite catch your point of order.

Mr. MANN: There is no point of order. There is no stonewalling either. I am not stonewalling.

The HOME SECRETARY: You threatened to.

Mr. MANN: That is a different thing. I am not stonewalling now. I was just pointing out to the Premier what is going to happen to this measure. I am giving him fair warning that I am opposing this because I think that the people who are behind it ought to come forward and say they are willing to pay this expense. If they do that, then I have no objection to it going through. Either they must do that or the Premier must come down with a general Referendum Bill to allow other bodies to take a referendum if they so choose. This is what the Premier said when speaking of the Bill introduced in 1906—

> I recognise that in putting this question to the people there is some little danger, unless those who are of my mind in the matter bestir themselves, that the question may be carried in the affirmative.

As the Premier holds that opinion, I think he should have this referendum at such a time as would allow the other people concerned to bestir themselves. We have had for the last three or four years a section of the church actively stirring up the people. A resolution on this matter was wired down from Cooktown the other day. Many people, thinking that it would not come on before the Federal election, trust to their members to defeat this, recognising that, if it is not to come on at the Federal election, these people are not prepared to go to the poll. The people who will mostly go to the poll are those who hold strong opinions on both sides; but as there are people who have been working it up for the last three or four years, they may be more numerous. As I wish to prevent what will be a very grievous disturbance in the State, I think the hon. gentleman ought to clearly let the people concerned understand that if this measure is altered the referendum will not take place for at least a period of two years.

Mr. ALLEN (*Bulloo*): In accordance with a promise given to my electors during every contest that I have taken a part in, I am going to oppose this Bill. I am totally [4.30 p.m.] opposed to the Bible being read in State schools, and I am totally opposed to taking a referendum on a religious question, and that is what this really is.

The SPEAKER: Order! I think the hon. member must clearly see that his remarks are not relevant to the question before the House, which is a proposal to alter the time of taking the referendum.

Mr. ALLEN: It would be a better plan to postpone this Bill for ever. (Laughter.) The promises given by hon. members to support a referendum were only given in this House at a time of weakness—at a time when they wanted to catch every straggling vote. I should like to see another amendment made in this Bill when it is before the Committee, and that is an amendment providing that the people who desire this referendum shall first of all put the money up. If they are the strong body and represent the majority of the electors of Queensland, as we have heard is the case—if the feeling on this question is as strong as these people try to make out, then money will be no object to them; they will be able to get thousands and thousands of pounds when they only want hundreds to pay the cost of the referendum. Therefore, I say we should have inserted in this Bill an amend-

ment providing that those bodies which are demanding the referendum shall pay down the cost of taking that referendum.

Mr. FERRICKS (*Bowen*): There are two redeeming features about this proposal. One is that it makes clear the clumsy climb down of the Premier with regard to taking the referendum at the Federal election, and the other is that it gives evidence of the influence upon him of his second Minister without a portfolio, the Rev. Archdeacon Garland. I am opposed to the suggested alteration in the Education Act, and I am opposed to a referendum being taken on any such question as that dealt with in this Bill. As I was not in the House when the Act authorising the referendum was passed, I had no opportunity of opposing it, but I shall oppose this amending Bill. I quite concur with the remark of the hon. member for Bulloo that it would be a wise thing to postpone this measure indefinitely. It has been said that there is a very strong agitation going on in favour of a referendum being taken. I would point out that those who have been devoting their energies to this matter have been organising for some considerable time from the Southern end of the State to the Gulf of Carpentaria, and yet even now their supporters are only a handful of people. It may be said, "Let them have a referendum then, if they are only a handful of people." I say let them take the referendum themselves, and let them pay for it themselves. With regard to the remark of the hon. member for Fassifern that an additional referendum should be taken on the Constitution Act Amendment Bill, I have personally no objection to such a referendum. We are not all in the same position as the hon. member for Fassifern, but I am perfectly satisfied to leave it to the people to say whether members of the Assembly should be paid £300 a year from the date of election or not. But if it is a reasonable contention that that matter should be submitted to the people by means of a referendum, then it is equally reasonable that a referendum should be taken on other subjects, say, for instance, the control of the liquor traffic, or on the desirableness or otherwise of introducing a land value tax.

Mr. LESINA: Or on the question of abolishing the Upper House.

Mr. FERRICKS: Or, as the hon. member for Clermont suggests, on the question of abolishing the Upper House. Would the Government agree to a referendum on that subject?

Mr. LESINA: Not they.

Mr. FERRICKS: I maintain that there is no reason why a referendum should be taken on the question as to whether a man should teach the Bible in State schools. If such a referendum cannot be taken at a Federal or State election, then the promise in regard to it is nullified. We should not agree to any amendment which will fix the time for taking the referendum at some other time than a Parliamentary election. I do not say I would like to see it taken at a general election. Goodness knows, there are enough conflicting questions in politics without adding any more. I had experience of that at the last general election. I must give the Government candidate credit for not descending to that kind of thing, but it was descended to. As an Australian and a Queenslander, I am totally opposed to anything which would bring about a state of affairs in which we should have one section of children playing in one part of the school grounds and another section in another part of the grounds. (Hear, hear!)

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member will keep clearly before him the precise question before the House, which is the altering of the time for taking the referendum.

Mr. FERRICKS: I maintain that any amendment fixing the date of the referendum at any other time than that already determined upon should be opposed, for the simple reason that it will be detrimental to our national life, that it will be a very expensive business, and that it will create conflicts which will be very regrettable, and which we know are very rampant to-day. The people who are in favour of this referendum appear to have such influence with the Government that they can get the Premier to bring forward this Bill in preference to a Bill to amend the Local Authorities Act, or a Bill to prevent the leasing of land to aliens, which was promised in the Governor's Speech. Both these matters are of vital importance, the one to our national life, and the other to our social life, but they are put on one side, and a measure like this is submitted to the House, and members are asked to sit an extra day in the week to pass it. Owing to the fact that we have to devote so much time to our parliamentary duties we have to neglect our constituents. I suppose that Northern members have on an average a fortnight's mails on hand, but they cannot attend to them simply because they have to sit here five days a week, sometimes all night, and for thirty hours on end, as was virtually the case yesterday. And yet, in spite of this, the Premier comes forward with a proposal like this, which is opposed to the wishes of the people. It will probably be proved, if this referendum ever takes place, that the people as a whole are not in sympathy with it. But I would point out that if I am working for 8s. or 10s. a day I am not going to lose a day to vote on a question like this, even though it is a thing I may be opposed to.

Mr. NEVITT: A man might lose two or three days.

Mr. FERRICKS: In some cases a man would have to spend two or three days in voting for a thing in which he took no vital interest. And if I do not vote, others who are enthusiastic will vote and the proposal may be carried against the wishes of the majority of the people. It is not right that any section of the community should be able to do that. I contend that the Government in this matter is opening the door to a very bad practice. If any body of people can come along and claim the expenditure of £6,000 or £7,000 in deciding a question which affects them, where is the thing going to end? I say it is a very grave danger, and, although I do not wish to go into the matter at great length at this stage, I wish to point out to the Chief Secretary that I am not prepared to take his advice and let this matter go for the present. I intend to oppose it at every stage.

Mr. MURPHY (*Croydon*): Parliament having sanctioned this referendum, I do not think you can blame the Government for carrying it out. But when Parliament did agree that this referendum should be taken, it was thoroughly understood that it was to be taken at an election time. If the Government has to alter the date in consequence of the action

of the Federal Premier to refuse to allow the referendum to be taken at the Federal elections, he should arrange for it to be taken at a State election. If he will agree to do that, I shall support the Bill, but, if not, I shall vote against it. Unless the referendum is taken at election time, and people are taking an interest in public affairs, a very small vote will be recorded. It will mean that the Bible in State Schools League, which has been organising for a long time past, will get their members to the poll, while those who are opposed to an alteration in our educational system will refrain from voting. The best thing the Premier can do is to alter the date until the next general election. As a matter of fact, I fail to see why he should bring this motion forward at the dying hours of the session. There are other important matters to be dealt with, and I am sure that this question is not of such importance that it should be introduced at this late hour of the session in preference to others that will have to be dropped. We have been told that Parliament should not repudiate any measures that have been passed, but I would like to remind the House that twenty-five years ago Parliament voted the sum of £400,000 to build a railway from Normanton to Cloncurry. That railway has never been built yet, and successive Governments have refused to carry out the instructions of Parliament. But that will not carry weight with me in this connection, because if the Government is prepared to take this referendum at the next State election, or any other election, I shall be prepared to vote for it. But I do not believe in the referendum being taken in such a manner that a small vote is likely to be recorded.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Moreton*): The second reading of this Bill was passed by a large majority—49 to 15—and the point is that an honourable engagement has been made by this House so far as the people are concerned. The House has passed this measure, and, whether we like it or not, I am sure hon. members will own that if this House agrees to do a certain thing, it is the right and honourable course to do it. We know that a large number of the persons whose names appeared on that majority were opposed to this Bill, but they evidently realised that a referendum would decide this vexed question for ever. I must say, however, that the money a referendum is going to cost makes me think whether it is wise to have a referendum by itself. Even if it were held at the time of the Federal election, it would cost almost as much. You would have to have separate polling-booths; and altogether, I think, it would cost as much at the Federal election as if it were held by itself. If it is going to cost £7,000 to hold a special referendum, it is going to be a big item.

The PREMIER: About £5,000.

Mr. FORSYTH: I feel very much inclined to advise the Government in this matter that, instead of having a special referendum next June or July, it would be better to hold it at the next State election, because we would then be able to avail ourselves of the services of the officers working in connection with the State elections, and the referendum would not cost so much money as it otherwise would. From that point of view—although I would like to see the matter settled and done with—I am somewhat in a quandary to know what to do; for, although I would not like to see £6,000 or £7,000 specially expended on this question, yet we do not want controversial matters like this brought up at the State elections.

Mr. HAMILTON: You would not get a wide expression of opinion at a special referendum.

Mr. FORSYTH: It is not a question whether members are against the principle or not. The question is that the House has affirmed a certain thing, and we, as honourable men, must carry out our contract, either at a State election or at a special referendum. If it would meet the views of those who are anxious to get this referendum, it would be a good thing, and save expense, if we could have it at the next State election. There is, however, the objection that members of Parliament and the public generally are averse to controversial matters of this nature being introduced into the ordinary State elections. On the whole, I think the referendum should be taken at the State election.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Charters Towers*): I would like to say that the Premier in introducing this motion did not give a sufficient reason, to my mind—in fact, he did not give any reason at all. I do not know whether he has any reason or not for altering the day the referendum is to take place. It has already been pointed out that, on the score of expense, there would be nothing saved by taking this referendum at the Federal elections. If that is the case, what grounds can there be for making this amendment? As a matter of fact, it is no concern whatever of Federal members; I do not think it would concern them one iota. I do not see why the State could not use its own machinery—appoint its own returning officers and poll clerks, and take this referendum on the same day, when the people are all there, and when they are prepared to give a vote on this question apart from the Federal question altogether, and settle the matter. When the matter was discussed previously, as at the present time, it was pointed out that on a State election day would be an undesirable time to take the referendum. I am opposed to taking this referendum on a State election day. There are quite enough conflicting influences at State elections already, but that does not apply to Federal elections. There might be some electorates where it would have no influence whatever in the result, but there are other electorates where it would decide the issue as to who was returned, and for that reason I think it would be infinitely better to keep it away from State elections altogether, but I fail to see why it should not be taken at a Federal election. I can quite understand hon. members who oppose a referendum altogether voting against it, but as one who voted for a referendum, if it cannot be taken on a Federal election day, then I infinitely prefer that it be taken some time apart altogether from a State election. Something has been said about the number of people concerned in this question. It is quite evident that there has been a sufficient number of people concerned to get members, who were returned to this House, to promise to vote for a referendum, and whenever a sufficient number of people on any other question—whether it is the temperance question, or any other question whatever—can be got to exert the same kind of influence, I think they stand a very good chance of getting a referendum, too. The Act has been placed on our statute-book, and I certainly would not be one to repudiate a promise given to those people, but I do think the

referendum should be taken on the Federal election day, and the matter settled once and for all.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. D. F. Denham, *Oxley*): I just wish to remark that the House last session decided on a referendum on a certain day—namely, the next Federal election, and unless there be a change made, such as is projected in the motion for introducing the Bill to-morrow—unless a change is made the referendum will take place on the Federal election day, and it will not be any saving at all.

Mr. HAMILTON: We will get a wider expression of opinion.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: When it was decided to hold the referendum on the day of the Federal elections, it was thought the Commonwealth would permit the officers to take papers for the referendum, and a very large saving would have been effected, but the Federal people have said they will not permit it. Now, seeing that it is not going to cost any more money, whether it be taken at the next Federal election or a special day set apart, the question is—seeing that there are no less than two referendums of a Commonwealth nature—whether it is wise to complicate matters by a further referendum dealing with this question? Already the hon member for Gympie has said that on the two questions he will be "Yes-No," and now he has another question.

Mr. RYLAND: I will be "No" on this question.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I would suggest that time is passing, and as this is merely the formal stage, and all the pros and cons can be argued on the second reading, I think, seeing the pressure of business on the paper, that leave might be given, because if anybody thinks that by obstructing it they are going to prevent a referendum, they are making a mistake.

Mr. ALLEN: We will make you sit up all night.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member talks about sitting up all night.

The PREMIER: Does he want to sit up all night? (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I think it is unnatural that he should want to sit all night.

Mr. RYLAND: He was very anxious for a pair the other night. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If the hon. member is opposed to the referendum, then he will not secure his purpose, because a referendum will be taken on the day of the Federal election unless the day be altered. I think it is manifestly in the public interest that the day should be altered. Whether the House should determine that there be a special referendum day or whether it should be at the next State election—that, of course, can be determined when we have the Bill before us—but it would certainly be manifestly better if leave were given to introduce the measure, and then the whole question can be discussed. I merely propose to remind hon. members that we cannot get out of a referendum—that it has been determined to take it, and the only question for the House to determine is whether it is not advisable, under all the circumstances, that the date of taking that referendum should be other than on a Federal election day, upon which, quite unexpectedly, there are two questions of vital importance to go before the electors.

Mr. HAMILTON: There will be separate polling booths.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There must be separate polling booths, but now it is merely a question as to whether the day shall be altered.

Mr. HARDACRE (*Leichhardt*): I am one of those who opposed the Referendum Bill, because I took up the ground that a religious question should not enter into politics at all. I also pointed out at the same time that the referendum should not be taken at the time of the Federal elections for the same reasons—it should not be allowed to enter into Federal politics, and I hope when the poll comes it will not take place at a State election. I was approached during the last election about the matter, and I said it had passed the State Parliament and they should let the whole thing go with no more agitation on the matter. Parliament already has decided that the referendum shall be taken, and now we are requested to change the date.

The PREMIER: That is the whole question before us.

Mr. HARDACRE: I do not want to have any disturbance on religious questions at all. We have settled it now, we have got this far.

Mr. ALLEN: This is the beginning of it.

Mr. HARDACRE: I think we should let it go through. It seems to me that if we are going to change the date from the Federal election, and vote for it—as I am going to do—not taking place at a State
[5 p.m.] election, there is a necessity for a consequential amendment in the Bill. If we are going to take it at a time when there is no other question before the people, it means that there will not be a large vote. I would not like to see a 25 per cent. vote taken, and it seems to me to be necessary to provide against that happening by making some amendment. Unless we widen the scope of the order of leave, we will not be able to propose an amendment of that kind or any other necessary amendment, and I, therefore, intend at this stage to move an amendment to add to the order of leave the words "and for other purposes." "And for other purposes in connection therewith" might be better—so that when we come to discuss the Bill we shall have a chance of moving whatever amendments may be thought necessary consequent upon the change of day. I would not like to see a small vote taken—perhaps an overwhelming majority of those in favour of religious instruction and an insignificant minority against it—because of the apathy of the people at the referendum. We ought to have the chance of guarding against that, and this is the only opportunity we have of making it possible for members to move amendments. Besides that aspect, there may be other necessary amendments. As I desire to broaden the scope of the Bill, I formally move the addition of "and for other purposes."

The PREMIER: Hon. members will see for themselves that if these words are added to the order of leave, then it raises the whole question again, and we will find ourselves in the position that the hon. member for Cairns charged me with to-day—of bringing in a very contentious Bill at this late stage of the session. The Bill that I am now asking leave

to introduce can hardly be said to be a contentious measure, because it does not introduce the merits of the question itself at all. The only question that is raised by this Bill is the question of the best day to hold a referendum on this subject. A date has been already fixed in the Act, and, as the Secretary for Public Lands has already told the House, if the Act is not altered before the Federal polling-day, then the Government will have to carry out the law as they find it. If when the Bill is introduced to the House they think that the Federal polling-day is the best date to take the referendum, good and well; we will defeat this Bill, and that will be the end of it. I think another day is better. I am not going into the question of why I think another day is better; but, as the hon. member for Moreton suggested, it may be better to take a referendum on the State polling-day. That is a matter for the judgment of the House, but it has become, in my opinion, inexpedient to hold it on the Federal polling-day, and therefore I think it my duty before the session closes to get the Act amended and have another day fixed; otherwise I shall be compelled to see that the referendum takes place on the day of the Federal election.

Mr. HAMILTON: I would sooner have it then.

The PREMIER: I have no option, and if the House says now that the best time to take it is on the Federal polling-day, good and well; I am quite willing to take that day. But I do not think, in consequence of certain things having been decided, that it is the best day. I think it is better that we should choose another day for this referendum, but in the meantime I do not want to admit an amendment to this motion which would raise the whole question, and enable members to discuss every phase of it. I am not going to consent to that.

Mr. LESINA: Why introduce it at all?

The PREMIER: Have I not tried to explain? Surely the hon. member for Clermont, if he was paying attention, has quite sufficient intelligence to understand! I have explained that circumstances have arisen which seem to me to render it inexpedient to take this referendum on the Federal polling-day, but if I do not get the Act amended before the Federal election, I will have to take the referendum on that day. If the House refuses leave to introduce the Bill, the referendum will be taken on Federal polling-day; I have no option in the matter. If the House says do not go any further, just take the referendum on the Federal polling-day, it is a matter entirely in their own hands. I am only pointing out that the House cannot stop the referendum from being taken, and I object to raising the whole of the difficult question which is involved in the Referendum Act by accepting the amendment of the hon. member for Leichhardt.

Mr. HAMILTON: Would you accept an amendment that the poll must represent 25 per cent. of the votes of the people? Supposing it is only a small vote?

The PREMIER: Parliament can deal with that question afterwards. It is no use expressing an opinion on it now.

Mr. RYLAND: Will you accept an amendment like that afterwards?

The PREMIER: I will not willingly consent to raise any other question here except the question of the date of the referendum. (Hear, hear!) That is the only thing that I deem it desirable to alter, and if the House does not want to alter the date it can say so. If it wants to put in another date altogether, the House will have an opportunity of putting it in.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN (*Kennedy*): I would like to make myself clear on this proposal. I believe in the referendum principle, but at the same time I mean to support the amendment of the hon. member for Leichhardt, seeing that the Premier has emphatically stated that we cannot practically amend the Bill if anyone on this side wishes to do so when it gets into Committee. I think that on a question like this only 25 per cent. of the electors will go to the poll.

Mr. ALLEN: Only those in favour of it.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: That will mean that we shall have a small minority of the people of Queensland practically forcing on the majority of the people a distasteful measure like the Bible in State schools will undoubtedly be to the majority of the people. If it comes on election day there will be a terrible turmoil that no member in this House wants to see. Undoubtedly that will occur in a smaller measure at any time, but not so much as it would on a State election day, and it would not be so likely to occur on a Federal election day.

Mr. ALLEN: Why?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Because the greater things that attach to a Federal election quite overshadow anything connected with the State. Anyone with any national spirit must know that. I take up this attitude to concur with the amendment of the hon. member for Leichhardt.

Mr. DOUGLAS (*Cook*): So far as I understand it, we have an Act on the statute-book of this State called "The Religious Instruction in State Schools Referendum Act of 1908." I supported that measure, and in case this matter comes to a vote I wish to indicate my reasons for voting in the direction I shall. In fulfilment of my election pledges I gave my support to the measure when it was introduced in this House. This motion seeks to alter the date of the referendum, and the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Leichhardt proposes to widen the scope of the motion introduced by the Premier. I understood when this Act was first passed that the referendum would be taken at the first general election held after that, whether it was a State or a Federal election. I supported the Bill on that understanding, and I was surprised that at the last State election no provision was made for holding that referendum. On looking at the Act, I found that the definition of "general election" was "the first Federal election for members of the House of Representatives and Senators." I would much sooner that the referendum took place at the time prescribed by this House, but I am prepared to support the motion introduced by the Premier to discuss the advisability of altering the date. When the matter comes to its second reading, my intention is to vote against the measure, and so allow the referendum to take place at the next Federal election. Failing that, I think it is just as well to have this matter settled as soon as possible. I do not think that it is advisable to have this religious instruction in State schools business hanging over every election that takes place. I would rather see it settled as soon as possible, and the cheapest way would be to have a referendum at the time of the Federal election as laid down in the Act.

Mr. LENNON: But they will not allow it.

Mr. DOUGLAS: They cannot stop it. We can have a referendum when we like if we pay

for it. It will cost us £6,000 or £7,000 to hold it on a special day. At any rate, when this Bill comes before us, I do not think that the amendment of the hon. member for Leichhardt will be much improvement. I can quite understand his reason. He wishes to see a minimum poll by the electors of the State. So far as that feature is concerned it is not incumbent on any Government to introduce this religious system into the State schools, no matter how many people vote for it. Even if you have 90 per cent. of the people voting, and the majority are in favour of it, it will not be incumbent on the Government to bring in that system.

Mr. RYLAND: There is a moral obligation.

Mr. DOUGLAS: I do not see that the amendment will do much good at all. I myself would be inclined to favour a minimum poll—say, that two-thirds of the people on the roll, or 66 per cent., should cast their votes at the referendum. But even if there is a majority in favour of the referendum, there is nothing binding on the Government to introduce that system. I cannot see the advantage of the amendment at all. It is just as well to let the Bill go as it is, and see if we will alter the date from the next Federal elections to some future date. If it is decided to alter the date, then I would sooner see it held on the next State election day. The country is not justified in spending £5,000 for the purpose of getting a vote which certainly would not represent the wishes of the bulk of the people. The Bible League is a body which has been actively organised throughout the State, and if the referendum is fixed to take place at any other time than on a State or Federal election day, then it will not be given effect to to any extent. Those interested in it will vote for it, but those who do not care much one way or the other will not vote at all. It is not a fair method of taking a referendum to take it on a special polling-day. I would sooner see it at the next State election or the following Federal election after the one to be held next year. Let it stand over for three years. So far as I can understand, if this referendum is not carried now, the people who are behind this Bible in State schools business are not prepared to let it rest at that, and will bring it up at every election that takes place. If this referendum is not carried every future candidate will be badgered as to whether they will favour a system of that kind. It makes no difference when we have it, so let it stand over for three years. I would rather see it settled straight away, but it does not make much difference. At any rate, I am prepared to support the motion to introduce the Bill providing for an alteration in the time, and when the second reading of the Bill comes on I shall express my views with regard to it.

Mr. GRANT (*Rockhampton*): I was not in the House when the principal Act came up for discussion. I was at Rockhampton when the second reading took place, so that I am not bound by any decision the House came to.

Mr. COTTELL: You voted for the second reading.

Mr. GRANT: No, I did not. Parliament has decided that this referendum shall take place, and now it is not a question whether we should have the referendum or not, but on what date the referendum shall be taken. When the principal Act was debated in this House, I think there were only two members who really stated that they were in favour of Bible reading in State schools. Personally, I am opposed to that being done, and if the referendum should ever be taken I shall vote "No." If we throw this Bill out, then a referendum must be taken on Federal election day. It will have to take place then as a matter of course. The Act says that the referendum must be taken at the same place and during the same hours as the polling for the Federal election. I am not a lawyer, so that I cannot say what the definition of "place" is, or whether it would allow of the referendum being taken in one street in a place like Rockhampton while the Federal election was held in another street. But that kind of thing could not be done in a small township like Gracemere, where the school is about the only place in which they could have a polling-booth. The Federal authorities have refused to permit us to take a referendum with their machinery. I think that if the referendum is to be taken, it should be taken at the same time as the Federal election rather than on the day of a State election, because in State elections the electorates are smaller and the seats are more keenly contested. The taking of a referendum during a State election would have a very bad effect, as it would introduce a religious issue when candidates were contesting seats on purely material issues. As the question is not one with which the Federal Parliament would have to deal, the taking of the referendum would not have the same effect on a Federal election. However, the only question we have to decide now is the date of the referendum. Parliament has already decided that a referendum must be taken.

Mr. KEOGH: Not "must."

Mr. GRANT: Yes; Parliament has decided that a referendum "must" be taken, and unless we repeal or amend the Act, that referendum must be taken at the forthcoming Federal election. The hon. member for Leichhardt wishes to get in another amendment, which I think would amount to a repudiation of the action of the late Parliament. Although opposed to Bible reading in State schools, I shall vote for the introduction of the Bill, and I shall support the Bill itself.

Mr. McLACHLAN: I wish to say a word on the amendment. The Bill that will be introduced, if the original motion is carried, will be a very narrow one.

The PREMIER: Absolutely confined to the date of the referendum.

Mr. McLACHLAN: Quite so; and unless we pass the amendment, the House will be unable to deal with any other matter but the date of the referendum. My opinion on this matter has been pretty plainly expressed, and that is, that I am altogether opposed to the taking of a referendum on this question. The Premier has stated, in reply to the hon. member for Leichhardt, that if the amendment is carried he will not go further with the Bill. Well, I am going to support the amendment with the view of affording members an opportunity of discussing the whole question, as they have a right to do.

The PREMIER: You can bring in a Bill yourself for that purpose.

Mr. McLACHLAN: I may have an opportunity of doing that sooner than the hon. member imagines. (Opposition laughter.) I shall support the amendment as the lesser of two evils.

Mr. LESINA (*Clermont*): I intend to support the amendment to insert the words "and for other purposes." The proposition of the Premier is practically confined to one matter—

Mr. Lesina.]

that is, to altering the date on which the referendum may be taken. In 1908 we passed the Religious Instruction in State Schools Referendum Act, which I voted against. Section 3 of that Act provides—

A referendum poll of the electors shall be taken under this Act on the same day as the day of the first general election which ensues after the passing of this Act, and during the same hours and at the same places as are appointed therefor.

The term "General Election" is defined in section 2 as—

An election held in all electoral divisions of Queensland for the return of members of the House of Representatives of the Parliament of the Commonwealth.

It now appears that the Commonwealth Government are opposed to their election machinery being used for the settlement of a religious issue, and I think they have taken a wise course in refusing to sanction any such procedure. The Premier now finds that he cannot have a referendum taken unless he gets an Act passed to alter the date. [5.30 p.m.] and he asks the House to permit him to amend the principal Act in order that another date may be fixed for the referendum. That date is to be fixed by the Government. If we confine ourselves to that measure we shall have no opportunity of discussing other issues in connection with the question. For instance, the poll might be a small one, and a simple majority, 25 per cent. of the people of Queensland, might decide in favour of Bible reading in State schools.

Mr. HAMILTON: Or 10 per cent.

Mr. LESINA: The Government should provide for a minimum poll, such as we had in connection with the Federal referendum in New South Wales. There they had to secure a minimum number of votes before the voting became effective. There is, however, no such provision in this Act, and a small poll might decide this important question. Owing to the smallness of the poll one Government might see fit to ignore the result of the voting, but another Government, dominated by the religious parties of the State, might insist on legislation being introduced in accordance with the decision of the poll. Therefore, to safeguard ourselves we should carry this amendment providing for a minimum poll, and the amendment of the Bill should not be passed until that is provided. Personally, I do not believe in the settlement of sectarian differences by means of the referendum. Although I believe in referendums for settling industrial and political questions, I object to the taking of a referendum on this particular question, and I wish to put all the obstacles I can in the way of it being taken.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would remind the hon. member that the Act we are dealing with is already on the statute-book. The hon. member for Leichhardt has moved an amendment to add to the motion the words "and for other purposes," and the discussion must, at present, be confined to that.

Mr. LESINA: I shall confine myself to that. It has been pointed out that there is an insuperable difficulty in the way of carrying out the Act. What the House very unwisely did, on the advice of the Premier, was to place on the statute-book an Act of Parliament which could only be carried out with the consent of the Federal Government, and that Government has very wisely refused to give its consent. They had not been consulted at all.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. LESINA: When the hon. member for Cairns has finished his caucus meeting, I shall finish my remarks. He monopolises a great part of the time of the House by discussing every question introduced, and by talking in a loud voice he prevents other members from speaking. I would like to say that the condition now is one with which I am delighted. The Federal Government will not permit the State Government to have this referendum at the Federal election, and I must express my gratitude to the Federal Government for their decision, which was a wise and excellent one. Now the Premier wants to shift the difficulty. The Act is a dead letter until that Federal Government gives its consent, but the Federal Government recognises that to introduce religious issues or licensing issues into a political campaign will overshadow all other questions, and so has very wisely decided to keep them out when it has the power to do so. The Premier finds the door is shut in his face, and comes to this House saying he wants to amend the Act in one particular. He wants to have the question decided when public interest will be small, and a small vote only will be the result. That is the situation, and the member for Leichhardt wants power to amend the Act not only in the matter of time but in other respects. He wants to be able to fix a minimum vote, so that if the vote falls below a certain percentage it will be of no effect. If we are to have a referendum, let us have it; and if we are to fix a certain date, let us fix it; but if we are to have a referendum on a certain date, let us have some provision that the majority of the electors on the roll must vote, or otherwise the vote shall not be effective. Do not let a few people settle a question of such far-reaching importance. Twenty members of this House might pass a Bill. If twenty members are present, and a vote is taken, eleven out of twenty will carry a Bill; but members see that such a thing does not occur. They generally get an absolute majority of the members of the Assembly when a vote is taken. But if this thing goes to the electors in its present form, and no provision is made for a minimum vote, we may find that the great mass of the people would not vote at all; and why should we let a small minority vote decide a question when we would not think of such a thing being allowed to happen in this Chamber. As far as the present Act is concerned, it is a dead letter, and inoperative. It cannot be carried into effect without the permission of the Federal Government.

Mr. TOLMIE: That objection does not carry any weight.

Mr. LESINA: The Premier has been assured that the Federal Government will not give its permission. You could establish your own polling-booths, but you could not use the machinery of the Federal Government. It would cost from £6,000 to £7,000 to hold the referendum under those circumstances, and perhaps more. I found during my recent visit to New Zealand that the question that overshadowed all others was whether the public-houses should be open or closed. It was now proposed here that we should bring up the question whether our children should be taught a certain religion or not in the State schools. If such a question was brought up at a general election, it would simply overshadow every other question at issue. This is a question on which small-minded persons can think, and think intensely. They cannot understand questions of public policy, but they

can understand this. A man appearing before them might be an excellent statesman, having a broad grasp of public affairs, but unless he looked eye to eye with them on this particular question out he would go. The statesman is pushed in the background. The question of the State policy is pushed in the background, and a little, narrow person who has not two thoughts to rack his brain with is the person who gets the support every time. If this Bill be amended in the direction indicated by the amendment, the referendum will not be taken on a State election day. I objected to the principal Bill being placed on the statute-book. I object to it now, and I object to the present Bill on the broad ground that such amendment makes no provision for securing a minimum vote on a matter which will alter the settled policy of secular education of this State, and with no guarantee that it will have behind it an absolute majority of the voters of Queensland, and in that respect it appears to me that the amendment of the hon. member for Leichhardt is a perfectly justifiable one. We want not only to alter the date, but to put in a provision for a minimum vote, and every member of the House, who would like to see a big vote on the question, should vote for the amendment. Matters like this should not be a party question, and I hope the Government will not bring pressure to bear on their supporters to vote one way or the other in this matter. The higher we keep matters like this out of party feeling the better it is for the State, as people would then give a rational judgment on the matter. I shall vote against the motion itself, but I shall vote for the amendment.

Mr. RYAN (*Barcoo*): Already on the statute-book there is an Act providing for a referendum on this question as to whether there shall be Bible reading in the State schools. I take it that that referendum is for some purpose. It was surely intended by the Parliament that passed that Act that, if the referendum is carried in favour of teaching the Bible in State schools, there shall be Bible teaching in State schools, and, therefore, it is desirable that there should be a representative plebiscite or vote on the subject. That was to be secured, I understand, under the Act which is already on the statute-book, by having that poll taken at a general election, and I certainly think it was a wise thing that that vote should be taken rather at a Federal than a State election, because, as the hon. member for Kennedy has said, at a Federal election it is not so likely that a religious question would raise such strife as at a State election, principally because the Federal Parliament has nothing to do with education, whereas the State Parliament has. If this vote is not to be taken at the time of the Federal elections, then I think, in order to have it representative, there should be some provision for having a minimum vote, so that it could not be afterwards said, if it is carried, "Oh, well, we are not going to take any notice of that referendum, because the vote was so small." When something was said about a small vote, the Premier interjected, "Parliament can deal with that afterwards." What does that signify?

The PREMIER: As a matter of fact, Parliament will deal with it.

Mr. RYAN: Quite so, but the Premier interjected that in reply to a statement that the vote might be small. What he conveyed, to my mind, was this: That if it is a small poll hon. members of the House can throw out religious instruction in State schools whether it is carried at the referendum or not. I do not think we should strive to deceive those people who desire to have religious instruction in State schools. Although personally I am opposed to religious instruction in State schools, still I do not think we should try to deceive the people who desire to have that religious instruction in the State schools by giving them a referendum that will afterwards not be taken notice of by Parliament, and the Premier himself has thrown out the suggestion to those who are opposed to it. During the recent election I stated, in answer to a question, that if the referendum was carried I should certainly support the carrying of the Bill through the House. I did that because I felt there was a sufficient provision in having this vote taken on a general election day—that that was a sufficient assurance that there would be a representative vote, and a vote which would justify us in giving effect to the wish expressed by that vote; but if we allow this Bill to be introduced simply to alter the date without having some provision for a minimum vote such as the amendment provides for, then I think we will have a referendum that no hon. member need feel bound by, and the Premier himself evidently feels that we need not be bound by it. Therefore, I am in favour of the amendment, because I think it is in the interests of the people who want this referendum taken.

Question—That the words proposed to be inserted (*Mr. Hardacre's amendment*) be so inserted—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 30.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Land
,, Armstrong	,, Lennon
,, Barber	,, Lesina
,, Blair	,, Mann
,, Breslin	,, May
,, Collins	,, Mullan
,, Coyne	,, Murphy
,, Crawford	,, McLachlan
,, Douglas	,, O'Sullivan
,, Ferricks	,, Payne
,, Foley	,, Philp
,, Hamilton	,, Ryan
,, Hardacre	,, Ryland
,, Hunter, J. M.	,, Theodore
,, Keogh	,, Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Hardacre and Mr. Ryan.

NOES, 34.

Mr. Allan	Mr. Hodge
,, Appel	,, Hunter, D.
,, Barnes, G. P.	,, Kidston
,, Barnes, W. H.	,, Macartney
,, Booker	,, Morgan
,, Bouchard	,, Mulcahy
,, Brennan	,, Paget
,, Bridges	,, Petrie
,, Corser	,, Rankin
,, Cottell	,, Somerset
,, Denham	,, Stodart
,, Forrest	,, Swayne
,, Forsyth	,, Thorn
,, Grant	,, Tolmie
,, Grayson	,, Walker
,, Gunn	,, White
,, Hawthorn	,, Wienholt

Tellers: Mr. Corser and Mr. Somerset.

PAIR.

Aye—Mr. Bowman. No—Mr. Roberts.

Resolved in the negative.

Original question stated.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Brisbane North*): Recognising that this is not the usual time to discuss the merits of a Bill, I would not have risen to say anything had it not been for some remarks made by the hon. member for Cairns that struck me as somewhat extraordinary and

alarming. If I understood the hon. member aright, he suggested that the Premier had, after the passage of this Bill in 1908, done something in the nature of the insertion of a definition which altered the meaning of the Bill. I could not understand the hon. member, and I looked through the debate to see if I could verify the statement made by the hon. member to the effect that certain words had been omitted, but I was unable to do so. I obtained a copy of the Bill from the Clerk of the House, and I find that the Bill originally introduced contained the definition which the hon. member alleged was afterwards inserted. I found, on going through the debate, that the question of the omission of this definition had been very definitely discussed.

Mr. MANN: The impression of the House was that it meant the first election.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I do not follow the hon. member. The result of my investigation is this: Nothing was inserted in this Bill in that respect, at any rate after it left this Chamber, and I think the hon. member, in justice to the House and to the officers of the House, if not in justice to the Premier, ought to give that explanation, so as to make it clear. It is a very serious thing to say that a Bill, after it leaves this Chamber, can be altered in any particular.

Mr. MANN: Mr. Speaker——

The SPEAKER: Is this a personal explanation?

Mr. MANN: Yes. The hon. member for Cook and most members of this House were under the impression, when we were discussing the Bill, that the referendum would take place at the first election, either Federal or State.

Mr. HARDACRE: Whichever came first.

Mr. MANN: I did not think the definition was mentioned in the debate, and I never saw the definition until after the Bill was passed.

Original question put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 40.

Mr. Allan	Mr. Hodge
,, Appel	,, Hunter, D.
,, Armstrong	,, Kidston
,, Barnes, G. P.	,, Macartney
,, Barnes, W. H.	,, Morgan
,, Booker	,, Mulcahy
,, Bouchard	,, Paget
,, Brennan	,, Petrie
,, Bridges	,, Philp
,, Corser	,, Rankin
,, Crawford	,, Ryan
,, Denham	,, Ryland
,, Douglas	,, Somerset
,, Forrest	,, Stodart
,, Forsyth	,, Swayne
,, Grant	,, Thorn
,, Grayson	,, Tolmie
,, Gunn	,, Walker
,, Hardacre	,, White
,, Hawthorn	,, Wienholt

Tellers: Mr. Grayson and Mr. Wienholt.

NOES, 21.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Lennon
,, Barber	,, Lesina
,, Breslin	,, Mann
,, Collins	,, May
,, Cottell	,, Mullan
,, Coyne	,, Murphy
,, Ferricks	,, McLachlan
,, Foley	,, O'Sullivan
,, Hamilton	,, Payne
,, Hunter, J. M.	,, Winstanley
,, Keogh	

Tellers: Mr. O'Sullivan and Mr. Barber.

PAIR.

Aye—Mr. Roberts. No.—Mr. Bowman

Resolved in the affirmative.

TALWOOD TO MOONIE RIVER RAILWAY.

APPROVAL OF PLANS.

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 from Talwood to the Moonie River, in length 38 miles 55 chains, as laid upon the table of the House on Thursday, 2nd December.

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

Mr. LAND: I desire to enter my protest against the introduction of this proposal at this stage. I do so in the best interests of this State, and in the best interests of the great number of the electors of Balonne. I am opposed to this railway pro-

[7.10 p.m.] posal running from Talwood to Bullamon, and I favour a railway running from Talwood to St. George. I wish to point out that whatever justification there may have been in years gone by to extend our border line, it is entirely done away with now. (Hear, hear!) I will show you some reasons why. You will observe, in looking at the map on the wall, that when this railway extension reaches Talwood it goes in a southerly direction along the border. It dips right down to the south from Talwood. The Minister, or Commissioner, or any other man in favour of this proposal, may have had some logical argument to deduce why they should extend that section, if they only extended it to a point on the Moonie River —say, at least 30 miles north of the present terminus. Now, I consider there is not an atom of logical argument why they should extend that line, and make the terminus so far south.

Mr. KEOGH: To catch the border trade.

Mr. LAND: If you look at the map you will see that the terminus is just above the New South Wales town of Mungindi, about 25 miles from Mungindi.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Thirty miles.

Mr. LAND: Is that in a straight line, or by road?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is 30 miles north of Mungindi.

Mr. LAND: If anyone will look at the map they will see this railway will run right through the centre of the Australian Pastoral Company's holdings. Their holdings run right on to the border. You will also see that if you extend the line in the direction in which it is going now, in a short distance you will run it across the New South Wales border.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Oh, no!

Mr. LAND: But, oh, yes! (Laughter.) I ask any hon. gentleman present to have a look at the map.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It takes a turn.

Mr. LAND: I will deal with turns later on. (Laughter.) You will get more turns. There is too much twisting in this, and, as the Minister for Lands says, there is going to be some more twisting. I wish to make my point quite clear that if the line goes on as it is going now, then in time it will go straight across the New South Wales border.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No. It might when it gets many hundreds of miles further west.

Mr. LAND: I maintain that any man looking at that map will see that if it goes on in the direction it is going, then it will go straight across the New South Wales border. If there is anything in the statement that this line is to catch the border trade, surely to goodness you would not extend it right over the border! Would you not leave a little margin on the Queensland side. Would you not leave some Queensland land that you could supply with a railway and from which you could draw their produce. Would you run a line there costing hundreds of thousands of pounds to the people only to serve the people on one side of the line? If you were logical men you would run it out where you would open up Queensland country and get the Queensland trade. Looking at the map you can see that what I say is absolutely correct. There is a twist in it all right, and if it never twisted before it has twisted since it left Talwood. I do not know what is causing that twist. Although the line is pointing towards the border, it is not intended to go across the border at all when this Government or any other Government decides to extend that line further. Then it would have to have another twist. I will give this House an idea of what the Australian Pastoral Company holds there. That company at present holds 1,635½ square miles of leasehold there, and the map shows that the railway will run right through the centre of it. Anyone who knows that country knows that it is some of the best grazing country in Queensland, and yet this company has got it at a rent of £1 16s. 8¼d. per square mile. I know that instead of only getting that amount for it you might get many times more if it had not been leased again.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was leased a long time ago.

Mr. LAND: When I have finished you will find it not as good a proposal for Queensland as you might think now. The length of the leases is from twenty-six to thirty-seven years, except in the case of Collyben resumption, that is 9,200 acres. The first resumption that falls due out of that 1,600 odd miles is in 1916-7. I wish you to mark that, because it will give you an idea at what date you are going to get any land for closer settlement to support your railway line. In case the point might be raised that the leases are falling due, I wish to say that the Collyben resumption is equal to 9,200 acres of land—out of 1,600 miles. And the 1,600 miles is adjoined by 219,619 acres of freehold land sold at an average of 1s. over 10s. per acre.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: When was it sold?

Mr. LAND: At different dates, and in different parcels. One lot was sold at 10s. per acre, another at 15s. 4d., and 15 acres at £2 per acre. I believe myself there is a pull to get that railway there. I cannot exactly explain what the pull is, but it is certainly not on its merits, and if there is anything in Queensland to-day that should be substituted for the Commissioner's report before we pass the railway—well, I cannot agree with it. I do not believe there is one single proposal that should be carried without a better report than the Commissioner's, more especially as the people are prepared to guarantee it, because the Commissioner will say now, the same as he said in connection with the Port Alma Railway, that the Government will not be a loser. That is not a fair thing. It is not a fair thing to saddle the taxpayers of this State with large sums of money like that, and to make some poor unfortunate people pay for a blunder. This is nothing but a blunder.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It has not proved a blunder hitherto.

Mr. LAND: I will give you some information later on about your blunder. From Mungindi to Nindy Gully is about 30 miles north of the present terminus on the Moonie. Say it is about 60 miles from Mungindi, and Mungindi is 74 miles from Moree railway terminus. That makes it 134 miles from Moree to Nindy Gully. There are some little stores just formed there and those little storekeepers can serve the travelling public cheaper than the people of St. George can serve you at the present time. And they have only got 130 miles by road from your Queensland railway, for from Yeulba to St. George is 130 miles; and at Nindy Gully, which is 134 miles from Moree, they can supply you with goods cheaper than they can at St. George. The Moree extension will take place without any doubt. I said just now there was somebody pulling this line, and when I say that I do not mean to say there is anything extraordinarily crooked about it, but I mean to say that you can go out into that district and you cannot hear anybody asking for this line. I never heard it spoken of in all my travels. I do not know much about the Australian Pastoral Company, and I do not know if any Australian has got a share in it.

Mr. FORREST: It is a good thing to be in, anyhow.

Mr. LAND: As long as it pays. The late C. B. Fisher lost over £1,500,000 over it, so it was not always a good thing to be in. I took notice of the hon. member's interjection that it was a good thing to be in, and I have got an idea that somebody is endeavouring to get that railway through here, while the people interested in the district are not trying to get it through. It has been said there is some firm in Brisbane acting for the Australian Pastoral Company, and if so, that accounts for the railway going to Bullamon. I want to show you that this proposal is so close to Mungindi, and that people, as I pointed out, who are 60 miles above Mungindi, are getting their things cheaper than you can get them in St. George. This goes to prove that those people are dealing in Sydney, and if they are satisfied to get their supplies and necessaries in Sydney that is where they will send their produce. If they are established in Sydney, and buy in Sydney, they will sell in Sydney. What chance have you got of drawing anything from below the line? I have no hesitation in saying that if this railway is completed you cannot draw that trade. And I can show you that they are very active in their proposal to run the Moree line to Mungindi. But, first of all, I will read something in reference to the matter from a St. George newspaper. The *Balonne Beacon* reports as follows:—

> At the present time mention of any railway extension likely to influence the welfare of this district is a matter of importance, considering the unanimously pronounced adverse feeling that exists towards the proposed construction of the Talwood railway extension to Bullamon Station, on the Moonie River. The hope of the residents of the Balonne, who have been promised railway communication by successive Governments for years past, strange to relate, now lies with New South Wales. It has been repeatedly brought under the notice of the Government that the proposed route from Talwood to the Moonie will not in any way secure the trade of the border to Queensland, as the extension of a line from

Moree to Mungindi would defeat the object of any railway that may be constructed in the South-west for the purpose of saving the so-called border trade. But little heed has been taken, and apparently none are so deaf as those who will not hear. Therefore the announcement of future railway matters in New South Wales is of interest and special importance to this district. Mr. C. A. Lee, Minister for Public Works, has given notice in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly of the following motion:—"That it is expedient that a line of railway from Moree to Mungindi, as recommended by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, be carried out. This is significant, and as we stated in a previous issue, that the line from Moree to Mungindi will be speedily constructed. On the above resolution being carried in Parliament, and there is every reason to suppose it will be, a Bill will at once be framed thereon to authorise the construction of this line.

Mr. FORREST: It cost £268,000. We know all about it. You ought to know a bit more about it before you talk about it.

Mr. LAND: I know very well that the hon. member knows something about it. At the same time, any information I have to give to the House I intend to give. It is certain the hon. member for Bris-
[7.30 p.m.] bane North has come out of his shell a bit more to-night in connection with this proposal than ever I knew him to do before. He knows all about it now, and the Premier will get to know something now. I was sorry to hear the Premier say the other night that he was getting his leg pulled.

The PREMIER: What are you sorry about?

Mr. LAND: I am sorry to hear you say that you were getting your leg pulled.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must address himself to the Chair.

Mr. LAND: The report goes on—

This Bill will have to be passed by both Houses of Parliament, and the Treasurer will also have to make provision in his Loan Estimates for the money, after which the Minister can go ahead with the work of construction. All this may cause a slight delay in the starting of the work, but beyond that the line will be built. And to show even at this early date how far the details have been entered into, it is now understood that separate tenders will first be invited for the erection of the two bridges between Moree and Mungindi, so that the speedy construction of the line, when once started, will not be retarded in any way. Further, the whole of the steel and iron required for the bridges will be prepared at the Government workshops at Cockatoo Island, and, if it is necessary, the building of the bridges will be done by the department by day labour. The first section of the line will be from Moree to Garah, about halfway to Mungindi. So that is the situation at present with regard to the construction of the line to Mungindi, distant about 80 miles from St. George, and needless to say the district which will benefit most by the building of that line—after the Mungindi district—will be the St. George district. As distant only 80 miles from the nearest railway that connects with Sydney, all the railway lines the Queensland Government chooses to construct for the purpose of securing the trade of the border will only be as so much scrap iron.

That is what I tell this House without the slightest hesitation. The hon. member for Brisbane North said he knew all about this being passed, and I do not doubt his words for one moment; but the public with whom I have come in contact know nothing about it. The *Balonne Beacon*, of 4th December, reports—

In the New South Wales Parliament recently, Mr. C. A. Lee, Secretary for Public Works, moved, "That it is expedient that a line from Moree to Mungindi, as recommended by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Works, be carried out." He said: This important railway extension is intended to develop the upper portion of our great north-western district close up to the Queensland border. The details of the proposal are as follows:—

Revised estimated cost, exclusive of land resumptions, £289,643.

Length, 77 miles 12 chains.

Land resumptions estimated at about £5,000.

Estimated Annual Expenditure.—Interest on capital cost at 3½ per cent., £10,006; maintenance of permanent way, and traffic and locomotive expenses, £6,318; total, £16,324.

Estimated Annual Revenue.—Merchandise and live-stock, £4,896; passengers, parcels, mails, etc., £2,587; total, £7,483; estimated annual loss, £8,841.

The line to Goondiwindi (Queensland) was opened for traffic on 14th October, 1908, and a further extension of 55½ miles along the border from Goondiwindi to Talwood, which is about 15 miles north-west of Boomi, New South Wales, is now under construction by the Queensland Government. From Talwood, it is stated, it is intended to push this railway still further west to Nindy Gully, on the Moonie River; but this further extension would appear to be mainly to secure for Brisbane trade which is legitimately that of Queensland, and which under present conditions comes to the New South Wales railways through Mungindi to Moree. If the proposed railway from Moree to Mungindi should not be constructed, very much of the traffic it is expected this line will obtain will, according to the general opinion, go to Queensland railways.

From local inquiries made towards the end of last year, it was reported that New South Wales wool, to the extent of between 6,000 and 7,000 bales, had been attracted to Queensland by the Goondiwindi extension, and it was estimated that, approximately, 2,500 bales of Queensland wool that previously came to Sydney through Moree had gone to Brisbane, with corresponding loss of back store loading in both cases.

The primary object of the line is to serve legitimate local traffic between Moree and Mungindi; at the same time it will help to retain for the railways of this State a traffic from the Southern border of Queensland. I principally refer to the Australian Pastoral Company's wool grown in Queensland, at an average distance of about 50 miles from Mungindi. Last year we received 5,639 bales of wool (1,000 tons) at Moree from the property owned by this company. As, however, the present terminus at Moree already influences this traffic to Newcastle for shipment, it is reasonable to assume, notwithstanding that Queensland may further extend their lines, that the proposed railway to Mungindi will, at least, have the effect of preserving existing trade relations.

Distances.—Sydney to Moree, 413 miles; Moree to Mungindi, 76¼ miles; total, 489¼ miles.

Brisbane to Warwick, 169 miles; Warwick to Goondiwindi, 125 miles; total, 294 miles. Goondiwindi to Tallwood, 55½ miles; total, 349½ miles.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

Why I read this at the risk of wearying the House is because I want to let this House and the public have as much information as I can. I now propose to read resolutions passed at public meetings in St. George—

(1) That this meeting of ratepayers protests strongly against the proposed action of the Government in depriving St. George of direct railway communication with Talwood.

(2) That the proposed extension of the Talwood-Goondiwindi line 40 miles towards Bullamon is inimical to the best interests of the State in view of the early extension by New South Wales of a line from Moree to Mungindi, whereby New South Wales will secure the trade of the southern part of this district, in spite of the proposed extension to Bullamon.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They wish our trade to go to Sydney.

Mr. LAND: They do not wish anything of the sort. In passing these resolutions we were in favour of a line *viâ* Talwood.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do they intend to reach Brisbane *viâ* Talwood?

Mr. LAND: The St. George people were so long agitating for railway communication without success that they took advantage of the first opportunity they considered they had of getting railway communication, and in the Talwood extension, which is within 60 miles, they saw a good opportunity of getting an extension to St. George, the country along which the railway would run being all good country and high and dry and above flood. I

would like to ask the Minister: Do you expect the St. George people to get any benefit from this railway?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Most decidedly.

Mr. LAND: Then it is very funny you kept them outside the benefited area.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What about extending the line from Tara?

Mr. LAND: What is the good of talking about extending the line from Tara? The Tara line has plenty of work to do. If this line had been extended out to St. George, I maintain that it would have paid from the first day, but this New South Wales line is sure to be built, so how is it to pay now? It is all bunkum talking about the Australian Pastoral Company's traffic. We have not got £1 out of the Australian Pastoral Company for years. I want to show the Secretary for Railways that what I am saying is absolutely correct. Does not their land run down to the New South Wales border? They have got their sheds there, and everything down there. Is not New South Wales a better market than Queensland? Are you going to get people to send their stock to Brisbane when they can send them to Sydney? Not at all. The Sydney people come up here and buy sheep—as many as 80,000 in a mob.

Mr. BOOKER: The facilities for dealing with stock are better in Brisbane than in Sydney. I know all about it. You don't know what you are talking about.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Order, order!

Mr. LAND: The hon. member talks about the meatworks in Brisbane—about what they can do.

Mr. BOOKER: There are better inducements in Brisbane than in Sydney

Mr. LAND: As a matter of fact, the Sydney buyers come out West and take the sheep to Sydney without railway communication, so long as the road is open. I do not know what the hon. member knows about the facilities in Brisbane. I know this: If you have any stock in the Western country it is only now and again you can do any good with it in Brisbane. It is all very well to get your 200 or 300 down, but why go out as far West as I am speaking about now, when you have got all the country between there and here to supply them? Why, there are more people in Sydney than there are in Queensland altogether. Sydney is a regular market, and a better place to buy.

Mr. WHITE: Why don't you go to Sydney?

Mr. LAND: I'll go where I like.

Mr. BOOKER: Our surplus stock have got to be exported.

Mr. LAND: Recently, this year—and past years have not been too bad with us—I can assure you that fat sheep were not worth more than the wool on them. You could not do anything in the Brisbane market. You have got a railway running to the centre of that district. Why was it that sheep were standing there of no more value than the wool on them? Practically because you could not sell. The Sydney market was cut off for the want of water and grass. I know what I am talking about, and I say that if that line goes to Bullamon, you won't get the Australian Pastoral Company's wool. What you might do is this: If this line is finished before the Moree line, it may be possible for you to get a clip, but there is no sympathy between the Australian Pastoral Company and Queensland. I admit that it does not matter where you sell your wool the buyers will come for that, but it matters with stock. The Brisbane market is not reliable at all for stock. Where people sell their stock, it is a thousand chances to one that they will sell their wool and buy their commodities. I would not oppose this railway for a moment, unless I was satisfied that I was doing it for Queensland's good. In opposing the railway I am opposing it in the interests of Queensland, and in the interests and the wishes of the great bulk of the electors in my district. You can go into St. George, and you would not find a man or woman but what is in favour of the railway to St. George. I have advocated the railway to run from Yeulba to St. George, with the object of running it to Mungindi, instead of running our lines out any further. It is a great mistake to run out our lines any further. That market is absolutely lost to New South Wales. What is the use of running the line out and stopping there. Then if you run it further out the Moree line is within 80 miles of the border. You go further West and the Bourke line is within 80 miles of the border, and they are actively working in New South Wales to extend the line to the Queensland border, and I hope the Government will take notice of that.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is so.

Mr. LAND: I hope you will be just as active as Bourke and Mungindi, and secure all this country against drought. I would not advocate a thing like that in this House if I did not believe that it was in the best interests of the people. We are always talking of our flocks and herds as our best assets, and how many did we let die? We know it was through the stock dying as they did that we had so much land on our hands. There were 50,000 or 60,000 head of cattle dying on one run, and the land was thrown up. It would be better if our trunk lines were connected so that people could always avail themselves of a market. Did you ever hear anyone say any thing about the Warwick line endangering Queensland? I am very sorry that this proposal was ever brought in. I am not afraid to say that as soon as ever this line goes from Moree to Mungindi, the greater portion of this Talwood line will be just scrap iron. Those people believe in Sydney, and they won't come here at all unless they cannot help it, and when you run your line out you will not get them. I want to read a resolution passed by the St. George Council. The St. George people want a line to go that way, and they are prepared to pay for the line. I know that it will pay from the very first day. The resolution states—

> That the Government be again approached, and be strongly urged to carry out the trial survey of line of railway from Talwood into St. George, as previously asked for by this Council, and which had since been officially promised to the hon. member for Carnarvon.

We all know that St. George is an old-established town. People settled there fifty years ago, and have battled from that day to this. All the land is taken up around there, much of it in small holdings, and it is some of the best land in Queensland. Every kind of tropical plant has been tried, and it will grow everything. They have never grown much, because they have no chance of doing anything with it; but I look upon the land about St. George, and from Talwood to St. George, as some of the best land in Queensland. I have stated in this House before, and some hon. members only laughed, that the red soil

about St. George was better soil than that about Toowoomba, and I maintain I am right.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What is the rainfall?

Mr. LAND: The rainfall averages about 20 inches, but it is equal to Roma. The reason St. George would be such a good agricultural district is because there is such a variety of soil.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: Some of the best wheat has been grown out there.

Mr. LAND: Yes; wheat and fruit of all descriptions. Some sort of a town would go up there, and it would help to pull St. George down. Another thing, if you extend that line, you get down into miles of flooded country. When you get down low, the land opens out into four or five different rivers, and there is any amount of that country flooded, and it would be impossible to maintain a railway like this. If, instead of putting it down there, you put it higher up, you could be on high ground all the way, and you would serve more people than you can serve now. If you had not renewed these leases for such a number of years, you would have a fair argument for running the railway out there, because the country would be available for settlement; but, having it locked up for so many years, you have no possible hope of getting the trade belonging to the Australian Pastoral Company if the line goes to Mungindi. I tell you that the line will go to Mungindi, and I say the line from Talwood to Bullamon will be a mass of scrap-iron. Besides the agitation that has been going on for years for a line to St. George, deputation after deputation has waited on the different Ministers, and there has been money on the Estimates; and, notwithstanding all that, these people have not been able to get a railway up to the present time. Now that they have an opportunity of getting a railway, the railway is denied them, and taken down into another part of the country just to bolster up a big land monopoly. It is too close to the border altogether, and there is no possible chance of drawing any trade from that side.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: How far is Nindy Gully from Mungindi?

Mr. LAND: It is about 60 miles as nearly as possible from Mungindi to Nindy Gully, and it is high and dry, with a chance for the water to get away. There is no chance down here, and the country is not so good. It is land which will take a good deal of settling on before there is anything to support a railway at all. In the Commissioner's report he says—

CHARACTER OF COUNTRY.—The greater part of the country in this district is held under pastoral lease, and the balance is grazing farms. About 300 square miles of land (to the north of the survey) have recently been designed in agricultural blocks of 1,280 acres each, which will shortly be opened for selection.

The people who settle on that have very little chance, as there is no water there. How they can expect people to settle on 1,280-acre blocks in dry country like that and keep the railway going, I cannot understand. That land should be cut up into larger grazing farms. It will be years before the small man can do any good there.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I thought you said it was good wheat-growing country.

Mr LAND: I did not say anything about the country. The Commissioner goes on to say—

There is a good deal of timber, but it is not valuable, and there is an undergrowth of sandalwood, wilga, and wattle. Considerable areas of brigalow and belar scrub are met with, which would, if ringbarked, produce good pasture.

That is all right. There is nothing wrong with that. Then the Commissioner goes on—

A comparatively poor belt of country is traversed by this extension, but immediately beyond the Moonie River the soil improves. Prickly pear is in evidence.

I admit that it improves. It is some of the best grazing land in Queensland. It is in a good artesian belt, and there is no [8 p.m.] trouble at all about getting water there. You know exactly how far you have got to go, and what it will cost you. But there are 1,600 square miles of leasehold there, and 219,000 acres of freehold adjoining it. It is private land. That report is perfectly true.

Mr. ALLEN: Is it the best land?

Mr. LAND: I am not prepared to say that. The chances are that the freehold is mostly on the rivers, and the Premier even will admit that it is not likely to be the worst land. If that grazing land could be secured for closer settlement, it would be taken up without the slightest trouble at all in small areas. People would live on it, and the rental they would be willing to pay would be much more than what the Australian Pastoral Company are paying.

The SPEAKER: Order! I think it would be better for the hon. member to bring up this argument in Committee.

Mr. LAND: I want to get it in at this stage, so that if any member wishes for any information when we are in Committee they can get it from this. The Commissioner goes on—with regard to the revenue and working expenses—

The principal source of revenue will be derived from the conveyance of wool and live stock. Last year the railway from Warwick to Goondiwindi (125 miles) earned a gross revenue of £28,847: and for this extension I estimate a revenue of £5,850. The expenditure (allowing for three trains per week) I put down at £3,550, leaving a net revenue of £2,300 per annum, or 2¼ per cent. on the capital.

The PREMIER: Have the members not got this information?

Mr. LAND: Yes, but there are certain things that I want to refer to in this report, and I am going to refer to them. It seems strange that the line is going to benefit St. George. The Commissioner estimates a net revenue of 2¼ per cent. on the capital, and if that is so, why is St. George not included? Why does the benefited area of this line go right up alongside St. George and then go off? If St. George is going to be benefited, then St. George should be in the benefited area. I oppose this railway in the best interests of the people of the State. I am sure that it will be non-paying. If it went from Talwood to St. George, the people of St. George would be glad to guarantee it straight away. If the railway branched off to St. George, more people would be served by it, and the State would reap the benefit by having a railway that would pay.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Perhaps I might be permitted to say a few words in reply to the hon. gentleman. The hon. member for Balonne might well be expected to put up a fight for the St. George people. I find here amongst my papers a letter, dated 7th August, 1907, signed by Mr.

E. M. Land, the hon. member for Balonne, and Mr. W. H. Moore, then hon. member for Murilla. They point out—

Seeing by the Governor's Speech at the opening of Parliament that there is likely to be a progressive works policy submitted to us, we, the members in the Legislative Assembly for Balonne and Murilla, humbly beg to draw your attention to the proposed railway line to St. George from Yeulba.

The letter goes on to state that the line to St. George was reported on by a Select Committee, and the Minister would have the details of the report, and he would see that that trade should be secured. Then it goes on—

You are aware of the fact that New South Wales is pushing her lines up to our borders, and you must also be aware that in the near future the Federal authorities will be playing a part in determining the railway policies of the different States at their one and several borders, and it behoves you to now act, and act immediately, to secure to our State her legitimate trade and rights in that portion of Queensland by running a railway to St. George.

Mr. LAND: Read the whole lot.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I do not desire to read the whole letter.

Mr. LAND: You read the part that suits you.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: In running this railway from Talwood to Bullamon the desire of the Government and the Commissioner for Railways is to conserve Queensland trade for Queensland, exactly what the hon. member for Balonne and the then hon. member for Murilla desired the Minister and the Commissioner for Railways to do in 1907, to get in before the Federal authorities stepped in and determined the policies of the various States respecting their border railways. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. LAND: That is right.

The PREMIER: And this is what the Minister gets for carrying out instructions.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: In February last the Chief Secretary, Attorney-General, and myself, in company with the Commissioner for Railways, went to Sydney to take part in a conference with the New South Wales authorities on this very question of border rates, and on the very question of the two States of Queensland and New South Wales trying to come to some decision on the matter of preferential rates and what had been a bone of contention for over twenty years between the two States as to whether either of the States should be allowed to continue their railway policy in such a manner as would conserve their trade to the natural ports, and we came to a very fair and very just agreement, one, at any rate, which was not inimical to the interests of Queensland. The hon. gentleman, of course, was quite right in fighting for the interests of St. George and his electorate, but he did not fight for the interests of the electorate of the hon. member for Carnavon, where the sheep are.

Mr. NEVITT: People are more important than sheep.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Well, where there are more people and more sheep too, because it is the wool traffic which is going to make the line pay. The hon. gentleman also said that Sydney was the natural market for this country.

Mr. LAND: I mean the lower country.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If Sydney is the natural market of this country, how is it that the Goondiwindi line has been such a success? Mr. Thallon is a gentleman whose opinion, I think, is respected by every member in this House. On the 6th of October, 1905, he showed how a certain policy, if carried out, was going to be a success, and I may say that it has been a success, and it will be a further success when it is further carried out. On that occasion Mr. Thallon said about the line from Thane to Goondiwindi—

For the reason 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.

Probably the hon. member for Balonne might have considered that this was not doing a fair thing to St. George, and I do not for one moment blame the hon. gentleman for fighting for what he thinks are the rights of the people of St. George. To show whether the Commissioner was right in his prediction as to the value of that proposed railway, I would like to point out that the revenue from the Goondiwindi line last year was £15,267, and the net return on the capital value was £4 12s. 9d. per cent. (Hear, hear!)

The PREMIER: A new railway.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes; a new railway. I quote again from the Commissioner's report of the 2nd April, 1908, with reference to the proposed line from Goondiwindi to Talwood—

The extension of this line is necessary to secure to Queensland the carriage of its legitimate trade. Should the line be extended from Goondiwindi to Bullamon, about 25 miles north of the border, the distance to Brisbane would be 383 miles, or, if the via recta were constructed, 326 miles, compared with a distance of 503 miles from Bullamon to Sydney, *via* Mungindi and Moree.

The hon. member for Balonne will not wait in his place while I am replying to his remarks. I would like to know if he still thinks that Sydney is the natural market for that country.

Mr. GRAYSON: Your arguments are too convincing.

Mr. ALLEN: It is the best market for stock.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Seeing that Sydney has got 20,000 more people than there are in the whole of this State, I should say that it was the best market for stock, but when we get this extension built there is no reason why they should not send their stock to Brisbane. There is absolutely nothing in the hon. gentleman's argument. They get a better price in Sydney, but they have to travel hundreds of miles more to get that better price. When our fat cattle are travelled from the north-western parts of the State down to Adelaide they fetch a much better price than they do in Burketown. Mr. Thallon says in his report—

If New South Wales gets to Mungindi first with their railway they will secure the Moonie River trade. It is important they should be prevented, for once a railway is established it is difficult to alter the course of the trade, especially station trade. Consequently, I will urge the construction of this line with as little delay as possible.

What Mr. Thallon foresaw eighteen months ago has come about. The New South Wales Parliament has authorised the construction of the railway from Moree to Mungindi, but I believe the Queensland Parliament will authorise the construction of some 40 miles in a generally westerly direction from Talwood to Bullamon, which is 30 miles from Mungindi, and that the extension will be built more quickly than the line from Moree to Mungindi. And I have not the slightest fear that the pessimistic views of the hon. member of a neighbouring electorate—for this railway is not in his electorate—will not come to pass.

Hon. W. T. Paget.]

I do not believe, if this extension is granted, and we are permitted to get into Committee, that that railway will ever become scrap iron. I believe it will prove a most valuable asset to this State, and be the means of conserving Queensland trade to Queensland ports. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*): I wish to say a few words on this matter, because I happen to live within a mile of Talwood, and have been frequently using the road to St. George, where my sons have some property, and know the country very well. I therefore think I am justified in saying a few words. When the line was constructed to Goondiwindi it was considered better to continue that line for a further distance, and no one thought the line would ever stop at Talwood. There are two main drift ways between the colonies—one at Goondiwindi Bridge and the other at Mungindi Bridge. In the past a portion of our trade has gone over the Goondiwindi Bridge to Moree, and thence to Sydney. And a considerable amount of trade has gone over the Mungindi Bridge to Moree.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The trade is coming back.

Mr. GUNN: Previous to the line being built it went the other way. The object of this line is to conserve this trade, and to get it to come to our own port instead of going to New South Wales. Some people think it does not matter where it goes. But it does matter. There are 50,000 bales of wool to be sold in Brisbane on the 7th of January, and there are a big number of wharf labourers who will be glad to handle that wool. I have met some of them, and they regretted very much the sale was postponed. Some told me they would have very little to spend at Christmas, because they had not money to pay for their Christmas dinner, and that this was owing to there being no wool to handle.

Mr. NEVITT: That does not speak well for the condition of the working men in Brisbane.

Mr. GUNN: It would be perfectly valueless stopping the line at Talwood, and when that line was built everybody understood it was to be taken a section further. When it gets to Bullamon it will be opposite Mungindi. From Sydney to Mungindi is 489 miles, and 76 miles of that has no railway line, although they are building a line. It is 30 miles from Mungindi to Bullamon, or 519 miles from Sydney to Bullamon. If our line is continued it will mean the distance between Brisbane and Bullamon is 388 miles, and surely to goodness Brisbane is the natural port of that part of the State. There is no reason for supposing any of the Queensland trade would go to New South Wales when it could get to a Queensland port by railway over a much shorter distance. You have heard this evening of Queensland stock going to Sydney. Not so very long ago—a month ago, in fact—a brother of mine near St. George sent some fat cows to Sydney, where they averaged £4 6s. 9d. Similar cows were sent down here to Brisbane last week and averaged £5 6s. 9d. in the market.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Where is the best market now?

Mr. GUNN: On the 24th of this month eighty-four cows are to be sold here that have come from there, and I am now in treaty for the sale of a lot of fat sheep to a Brisbane preserving company. So that argument of New South Wales being a better market for Queensland stock is knocked over. Now, with regard to the turning off of the line at St. George. The object of this line is to run due west from Warwick, and the same thing applied to the Western line. All our lines go from the coast into the interior, and they should be continued towards the West. This line should be parallel with the Southern and Western line. To turn it off to St. George means you spoil the plans of this border railway for all time. Again, when this line is continued right along the border, as it will be, it is quite possible that at some future date the via recta railway will be built, which will shorten this border line, so far as Brisbane is concerned, by 60 or 70 miles.

Mr. LAND: It would be 60 miles nearer to St. George.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Yeulba is up a tree so far as St. George is concerned.

Mr. GUNN: We should look ahead. Why not continue the line from Mungindi to Bullamon at some future period, then to St. George, and then to Yeulba or Roma, and connect up the whole system? You must have a plan, and it is a mistake to spoil a plan for the sake of any particular town. I would just like to say how this affects my own personal interest. I am within a few miles of the Talwood terminus, and I have two sons and a brother who have grazing farms near St. George. It would suit me best to connect the line between Talwood and St. George. Those cows I spoke about would come down by train if that was done, instead of having to travel by foot. There is no doubt that it would be in my interest to support a line from Talwood to St. George, but I do not think it is my duty to do so. In the interests of Queensland I would support the line across to the border, and continue it parallel with the Southern and Western line, and as part of a well-thought-out plan. With regard to the point where the present survey goes, I would point out that the terminal point, Bullamon, is too near the border. The line should go nearer Nindy Gully. It will have to be continued at some future period, and if it went a little further north a lot of flooded country would be missed. I hope it will be possible that the line will be continued a little nearer to St. George than it is at present.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: A branch line?

Mr. GUNN: I do not mean a branch line. It will make the line straighter than it is at present. It ought to continue in a westerly direction.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Where to?

Mr. GUNN: Take it to the South Australian border if you like. In my opinion, if there were no New South Wales and Queensland and the whole of Australia was as one State, it would be a wise thing to build this line. It has nothing to do with the taking away of trade from New South Wales. I do not believe in robbing them of their legitimate trade, but I do not believe that we should supply people out there with schools and such like, and that they should do all their trade with Sydney and give none of it to Brisbane. With reference to the freehold this line is supposed to pass through, I must say that, so far as I know, it does not pass any freehold, except that there may be a little on Moonie River, where the terminus is.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What freehold there is will be responsible under the guarantee.

Mr. GUNN: When it goes further along it will come to the freehold belonging to the Australian Pastoral Company. But if you ran it into St. George you would run into

freehold. You have freehold everywhere. If you go off round every time you come across freehold what sort of line would you have? With regard to the land the line goes through, I may say it is fairly good red soil, and I am given to understand it will make good wheat land. It is not, however, the land immediately along the line that will benefit, but the people to the left and right, and the line should be the means of settling a lot of people on land at present unoccupied. Not so long ago I called in at St. George, and could have got an occupation license for a block of land at £1 a square mile, but I did not think it worth while. There is no water on it, but I hope an artesian bore will be put down, and that land made available for closer settlement. While I am a breeder of sheep and cattle, I think people a better asset to the State, and I would like to see that country out there settled by a lot of farmers. As a matter of fact, the man with sheep and cattle can do without a railway far better than the farmer. When the line was opened to Goondiwindi a great number of the people about there did not believe that the line [8.30 p.m.] should stop at Goondiwindi. They demanded a poll on the matter, and the line from Goondiwindi to Talwood was only carried by ten votes. The principal reason the people voted against the extension of the line was this: They had leasehold, and when a railway comes to a leasehold there is no chance of getting out of any resumption—the leaseholder will lose all the resumptions which will be taken up by smaller men. Take my own instance. I have a grazing farm of 20,000 acres, and when a railway comes within 10 miles of my grazing farm, the Government can take a quarter of that grazing farm, after a certain period, whereas if the railway had stopped at Goondiwindi I would have had my grazing farm intact for the next twenty years or whatever period the lease may be. Therefore, it is not greatly to the interests of the grazing farmer or lessee for a railway to go to his door—it would be just as good if it were 50 or 100 miles away. There has been a lot of talk about this line benefiting the Australian Pastoral Company. I have heard some whisper that a poll will be demanded if this line is passed—it will be demanded by the ratepayers, and amongst those ratepayers will be the Australian Pastoral Company, and most likely they will vote against the construction of this line, because if it is constructed, it will mean that there will be no chance of any further extension of their lease, and they will lose all their resumptions. Some people say all the land is freehold. That is not the case. There is a great quantity of leasehold country there and resumptions will be falling in from time to time, and the Government will be able to make use of them. I could say a great deal more on this question, but I do not want to keep the House too long, and a note has been sent up to me to keep something for another time. (Laughter.) I would like to say that I sincerely believe in the line, but, in my opinion, in the interests of the State it should go a little further to the north than the proposed route.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is not in order to have a discussion of this kind on the motion that I do now leave the chair. Under the Standing Orders a general discussion on the merits of the lines is out of order at this stage.

The PREMIER: I do not want to continue the discussion, and I quite agree that it is not a good time to discuss the merits of the proposal. I only want to say this: That as I understand the hon. member for Balonne, Mr. Land, he does not seem to understand the policy the Government are trying to carry out, or he would not suggest that we construct this railway in the direction of St. George. There is a great block of country between St. George and the border, and no one railway will open that. He would be doing a very bad service to his constituents if he got the Government to connect this railway with St. George, as it would saddle them for all time with a very much increased mileage on their goods. The proposal of the Government is to try and give railway facilities to that large district. The people in the southern part want a railway as well as St. George, and the policy of the Government is to try and give them both railway facilities. The hon. member knows that it is the intention of the Government to reach St. George by the Tara line, which will be a much shorter route than if we connected them with this railway.

Mr. RYLAND: When do you expect to build that line?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: In due course.

The PREMIER: If this kind of business goes on we will not be able to build any railways. This railway is projected by the Railway Department as a matter of necessity, if they are to give fair business facilities to that district, and enable them to get to the nearest port, and the hon. member, when he speaks about Sydney being the natural port of that country, does not know what he is talking about.

Mr. LAND: What nonsense! It is only 500 miles from Sydney as the crow flies.

The PREMIER: I hope the hon. member will remember that there are other places in this State besides St. George and Cunnamulla, and it is the duty of the Government to give these other people reasonable railway facilities just as much as Cunnamulla has already got, and just as St. George will get by the extension of the other railway now approaching them. But St. George ought not to be like the dog in the manger, and object to the people in the South getting railway facilities.

Mr. LAND: They have been waiting twenty-five or thirty years for a railway.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is not going to shorten the period of waiting by blocking this railway. This railway has nothing at all to do with it. It would be a very cruel kindness to the people in St. George to connect them with this railway. There is plenty of country there, and there is plenty of room for development there to make both of these railways which we have projected paying concerns to the State, and I hope the hon. member will recognise the position in regard to these railways, and not interfere with the passing of this railway to give the people between St. George and the border reasonable railway facilities, and St. George will get its railway, although it does not get this railway.

Mr. ALLEN: Will you extend the Tara line next session?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Give notice of the question.

Question put and passed.

Hon. W. Kidston.]

COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS, in moving the resolutions, said: This is an extension of some 38 miles 55 chains, and is a line from Talwood to Bullamon, generally in a westerly direction. I would like to say that members of the Committee have this evening gained a considerable amount of knowledge in respect to the line.

Mr. HAMILTON: Does this tie us down to Bullamon?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I would like to say that the proposal is to extend the line from Talwood to Bullamon, but under the various Railway Acts, when the Commissioner and his officers are making a permanent survey of the line, he has some powers to deflect that line generally, but he cannot deflect it, we will say, to a place like St. George, which is to the north-west of Talwood. But I think it will be found necessary in the interests of the people to deflect the line—I cannot say how many miles—north. I think there would be no difficulty about that. That is a matter, of course, that is to be left in the hands of the Commissioner, but it would be found necessary, I think, for the Commissioner to advertise his intentions. Information has been given to-night which would lead one to think that it would be better perhaps, provided the physical features of the country would permit, to put this line a few miles further north, and more in the direction of the 200,000 acres of land that are being surveyed to the north of Bullamon. That is a matter that, of course, I am not at the present moment prepared to discuss, because it has been rather, I might say, sprung upon me, and I knew practically nothing about it at all until this evening, for the reason that the policy of extending the line west of Goondiwindi was one that was entered upon before I entered the Railway Department. This is extending that policy. I do not think that this is a question of extending a railway to meet the wishes of the people of St. George. The people of St. George for quite a number of years have naturally desired to get railway communication with Brisbane. There has been a very strong advocacy in favour of linking up St. George, *viâ* Yeulba, on the Western line. Now, of course, that they find they will have a nearer route *viâ* Talwood the people of St. George naturally try to pull the line north-west instead of going west to Bullamon. I have had numbers of telegrams, and quite a number of resolutions, sent to me since it was supposed that the policy of the Government was going to be carried out—the extension of this line in a general westerly course; but it would not have been carrying out the policy of conserving the border trade for our Queensland ports and for our Queensland people had I allowed that line to be deflected round by St. George. I think that the matter of giving, what I may call the township of St. George, and the settlers in that locality railway communication must be a question of a branch railway either from the Western Railway or from this line, and I really fail to see that the people of St. George would be any worse off by the extension of the line from Talwood to Bullamon than what they are at the present time. I think they would be better off.

Mr. LENNON: They are being denied railway communication here—they are no better off and no worse.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I think the distance from Talwood to St. George is about 80 miles.

Mr. LAND: I have got your report showing it to be 62¼ miles.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have not the report with me. I quoted portions of a letter which the hon. member wrote in 1907, and the chief of the *Hansard* naturally sent for it. I will take the hon member's statement. From Bullamon to St. George would be only 50 miles, so you will be some few miles better off than you were before. But I do not consider that this is a question of make the people of St. George better off at all. That has never entered into my mind in connection with this extension.

Mr. LAND: I think the Australian Pastoral Company is better off.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I think the people of St. George deserve railway communication, whichever is considered to be the best route, either from the Western line or from some point on this line; but I do not think they are entitled—although their member puts up a gallant fight for them—I do not think it is in the interests of the people to the west of Talwood that the line should be deflected 60 miles *viâ* St. George. Not only that, but we are going away from the border, and simply allowing New South Wales to step over our border and to take the freight that rightly belongs to us, and for which purpose this railway is being built. The hon. member for Balonne interjected that I am endeavouring to profit the Australian Pastoral Company by building this line.

Mr. LAND: Right into the centre of their holding.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS. Every railway has to be built into the centre of somebody's holding, whether it is a holding of 1,600 square miles belonging to a pastoral company or 160 acres homestead, as will be the case with the proposed railway in connection with Rosewood. It is a question of whether it is advisable whether we should build railways in this country or not, and it is impossible to build railways unless we go through somebody's holding.

Mr. LENNON: Could you not take it through Government holdings?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There are 1,600 square miles of leasehold, which are Crown lands.

Mr. LENNON: Tied up.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Of course, and quite right that it should be tied up. I think it is quite right that we should not have vacant Crown lands, because when it is tied up the people are paying rent.

Mr. LAND: £1 16s. 4d. when £4 could be got for it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I know perfectly well that if the Australian Pastoral Company paid £4 per square mile, then the hon. member would say they should pay £8 per square mile. I suppose they are paying what they were assessed to pay by our Land Court, the members of which were appointed by Parliament. I understand also that this company has quite a large area of freehold.

Mr. LAND: 219,000 acres.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Although these people have 219,000 acres of freehold land, I expect they pay the price the Crown demanded for it; and there is an argu-

ment which has not appealed to the hon. member for Balonne, that under the provisions of the 1906 Act that freehold land will all have to bear its burden if it is in the benefited area.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: It will pay for the railway nearly.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You know perfectly well that the wool that is shorn on that property will go a long way towards bearing the working expenses of the railway. I do not know that it is necessary for me to enter into a very long argument about the use this railway will be to the people out there. It must be obvious to every open-minded member of the Committee—I dare not refer to the arguments which were so lucidly put before the House by the hon. member for Balonne this evening—the Commissioner reports upon the revenue and working expenses, and gives the information which I will refer to. This line is generally running 25 or 30 miles north of our Southern border, and the extension is being brought forward with the object of conserving our trade which is within our borders for the people within the State. That is a policy which I think very few members of this Committee will quarrel with. As to whether the extension from Moree to Mungindi will operate very unfavourably against this railway, I will just quote a report from the Commissioner for Railways. He reported to the Minister on the 15th June, 1909, respecting its extension. He said—

> The Commissioner reported to the Minister, as under—
>
> It cannot possibly be argued that the line to Mungindi is intended to open up New South Wales, as the distance from Sydney by rail is 489 miles, or as the crow flies 360 miles, while from Brisbane the distance is by rail only 400 miles, or as the crow flies 260 miles.
>
> Whether anything can be done to protect Queensland against this infringement of the Federal Constitution or not I am unable to say, but I am strongly of opinion Queensland should push her railways westward from Goondiwindi with the utmost despatch even if it is necessary to borrow money at double the rates of present interest.

Then he also follows up, early in December, by saying—

> On Thursday last, the Minister for Works (Mr. C. A. Lee) moved the expediency of constructing a line of railway from Moree to Mungindi. He said this was a most important railway extension, designed to meet the development of the North-western district. The estimated cost was £289,743 for 77 miles 12 chains. The estimated annual loss was considerable, but the Chief Commissioner, after personal inspection of the route, was of opinion that the line was well worthy of consideration, as it should, with favourable seasons, pay interest and working expenses within a reasonable time. The motion was agreed to.

It cannot be contended for a single moment that the New South Wales Government are extending their railway from Moree to Mungindi, which is right on the border, for any other purpose than the hope of catching some of our trade, and I say that it is our duty to push on with this extension as early as possible, so that we may retain our own trade in our borders. The Commissioner, under date 23rd November, reports on—

> The proposed extension from Talwood to the Moonie River, a distance of 38 miles 55 chains.

Then he describes the country—

> The greater part of the country in this district is held under pastoral lease, and the balance as grazing farms. About 300 square miles of land (to the north of the survey) have recently been designed in agricultural blocks of 1,280 acres each, which will shortly be opened for selection.

I understand that the western boundary of this 300 square miles is just parallel with the Bullamon terminus, but the nearest farms are about 10 or 11 miles away from the proposed route, and that is why I say some short time ago a trial survey had been made to deflect the line in the public interests.

Mr. HAMILTON: It might be deflected across the border.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is not very likely that our Commissioner is going to deflect the Queensland railway across the New South Wales border. Then he goes on—

> There is a good deal of timber, but it is not valuable, and there is an undergrowth of sandalwood, wilga, and wattle. Considerable areas of brigalow and belar scrub are met with, which would, if ringbarked, produce good pasture. A comparatively poor belt of country is traversed by this extension, but immediately beyond the Moonie River the soil improves. Prickly pear is in evidence.

I think that is an argument why we should get on with that extension as quickly as possible. I think that one of the best methods by which we can fight this curse in Queensland is by railways and close settlement. Railway building in our days means close settlement, and there are 300 square miles of country that are just being surveyed in 1,280-acre blocks. Then the Commissioner goes on—

[9 p.m.]

> The length of the extension will be 38 miles 55 chains; and the estimated cost, including telegraph line and surveys, is £100,129, or at the rate of £2,596 per mile. As this is a further extension of a line already in operation, the cost of extra rolling-stock will be trifling, and may be set down at £3,000, making a total of £103,429.

Then, with regard to revenue and working expenses, the Commissioner says—

> The principal source of revenue will be derived from the conveyance of wool and live stock. Last year the railway from Warwick to Goondiwindi (125 miles) earned a gross revenue of £28,847; and for this extension I estimate a revenue of £5,850. The expenditure (allowing for three trains per week) I put down at £3,550, leaving a net revenue of £2,300 per annum, or 2¼ per cent. on the capital.

Mr. HAMILTON: That includes the revenue from the railway material which goes over the railway to the Talwood extension.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Warwick to Goondiwindi Railway last year returned a net revenue of £15,267. That line has a total capitalisation of £329,227, and the net return on that capital was £4 12s. 9d. per cent.

Mr. HAMILTON: Which was derived from the railway material going over it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am glad the hon. member for Gregory reminded me of that, because I have got some information which I am glad to place before members of the Committee. The hon. member says that a great deal of this revenue was derived from railway material for the building of the Talwood line. Well, railway material is not metioned in the Commissioner's report of 1908-9, but I notice here that it says that the return for the carriage of wool for the year was £9,869, and for the carriage of live stock £3,624. These are the two principal items of goods which are carried over that line. The revenue inwards from the Goondiwindi Station alone was £13,013 3s. 8d., and the total revenue at that station outwards was £14,733. The next biggest return on that railway was received at Inglewood. The return from wool was £345, and from live stock £603. The total goods traffic inwards at Inglewood, including live stock, was £8,226, and the total revenue outwards, £6,085. These are the

two principal stations. I will not quote any more except any hon. gentleman desires me to. It is not necessary for me to say that when any rails and sleepers are sent over our existing lines that they are not charged for, but as this is a guaranteed line, it is only fair to the guarantors that they should be credited with the carriage of any railway material over that railway. The recommendation of the Railway Commissioner is as follows:—

Although the land traversed by this extension is not all that could be desired, the extension must be looked upon as forming another section of the border railway, designed to secure Queensland traffic to Queensland ports. I am satisfied that the extension of the railway will be of immense benefit to Queensland producers, and I strongly recommend that the work be pushed on without cessation, and, if possible, before the Talwood extension is finished.

That is a big argument in favour of this line being considered favourably, and for the reason that the extension to Talwood is approaching completion. As head of the Railway Department, I do not wish to see what I consider a fine body of men disbanded. I want them to learn that when their work is completed at Talwood there is more work for them to do on the extension from Talwood to Bullamon.

Mr. LESINA: At a minimum wage?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The wages will be the wages which the engineers consider it is desirable to pay.

Mr. LESINA: He might give them 5s. a day.

Mr. LENNON: Will it be built by contract or day labour?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I just stated that I did not want to see the men disbanded but to be kept right on with the next extension if we were allowed to go on with it.

Mr. LENNON (*Herbert*): I do not rise for the purpose of offering any opposition to this line, because our party treat railways on their merits, and this is not like the railway that received, and which merited, so much opposition last night. This is not such a smellful proposal as the Port Alma line. I consider that the hon. member for Balonne has put up an exceedingly good case for a railway to St. George. Not only has he made a good case, but it is one of those districts which have been promised a railway for the past twenty-five years, and Governments have allowed it to go on from year to year without redeeming that promise which was made in the past. One thing that struck me of importance which is a remarkable condemnation of our present system of railway construction is the fact that the Commissioner mentions in his report that, in connection with this railway, 400 miles west of Brisbane, it is necessary for him to purchase 440 acres of freehold in order to effect its construction. That is only another instance of the absurd methods we adopt in regard to railway construction in Queensland. We should make our railway extensions precede settlement, so that when settlement came about we would get back far more than we would if we extended our railways afterwards. We have got into the habit in the past of waiting until the people get hold of large areas of freehold land, and then we construct the railway for their benefit; but if the other method were adopted it would be for the benefit of the State. I hope the Minister will consider that view, and press it strenuously on the Cabinet. Let us have a new method, and build our railways to places where all the land is held by the State, and in that way let our railway construction precede settlement.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We are doing that in connection with the Dawson Railway.

Mr. LENNON: That is only one instance, but it should be done in others as well. I must admit that the Minister has made out a good case in connection with the construction of this railway. As he states that it is to be constructed to conserve Queensland trade for Queensland I shall have nothing to say against it. I hope the Minister will take notice of the suggestions which I have made about railway construction preceding settlement. I do not want to be accused of parochialism too much, but I hope those districts in the North will not be overlooked in the matter of railway construction. I must enter my most emphatic protest against the construction of so many railways in the Southern part of Queensland, which is out of all proportion to those which are being constructed in the North.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I will soon have some ready for the North.

Mr. LENNON: I warned the Minister about keeping back that road they are constructing over the range until the wet season comes in. It would have been far better to have started it before the rainy season, but instead of that the contractor has been kept back to the eve of the rainy season. That means that the contractor has heaps of trouble with his work, because the men do not care about working at that arduous work during the rainy season. However, this Government is a combination of "know-alls," and they will not take any advice from members on this side of the House. This is purely a Brisbane Ministry. It is a *Courier* Ministry. If it is neither of these it is both of them. (Hear, hear! and laughter.) I hope that the North will not be utterly neglected in the matter of railway construction, as it appears to be at present. When we had previous Ministers for Railways we had the gratification of knowing that we made some impression on them from time to time. Whether the present Ministry is so case-hardened that no impression can be made on them I do not know. They seem to have devoted all their energies to the Port Alma scheme.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We had to divide twenty-eight times on it.

Mr. LENNON: If you had to divide 128 times it would not be too much. The Minister made out a good case for this line, and what he says shows that there is a reasonable prospect of it becoming a payable line in the early future. In that case the Minister is justified and the House will be justified in passing the line, and in securing for Queensland Queensland's trade.

Mr. LAND: I have already referred to the 1,600 square miles of country that is locked up for thirty-seven years and to the 219,000 acres of freehold that has been sold to the company for about 10s. per acre.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Probably its full value when it was sold.

Mr. LAND: Some years ago, when the hon. Minister for Lands was Minister for Railways, when talking about extending the railway to St. George he said that they had a fine piece of land then falling in, and that they must get the railway there. But what has he done? The present Minister for Railways has brought the line 14 miles below that land. If the railway went to St. George it would go right through that land.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The railway to St. George would have been miles to the north.

Mr. LAND: Will the Minister allow me to use the report of the trial survey from Talwood to St. George?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It was sent to you confidentially.

Mr. LAND: May I use it here?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is not a fair thing to read it through. You may make extracts.

Mr. LAND: Do you object to me using the plan?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No; but I hope you will understand the report is not to be read.

Mr. LAND here produced and explained the plan. The Minister has stated on the floor of the House that he can divert the line from its present course after the trial survey. If the line were run further north, instead of in its present direction, it would serve the interests of people both to the north and south. By the present route it will go straight to the New South Wales border, right into the centre of land locked up for thirty years. It would go right across the border. Were there any difficulties in the way of its being diverted

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I do not know whether there are any physical difficulties.

Mr. LAND: The further you run the line north the better the country. It is higher and drier. Instead of running the line into a block of country which has been cut up into 1,280-acre blocks, they have run it 13 or 14 miles to the south into country which is locked up for thirty years. If the Minister desires to run that line straight from Talwood to the West he has a good logical argument in favour of his proposal, because it will run through 200,000 acres the department is going to cut up. That would be better than running it along the border. By adopting the former they can draw trade on each side, and I hope the Minister will seriously consider that proposal before coming to a decision. I am pledged to support a railway from Talwood to St. George, and that is the way the line ought to go. They would not have had that Talwood line at all but for the St. George people. I would like the Minister to say whether he was prepared to give the matter further consideration.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I promise you I will look further into the matter.

Mr. LAND: I maintain it would be better to run the line straight along than go the route now proposed.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Have I not promised to look into the matter?

Mr. J. M. HUNTER (*Maranoa*): I think that the Government, in proposing this line, have displayed, above all other things, their unfederal spirit towards New South Wales.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What about the Federal spirit of New South Wales in coming up to Mungindi?

The TREASURER: Do you not believe in our keeping our own trade?

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: The trade along the border is not much, and never has been much, and never will. Nearly all the stores used in the district came from Sydney. From a Brisbane merchant's point of view it is an excellent thing to build a railway out that way; but, I ask, is it a fair thing to the taxpayers of Queensland to call upon them to build a railway for the purpose of increasing the volume of the trade of the capital.

Mr. MURPHY: The system has been the curse of Australia.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: Where would you send it to, if not to the capital?

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: I am not going to say where. I say it is not right, that for the sake of giving extra trade to the capital, the general taxpayer should be called upon to build a railway line that has not a developing object. We should spend our money on building lines into the country that we are going to develop, and upon which we would get settlement. If we take the different routes that have been proposed to connect that country with the existing railway systems, we would find that we could send out lines at shorter distances and send them through better country than was possible with the line under discussion. This is not the line that is thought most of by the Railway Department. In 1900, when a commission was appointed to take evidence on these routes, the volume of trade that was going into New South Wales was causing rivalry between the Railway Departments of Queensland and New South Wales. The feeling was running high and the respective Commissioners and railway officers were prepared to make considerable sacrifices so that they might outdo the Commissioner on the other side who had the control of the railway. But that feeling should have been done away with by the present time. The fact of securing the trade is not everything, and if we compared the distances and the character of the country which the different lines will pass through, we would find that the line from Pittsworth to St. George is the proper line. It would give a shorter route and open up infinitely better country and a larger area.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: They will get that too.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: My contention is that, even when this line is built, the traffic we are looking for will not be secured. Mr. Phillips, who, in 1900, was managing for Gibbs, Bright, and Co., who acted as agents for the Australian Pastoral Company, stated that, if the line was built to point A, somewhere in the locality of the proposed terminus, there was a possibility of getting a certain amount of the trade. But Mr. Phillips would not even then undertake to say that we would secure the whole of the trade.

Hon. E. B. FORREST: He knows better than that now.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: Mr. Phillips, in giving evidence to the commission, refused to commit himself to that statement. He said that even if the line was built there was no certainty that the company would be prepared [9.30 p.m.] to do the whole of their trade with Brisbane. Leaving out of consideration all the trade that came through the Australian Pastoral Company, this line is not worth considering for five minutes. He stated further that if the New South Wales Government were to build a line from Moree towards Mungindi, the prospect of this line paying would be worse than ever. There is no justification for building this railway, unless you are going to carry the line right out to catch the whole of the Western trade, and if you do that you are preparing the way for the line across Cunningham's Gap—the via recta. I contend that the public funds of Queensland are not sufficient to justify these undertakings. The proper route for a line to St. George is from Yeulba or Roma. The route from Roma, which would be 105 miles in length, is the shortest, and the line would travel through some of the finest sheep country to be found in Western Queensland. If the Government undertook to build a line from Tara to St. George they would

not live long; they would be required to undergo a medical examination. My main objection to the railway proposals of the Government is that plans are laid on the table and reports submitted to the House which members have no opportunity of verifying for themselves. We have not sufficient time to inquire into the proposals and ascertain whether the recommendations made in the reports are justified. By continuing this line to St. George we shall establish a line which will enter into competition with the great trunk railway in that part of the State. My idea of a railway construction policy is to build branch lines at right angles to trunk lines, throw open the country on both sides of those lines, and drain the traffic from it to one large centre. If a direct line to St. George is wanted, then that line should be built from Pittsworth—that is, if you want the most direct communication with Brisbane. But the shortest and cheapest line of all is the line from Roma to St. George, and the next shortest and cheapest—and a line which would open up the same class of country—is a line from Yeulba to St. George. I think the St. George people are to blame for not pressing for the construction of their railway in 1900, or very soon after the Railway Commission sat. If hon. members will turn up the report of the Railway Commission which sat in 1900, they will find that it contains valuable information. Evidence was taken at Brisbane, Warwick, Toowoomba, Dalby, Roma, and I think some witnesses were examined at Yeulba. Mr. Thallon, who was one of the witnesses examined by the commission, said—

> The shortest line to construct to St. George will be from Roma, 105 miles.

Mr. Thallon then went on to say that he was firmly convinced that the best line to that portion of the State was the one from Pittsworth, always bearing in mind the prospect of the via recta, or the line from Warwick. The Warwick preference was always contingent on the via recta. I contend that the construction of the via recta is out of consideration at the present time. We have too much country in Queensland waiting for development, too much country that wants to be settled, to undertake the building of a second line to any town. And much of that country can only be settled by giving it railway communication. If we have money to spare for railways we should not spend it in providing railway communication where such communication already exists, but should provide railway communication in those districts where there is none at present. We should endeavour to open up Crown lands which are covered with the prickly pear pest, because people cannot settle on such land and make a profit on it at any distance from a railway. Yesterday I voted against the Port Alma Railway, because I could not see any justification for spending money in providing a second railway for the same place. I do not think we are justified in building this railway for the sake of the trade it is anticipated we shall get. Nor do I think the class of country which the line will pass through will be of any benefit to the State. I understand that the greater part of this country is held under a long lease, so that there can be no close settlement take place there. The line will not be any good to St. George, because the St. George people will have to travel 50 or 60 miles to the nearest point, a point which is further away from Brisbane than the nearest point on the Western line to the north of the township. What will the St. George people do? All their traffic will go to Yeulba as usual. That is the present route, and that is probably the way it will go. If you are going to build a line to St. George, build a line to St. George, but to try to make the St. George people satisfied by building a line 60 miles south of them is absurd. They are no better off than they are to-day with the line to the north, because the route to Brisbane is shorter by going north than by going south. I am very sorry that this line has been brought in. The St. George district has been set back for years, and the Government should give St. George a line. They had a survey from Yeulba to St. George, and they had two surveys from Roma to St. George, and for the expenditure of a very small sum of money for over 100 miles south they could open up some of the finest agricultural and pastoral land in the State of Queensland, and St. George would then get what it has been waiting for and what it has been promised for years—that is, direct communication with Brisbane.

Mr. TOLMIE (*Drayton and Toowoomba*): I desire to say a word or two on this railway before it goes to a vote, and at the outset I may state that it is my intention to support the line. The line is, I think, the natural continuation of the line that is at present constructed to Talwood, and the extension of the line to Talwood was for the specific purpose of securing to Queensland trade that we maintain belongs to this State, and if we are going to secure that trade, it is necessary that the line should go as near the border as possible. I would be better pleased if it were to go a little further north than is at present proposed, in order that it might be of service to people taking up land there when it is thrown open for selection. But apart from that, there is a considerable amount of Crown land that will become available for settlement at the present terminus, Talwood, and the projected terminus at Bullamon. There are numbers of pastoral properties whose leases are falling in, and we can cut them up for close settlement. The route, as pointed out by the Minister, cannot suit everybody, but as it is a border line, it should go as near to the border as possible. The people in St. George no doubt feel sore when they find a railway running so close to them as this railway is likely to do, and that it will not go into the township. I, however, think that a railway to St. George is not only necessary, but will come very shortly, and when that railway is built it ought to be by the shortest possible route from St. George to Brisbane, which is *vid* Pittsworth. An extension of the Pittsworth line will become necessary, because as you, Mr. Armstrong, know, there is a great deal of land to the westward of the present terminus of the Millmerran line, and the people in that district will be pressing for additional railway communication, and every mile that line is carried further west brings it nearer to St. George. Apart from that, a railway was passed by this House some eighteen months ago, from Dalby to Tara. We know that that line is not likely to pay unless there be a further extension, and that extension must always be in the direction of St. George, so there is no doubt the people of St. George will get their railway either from Dalby or from the Millmerran line. The present line, as pointed out by the Commissioner, is what he calls a policy line, and is for the purpose of retaining to us trade that legitimately belongs to this State; and because, in the opinion of those who are thoroughly acquainted with the district, this line is estimated to carry out that policy, I shall give it my support. It has been pointed out that other lines are pressing upwards from Sydney in the direction of the border. I would like to draw attention to the fact that those lines will never seriously contest the extension of the line we are now discussing, because those lines are passing at right angles to the Tallwood to Bullamon line, and they thus can only serve a very small portion

of the country, whereas this line passes right along the border, and in that way we must tap the country coming in between the various New South Wales lines. I think, for the purpose for which it is intended to be built, it is an excellent line, and I have no fear that it is going to do the very serious damage to Toowoomba as a good many people would like to lead me to believe—that it is going to force the Government to immediately construct the via recta railway, and by the construction of that railway injure the Darling Downs. I have no such fear as that. I know that on the Darling Downs there is room for not one, but a good many cities. So far as the district of Toowoomba is concerned, we have an area there possessed of great natural advantages not possessed by the city of Warwick, which will always give Toowoomba that pre-eminence which nature has designed it should occupy. (Laughter.) Apart from that there was the further serious obstacle to the via recta railway that it has to pass over the range, and the crossing of that range will be so costly, and the extra burden Warwick would have to undertake under our present system of railway construction so great, that I am sure the people of Warwick would hesitate before undertaking that burden. However, I do not look upon it from that point of view. I look upon it from the point of view that it is going to be a great benefit to this State. I believe it is going to be a very great advantage to us to have lines of railways passing out to the West in order to allow that portion of the country to be developed as it ought to be developed. The day of the pastoralist in the West must pass away, the same as it has passed away on the Downs, and land at present occupied by sheep will be used for agricultural and dairying purposes. We know without railway communication that cannot be, and until we get the land to settle the people upon it, our population must always remain small. I believe that the burden cast upon the people who will have to take the responsibility of finding the interest on the construction of this line will not be very great. If it is not reproductive to the extent that is required by law immediately it is constructed, the settlement to follow will soon make it so, so that there will be no burden on the people after a short time. I have very great pleasure indeed in supporting the line.

Mr. COYNE (*Warrego*): I am disappointed that this line has been introduced at this late hour of the session.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The plans have been ready for some time.

Mr. COYNE: For many years St. George has been promised railway communication. I know the district very well. It is a most important district, closely settled, with a good climate and a fertile soil, and there is every factor to make it one of the most flourishing centres in the State. There is only one thing it wants, and that is railway communication. Although many years ago a sum of money was placed on the Estimates for the construction of a line there, they are as far away from railway communication to-day as they were then. I know that some of the people advocating rival routes to St. George played into the hands of the Government, that only wanted an excuse not to build the railway to St. George. The advocates of rival routes from Dalby, from Yeulba, and from Roma, have assisted considerably in blocking the construction of a line to St. George.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There have been several Governments since that time.

Mr. COYNE: They are all the same—all bad so far as St. George is concerned. We are proposing in the first section of this great border railway to spend £103,429.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: £325,000 odd is paying £4 12s. 9d.

Mr. COYNE: That is very good, but you are not going to increase that by running a railway into the West, because the biggest portion of that revenue is coming in from the portion which you are building the railway into now.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do we not tap a large area through the West?

Mr. COYNE: The hon. gentleman is not going to get wool from Woolarina, Mulga Downs, and some other stations there. That wool will go to Bollon and right on to Mitchell, as it does at the present time. You are not going to get it further West than you are getting it now. The hon. gentleman suggests that we should send out this line to some of the places that are sending their produce to the Western Railway, in order to rob the Western Railway of that, and make up the cost of construction on this line.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is what you say we are doing.

Mr. COYNE: The Government propose to run the section which is under consideration to a station owned by the Australian Pastoral Company, the owners of a very large tract of good country there; and if there is any land proprietors or leaseholders of the Crown in the whole State of Queensland that have done more injury as Crown lessees to the State than any other lessees, it is the Australian Pastoral Company. They have caused more country to be overrun with prickly pear by their neglect than any other company in Queensland—or by the Queensland National Bank, which I quoted here last night, as holding such a large tract of country in Queensland. The Australian Pastoral Company, immediately the resumption fell in, found a sympathetic Government, which allowed the portion which they had suffered to be overrun with that pest, to be resumed. I do not know that the Australian Pastoral Company has done anything to warrant the expenditure of a large sum of money into that territory of theirs. We know what a large area of freehold land they hold, but they hold an enormously large territory of leasehold land, on long lease, and it will be very many years before we can accomplish close settlement in that district. We know that they are not putting the land to the best use. If they had done so there would not be such a large area of waste country in the resumed portion of their run. This is one of the finest pastoral properties, I suppose, in the Southern portion of Queensland, and it is completely overrun with prickly pear, and useless. By and by, we shall have the Minister coming along with some proposal to spend hundreds and thousands of pounds in clearing prickly pear from Hollymount and Bullamon, and other places, and as far as Gulnarbar, and a good part of the way towards Bollon and St. George. The hon. senior member for Toowoomba said he had no fear about this being an inducement in the near future for the building of the via recta, and the reason he gave was an insufficient one. He said the reason why the via recta would not be built was because of the enormous expense of building a line through miles of mountainous country. But when you come to consider that this Government had no compunction in throwing £250,000 away over the Port Alma mud flats, need we wonder that, in the near future, they would spend £1,500,000 in order to placate their friends in the southern portions of the Darling Downs bp building that via recta?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: You are altogether out.

Mr. COYNE: It does not require an oracle to see that they have this in their minds, because the only inference we can draw from what the hon. member for Warwick has said is that he is going to propose the via recta on the ground that it won't cost nearly as much as I have said, and that that will be an extra inducement to the Government to build it.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I simply want to put you right in the matter.

Mr. COYNE: I have no objection to be put right, and I accept the hon. member's correction, but I do not know that he has got any computation of the cost of the via recta between the two points.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It is years and years old.

Mr. COYNE: I believe that this is a step in the direction of constructing the via recta, the construction of which, at the cost it will be to the State, will mean that we will be robbing the southern portion of the railway from Warwick to Toowoomba of the freight they are getting at the present time. This revenue cannot increase very much from what it is [10 p.m.] at the present time. If the hon. member for Warwick expects to increase the size and importance of that city in the Darling Downs, this is not the way to do it. When the line from Goondiwindi to Talwood was submitted to this House and passed there was a certain railway district submitted at the same time. That has also been done at the present time. In connection with the other line, for some strange reason or other the town of St. George was included in the railway district, but it is not included this time.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: No; it was not included before.

Mr. LAND: Yes; part of the St. George district was included.

Mr. COYNE: Yes; I heard them saying in St. George how they voted in connection with this line and how they made it possible for the line to be constructed from Goondiwindi to Talwood. They said that by their votes they assisted materially in having that line constructed.

Mr. MURPHY: I voted for that line in this House because I thought it was going to St. George.

Mr. COYNE: Yes; and there will probably be several other members in this House who thought it was one section of the railway to St. George. St. George is deserving of railway communication, and those who were in the House at that time thought it was going to St. George. Although the people of St. George voted for the extension from Goondiwindi to Talwood, we find that when the line gets 30 miles closer to St. George they are excluded from having a voice in the matter at all, because they are not included in the benefited area fixed by the Commissioner for Railways and his advisers, the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Commissioner defines the benefited area.

Mr. COYNE: Yes; and like every other State employee, he follows the advice of somebody else in defining it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes; of his officers.

Mr. COYNE: Yes; and his officers follow the recommendations of somebody else further on. It is the same as the Lands Department. You have to go to half a dozen different officers there to get a reply to a communication which could be given to you by a child. The surveyor goes out and recommends something in connection with the railway, and the Commissioner looks at the matter. He takes up his pencil just like we were told that the Czar does in connection with certain railway proposals, and he draws the benefited area around the proposed line. He says that the benefited area will include this spot, but that it will not include that spot. He also says, "If I include this spot here, all my recommendations will go for nothing." He says that if he includes St. George in the benefited area, then his recommendation will go for nothing, because the people of St. George will defeat it at the poll. He cut out St. George altogether from the benefited area, and that is not a fair thing, for if there is any portion of that district which is going to make the railway pay it is the St. George district.

Mr. GRANT: Would it not be an injustice to take the line round St. George?

Mr. COYNE: The hon. member may know something about the mud flats around Port Alma, but he does not know much about this district. As the Commissioner relies on this district to make this section of the railway pay, it is only fair that we should include it in the benefited area. I intend to move an amendment altering the benefited area fixed by the Commissioner. I propose—

That to the railway district as set out in the Commissioner's report the following be added:—Also from a point starting at the north-east corner of the present proposed Talwood-Moonie River railway district; thence along the western bank of the Moonie River to its intersection with the south boundary of the Dalby stock route and Moonie River; thence by the southern boundary of the stock route westward to the eastern boundary of the resumed portion of Burgorah; thence northerly to the northern boundary of Burgorah resumption, continuing along that boundary westwards and along the northern boundary of the resumed part of Gulnarber to the western boundary of Maroungle block to its intersection with the proposed northern boundary of the Moonie River-Talwood railway district.

That will enable the people who will contribute towards this portion of the interest on the cost of construction to have a voice in saying whether they are to be burdened with the railway or not. In that way you would be doing something like justice to these people. I should be glad to know if the Minister will accept that amendment and give the people a chance of saying whether they will have this railway or not. It is just the same as the people of Central Queensland, who were not allowed to have a say whether they will be burdened with the interest on that £250,000 which is to be spent on a railway that will be absolutely useless, and these people should have an opportunity of objecting to it if they wish to do so.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee having heard the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Warrego, and this being an innovation, I should like to hear the opinions of hon. members, and of the Minister also, as to whether there can be any amendment to the benefited area as defined by the Commissioner.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: This amendment has been practically sprung upon us, and I think the better method would have been for the hon. member for Warrego to have given me some intimation, so that I could have had the facts in connection with determining the benefited area before me. I think I shall be able to show, however, that this is a matter entirely in the hands of the Commissioner. Clause 4 of the Railways Act of 1906 says—

From and after the passing of this Act, the Commissioner shall, with the statement required under section 16 of the Railways Act of 1888 Amendment Act of 1896 to be furnished by him to the Minister with respect to any railway proposed to be constructed by the State, transmit also a map and description under his official seal of the district which in his opinion will be directly benefited by the construction of the proposed railway.

Then it goes on to say what the procedure is. Then subsection (3) says—

> At any time within two months from the first publication of such notice, any owner or occupier of land within the said district, and any local authority having jurisdiction therein, may, by notice in writing to the Minister, make objections to the boundaries of the said district, and state the grounds for such objections.

If the local authority in that district that has its headquarters in St. George has jurisdiction within the benefited area, they may make objections. Then it goes on to say—

> The Minister may, if he thinks necessary, authorise an officer of the Commissioner or some other person to hold an inquiry with respect to such objections or any of them, and report to him thereon.
>
> The Commissioner may amend the boundaries of the said district in such manner as he thinks right and just, and in such case the map and description aforesaid shall also be amended accordingly.

The next subsection says that a poll may be taken. The Commissioner having, under the powers conferred on him, submitted this benefited area or railway district to the Minister, and I, having submitted it to the Committee, respectfully submit that the amendment is not in order, and that it is for the local authorities to protest against the boundaries.

The CHAIRMAN: I agree with the opinion expressed by the Minister. He might also have drawn attention to subsection 6 of section 4, which provides that the boundaries of the benefitad area may from time to time, at intervals of not less than three years, be amended by the Commissioner, with the approval of the Governor in Council.

Mr. COYNE: That is after the passage of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: That is so. This is one of those peculiar positions that sometimes arise. We find that Parliament can take no action, because the whole question of the benefited area appears to lie in the hands of the Railway Commissioner. For that reason I cannot place the amendment before the Committee.

Mr. COYNE: Do I understand that in the event of the very best railway proposition in the State being brought down, and the benefited area being such as could not be agreed to by this House, we would have to reject the whole thing?

The CHAIRMAN: That is the position, and it is a very peculiar position. It seems to have been an oversight in law-making. I think the House might make a recommendation to the Railway Commissioner if it desired to make an alteration in the benefited area, and I feel certain that effect would be given to the recommendation. The main question is now before the Committee.

Mr. MANN rose to speak with regard to the amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: I ruled the amendment out of order, and the main question is now before the Committee.

Mr. MANN: We have a certain motion submitted by the Minister in which it is proposed that the Committee should approve of the plans of a railway from Talwood to the Moonie River, and I contend that we may alter that motion, and say that the line shall be built from Talwood to some other point, and, if we do that, it will clearly be the duty of the Commissioner to alter the boundaries of the benefited area. The Minister seems to argue that we cannot alter the direction of the railway, because by so doing we should alter the benefited area, but I maintain that it is perfectly within the power and jurisdiction of this House to alter the route of a railway.

The PREMIER: That would be absurd.

Mr. MANN: It would not be absurd. If the majority of this Committee believed with the hon. member for the Warrego that this line should go from Charleville to St. George, then the Committee would be perfectly justified in making that alteration, and the Commissioner would have to alter the benefited area.

Mr. LESINA: The position taken up by the hon. member for Cairns is absolutely absurd. I have never known a more absurd position to be taken up by any member of this House. The motion before the Committee distinctly states—

> That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension from Talwood to the Moonie River.

We are asked to approve of plans for a railway by a definite route.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not think the discussion of this matter is in order. I have given a ruling which I believe is a correct ruling. It is no doubt an incongruity that this Committee cannot alter the benefited area, but that incongruity exists, and we must abide by it. I ask hon. members to confine themselves now to the specific question before the Committee, which is, "That the House approves of the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed extension from Talwood to Moonie River."

Mr. LESINA: I am entirely in favour of the construction of this railway. The St. George extension is no doubt necessary, and should be made as early as possible, but in the present case the Government have determined to make an extension in another direction, and I approve of their proposition, and will vote for it if my vote is necessary to carry it. It has been said that the deviation proposed in the route is made in order to serve one large pastoral company, which one member has stated has done a great deal to prevent closer settlement in that part of the country, and has also encouraged the widespread growth of one of the most injurious pests we have in Queensland. I do not know anything about that, but members have made the allegation, and it should receive serious consideration. We are told in the report that—

> The greater part of the country in this district is held under pastoral lease, and the balance as grazing farms.

There is also a large area of freehold, and that land will certainly be appreciated in value by the construction of this railway. We cannot construct public railways without appreciating the value of the freehold land in the district where the railway is built. If lines were not to be constructed in places other than those in which there are none but Crown lands, then there would be no railways built. The fact that freehold lands will be appreciated in value may be used as an argument against the construction of this line rather than in its favour. We have machinery by which we can deal with leaseholds which are appreciated in value by railway construction. The appreciation of value in that case can be arrested for the benefit of the State by raising the rent, but if a railway goes through freeholds and increases their value, we practically make a free gift of that increased value to the owners of the freeholds. I do not suppose a line has ever been constructed in Queensland which has not added to the value of privately owned estates, and the problem we have to face is how to deal with the increased land values in such cases. In all the other States an attempt has been made to secure that increased value for the public, and they have secured a portion of it every year by means of a land tax.

Mr. MURPHY: There is no land tax in New South Wales. They have only the same tax as we have in Queensland, and that is a tax imposed by the local authorities.

Mr. LESINA: The local authorities in New South Wales impose a tax on land values.

Mr. MURPHY: So they do in Queensland.

Mr. LESINA: Anyone who has seen the progress which has taken place in settlement on suburban lands down there must admit that the tax on land values has produced a considerable amount of good. The expenditure of £100,000 in building a line from Talwood to Moonie River will be a great advantage to the people who own freeholds in that part of the country.

Mr. MANN: There is no freehold.

Mr. LESINA: There is any amount of freehold land, and that freehold land cannot be touched. I have always been in favour of putting a tax on the increased value of land through the construction of these different railways, and then, whenever railway construction comes on in future, we will not have these railways [10.30 p.m.] being built and adding to the value of land held by this company or that company, or the freehold of this particular individual or that individual. We may just as well face the inevitable fact that at the present time it is impossible to spend £1 of public money in any part of the State without making it practically a free gift to the person who owns freehold land. The State should adopt some system of taking some of that value back for public needs. The construction of this line, like the construction of every other line, is simply going to make a free gift of public money to certain persons who have the title deeds of large areas of freehold lands. It may be said that it is perfectly right that in the construction of this line for every £1 spent by the State they should put £5 in their own pocket. It is not a wise thing. There is one other point I would like to make. The rental values of leaseholds may be appreciated by the construction of this line. That, to some extent, will be an advantage to the public Treasury for the expenditure of this money, but the Land Court does not always secure the appreciation in values through public expenditure to the extent it should by increasing the rent of leaseholds. Why? Because the leaseholders are strongly represented in this House, and every proposition in that direction is fought very hard. Apart altogether from these aspects of the business, the construction of this line would be a public benefit, irrespective of the important point that there is a dispute about the terminus, which dispute, I hope, will be settled to the satisfaction of all parties concerned. The other point is that there is such a large area of country held under pastoral leases and grazing farms, and it must necessarily follow there will be a greater amount of close settlement, and thereby an increased market for our secondary products, which I hope will add to the general prosperity of this country. I find that 440 acres of freehold land have to be resumed. That is a rather serious factor, and once more brings home to us that this, or some subsequent Government, must face the question of entirely reorganising our system of railway construction, and we ought to adopt a system which I have advocated for some years—it is not an entirely new or original idea. It is simply asking the Government to adopt a system such as Canada and other countries have adopted—that is, to have railway construction to precede settlement—railway construction to go right ahead of settlement and then settlement follows.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We are trying to do that.

Mr. LESINA: Yes; that is so in this particular case, and I hope the result of this railway, which is valuable in itself for that reason, will be a magnificent success. Then I think we could alter our railway policy generally, and instead of having rival routes and fighting fifteen elections over the construction of the railway to one terminus or another, the railway could be taken right out to virgin country, and settlement take place thereafter. There would be no rival route in that event. In the present instance there are two rival centres both equally deserving of railway communication, and both are fighting one against the other as to which shall get that communication. Then, again, we should do away with the system of political railways.

Mr. MURPHY: There have been more political railways within the last twelve months than in any other period of the State's history.

Mr. LESINA: How are we going to avoid political railways? To my mind, many of the evils attendant on the present system of railway construction are inherent in the system itself. To my mind there are no methods, as far as I am able to ascertain by reading or inquiry, by which you can prevent the more glaring evils of railway construction. After all, railway construction is a non-party question, and the policy of the Government has always been to make it a non-party matter.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The policy of railway construction is not before the Committee. The question is the approval of the plans, etc.

Mr. LESINA: I do not desire to dispute your ruling, but every railway introduced by the Government to some extent concerns their railway policy. However, sundry objections that have been made to this railway are entirely due to the system of construction. At present we take the Commissioner's recommendation. His experts advise him. Sometimes he makes a personal investigation, but to a great extent he depends on the results of the investigations made by the experts in the department, and those experts are men of special qualifications paid to carry out their duties. They bring up recommendations to the Commissioner and he makes his report on those recommendations, and the report in this instance is in favour of the construction of this line. If we reject the report of the Railway Commissioner, we practically set aside the result of the labours of men who are pre-eminently qualified by their superior training to guide us on these matters. These men have no axe to grind. The Commissioner has reliable officers under him, whose business it is to carry out this work; and it appears to me that we can only be guided by the Commissioner, and nobody else.

Mr. MURPHY: Why does he recommend this railway?

Mr. LESINA: He gives a clear recommendation. He says that the land travelled by this section is not all that could be desired; it is a section designed to secure trade for Queensland ports, and I am fully satisfied it will be for the benefit of Queensland producers. The mere attempt to secure the border traffic is an excellent one. It is not the only justification to capture the border trade; there are other elements as well. It will be an excellent thing for the producers out there, and bring the railway to the homes of many people who are at present beyond the reach of the railway. I am very pleased that the railway has been introduced. Railway construction should take place more rapidly in the Western country, and especially as this is to be built under the system of having a benefited area proclaimed.

The PREMIER: The Minister has very little time for the Agricultural Estimates if you want to adjourn at 11 o'clock.

Mr. LESINA: I was just giving my final sentence when the Minister interjected. Railway construction to these great vacant spaces which we shall have to fill up is an excellent thing, and the more rapidly the Government push on with that construction, and cut up land where railway extensions take place, the better it will be for the prosperity of Queensland.

The PREMIER: I rise not so much to continue the discussion, which is mainly for obstructive purposes, but to remind members that I understand that there is a desire to rise at 11 o'clock.

Mr. MURPHY: We will stop here all night; we have to stop all night when it suits you.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member is determined to stop all night, I cannot prevent him. I have been trying to leave time for the discussion of the Mines and Railway Estimates. Hon. members interested in those Estimates have complained that they are always rushed, and I have been trying to keep three days for those Estimates, and that is my only desire to get through the Agricultural Estimates to-night. I do not wish to stop any discussion.

Mr. HAMILTON: I should not detain the House, but I have not yet spoken. The question has arisen as to the position the House finds itself in. We are asked to pass a railway from Talwood to the Moonie River—and not to St. George, and not to any other place—we cannot take it anywhere else but the point——

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No; the Moonie River. It is supposed to be Bullamon.

Mr. HAMILTON: This House has no power to deflect one way or the other.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Commissioner has.

Mr. HAMILTON: We must accept not only the terminus of the railway, but also the benefited area as brought down by the Commissioner, and then the Commissioner has power under the Act to deflect.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Only in the public interest.

Mr. HAMILTON: He may deflect it to St. George, or go the other way down to the border. If he has power to deflect 1 mile he can deflect 20. I should not like the Commissioner to have power to deflect it any closer to the border. I think it would be better if this railway was run more towards Nindy Gully, so as to tap the large area of Crown lands. I should like to be sure if it is deflected at all it will be towards Nindy Gully.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I can give you my assurance.

Mr. HAMILTON: I know the Brisbane merchants would like to see it run along the border, because, it seems to me, with them it is not a question of opening up country, but to grasp as much of the New South Wales trade as they can get. But we want to open up the Crown lands, which is not going to be done by keeping it along the border.

The PREMIER: You can depend upon the Minister's promise.

Mr. HAMILTON: I am glad to hear that. I would like to see railways promoted in the Western part of the State. I shall certainly support the line; but, at the same time, I should like the Minister to give his assurance.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have given that assurance.

Mr. HAMILTON: I will accept the Minister's assurance.

Mr. MANN: We were told by the Minister that he could not alter the benefited area, and I quite agree with that view. I also wish the House to note that the order of leave says that the railway shall go from Talwood to Moonie River, and the Moonie River may be anywhere.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The plan shows Bullamon.

Mr. MANN: But it does not show how they are going to get to Bullamon, because these plans are not the ones that are finally adopted by the engineer who constructs the railway. He may go 10 or 20 miles from this route.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: As a matter of fact, he does not.

Mr. MANN: The hon. gentleman must know that that is often done. If the first surveyor has made a blunder, it is quite within the province of the constructing engineer to do that. Of course, on the other hand, it is sometimes not done in cases where it might have been done with advantage. If the Minister knows the Cairns Railway, he may know that 3 miles out of Cairns there are three or four bridges and a sharp curve which could all have been obviated by making a deviation of a few chains. It seems strange that we cannot move any amendment to alter the benefited area, but I have drafted an amendment which I think the Chairman will admit it is quite within the province o the Committee to make. I propose to move as an addition to the first paragraph of the resolution the following words :—

But recommend the Commissioner to extend the benefited area to include the town of St. George.

The PREMIER: What is the sense of it?

Mr. MANN: The sense of it is that we recommend the Commissioner to extend the benefited area. It will have a far-reaching effect.

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment the hon. member has just read will be outside our instructions from the House, and I would suggest that he moves it at the report stage.

Mr. MANN: I shall adopt that course. I only wish to put it in to show that we have the power. I just wish to say a few words at this stage with reference to the railway. It seems to me that we shall have to adopt a different method with regard to railway resolutions. We find the hon. member for Balonne—who, if he was not born in this district, has lived in it for very many years, and who knows the country as well as, if not better than, any other hon. member—differs from the hon. member for Carnarvon, who also has an intimate knowledge of the district. When we find two hon. members, each of them perfectly sincere in his advocacy of the route which he favours, disagreeing on the subject, in justice to hon. members, a committee of the House should he chosen to inspect every route after it has been decided to propose a railway. In South Australia the late Premier, the Hon. T. Price, told me that, when he was going to bring in a railway proposal, he took as many members of Parliament as cared to go over the route.

The PREMIER: A very ingenious way of getting railways through.

Mr. MANN: Yes. He told me that it lessened discussion, as members knew all about the route. They met the settlers, from whom they heard about the capabilities of the district. They were told by the engineers who accompanied them of the engineering difficulties, and the proposals were got through without any hitch, because the bulk of the members had a knowledge of the district, and had not to rely

upon the conflicting reports of members on either side, who might be interested, and who might be seeking to mislead hon. members. For example, we were told of the splendid land there was along the Dalby-Tara Railway. Then we had the hon. member for Oxley, the hon. member for Rosewood, and the hon. member for Cambooya telling us that the land was bad. But the reports we received from the late Secretary for Lands were such that they induced us to pass the railway. That is a great mistake. We may see something in the Commissioner's report about the character of the country over which a line will pass, but I do not know that the Commissioner ever posed as an expert in regard to agricultural or grazing land. We do not know who tells him about the capabilities of the land. It may be the opinion of the surveyor who goes over the route, but I remember a case where some twenty-five years ago a surveyor surveyed a lot of 40-acre blocks on the banks of a creek in my district. He marked out a township, and valued the land at £2 an acre, and said that it was beautiful undulating blacksoil country. To-day, in spite of the fact that there are a great many more people in the district, and that there is a great earth hunger, hardly a block of that land has been taken up—not 1 acre out of 1,000,000—and I believe that if the Government offered the land to any settler who knew anything about it at 3d. an acre they could not sell a bit of it unless for the sake of disposing of the timber for firewood. When we know of men making reports like that, it makes hon. members a bit chary about accepting reports as to the capabilities of land. I do not suppose that, when the Commissioner draws up his report upon a railway, he has been over the route himself. I take it for granted that he bases his report upon the reports supplied to him by officers of his department. It would be much better to get reports from men who have a knowledge of grazing and agricultural land. We have been told by the Minister that we ought to pass this railway for one or two very cogent reasons. The first reason seems to be that the railway is primarily designed to bring to Brisbane trade which is now going to Sydney. That might be a very laudable object if we had sufficient money to build railways that do not even appear from the Commissioner's report to be likely to pay in the near future. The Commissioner estimates that this railway will only earn 2½ per cent. on the capital cost.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He does not wish to be too optimistic.

Mr. MANN: He would not need to be, in view of the character of the country through which the railway will pass. And the balance of that is to be made up by the benefited area. To my mind there is other country in Queensland where this money could be spent to better advantage. I do not know how many railways have been passed through this House during the past two and a-half years, but the number must be something enormous.

[11 p.m.]

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Sixteen or seventeen.

Mr. MANN: I think that there must have been twenty railways passed through this House in the last two and a-half years. We would be wise if we went in for modifying our railway policy. I do not know when we are going to stop passing these railways, which we must build with borrowed money, and, as the Treasurer told us the other day, the last loan was not a successful flotation, inasmuch as there was trouble in the Balkans, and the question of the superiority of the German Navy coming to the surface made the money market tight. We must inevitably borrow more money if we are going on with this enormous development of our railway system.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will keep to the question before the Committee.

Mr. MANN: What is going to be the consequence if we continue to build railways as we are doing?

The CHAIRMAN: That question is not before the Committee.

Mr. MANN: I believe that if we get this railway the prickly pear evil will be minimised; but I would point out that in the Maranoa electorate there is a pastoral property—the Dulacca holding—which is close to the railway line, and it is so thickly infested with prickly pear that it will never be cleared. I urge the Minister to withdraw this railway proposal, and spend the money in a district where there is no dispute as to rival routes, and where he would find a better investment for the capital invested. It is no use building lines that will be non-payable, whereas in other districts we know places where lines are required, and which we know will pay from the start. I ask the Minister if he cannot go round the country and pick out many more places where railways are necessary?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I can pick out more than I have money placed at my disposal for.

Mr. MANN: I am glad to hear the Minister say that, and I suppose they are in agricultural districts, whereas this railway is to be run into a pastoral district. The pastoral industry is not so much dependent on a railway as the agricultural districts are, because wool will stand much longer haulage by team than maize or any other agricultural products will. I urge the withdrawal of this line until the rival factions have settled which is to be the route.

Mr. KEOGH: For forty years I have known the country over which this railway is to pass, and I can assure the Committee that eventually the line will pay well. With regard to the claim of the St. George people for a railway, I believe it is the intention of the present Administration to give a deviation from the proposed railway to St. George. I advocate that deviation, and I hope it will take place, as both lines will pay well. The consensus of the opinion of the people in that district is that this line will pay very well. It has been put forward that we have no right to encroach on the preserves of the New South Wales people, but we have a perfect right to our own trade. The people of New South Wales are doing their best to bring their lines up to our border, and I think we are within our rights in running our line along the border in order to get our own trade and push Queensland ahead. I believe this line will be one of the best things that can be done for Queensland.

Mr. LENNON: Stonewalling?

Mr. KEOGH: I am not stonewalling. That is one of the things I never have anything to do with.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must address the Chair, and not reply to interjections that are not relevant to the question.

Mr. KEOGH: In replying to the hon. member I did not mean any disrespect to you, Sir. I believe this will be one of the best paying lines we have in Queensland.

Mr. MURPHY: I doubt it.

Mr. KEOGH: I cannot help the hon. member having his doubts. I think that as far as the

country is concerned, hon. members will be doing their duty by voting strongly in favour of this line.

Mr. MURPHY: I wish to make a few casual observations on this railway. I know absolutely nothing about the country, but I have read the Commissioner's report and listened to the speeches delivered by men who know the country, and every man on this side who knows the country condemns the line. The members for Maranoa, Balonne, and Warrego all say that the line should not be built at the present time.

At 11.15 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN, under Standing Order 171, called upon the hon. member for Brisbane South, Mr. Bouchard, to relieve him in the chair.

Mr. BOUCHARD took the chair accordingly.

Mr. MURPHY: What does the Commissioner say in connection with this railway? He advises that we should spend £103,000 of public money for the purpose of filching a bit of trade from the border which might go to Sydney. This kind of railway has been a curse in Australian politics; and this one was introduced because of the pressure of commercial people on the Government. The sum of £100,000 could be better spent on railways in other parts of Queensland—in developing North Queensland, or in developing agricultural districts. We are told that it is the policy of the Government to settle people on the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And we are doing so.

Mr. MURPHY: Look at the splendid land there is in the district represented by the acting leader of the Opposition! Yet the Government could not find £60,000 in order to keep a promise—a signed pledge—made by the Premier to the hon. gentleman that a sugar-mill should be built on the Johnstone. The Commissioner, in recommending the construction of this railway, says—

> Although the land traversed by this extension is not all that could be desired, the extension must be looked upon as forming another section of the border railway, designed to secure Queensland traffic to Queensland ports.

I am not particularly interested in rival routes, but when we are dealing with public money in the construction of railways, we should try to select the best centres in which to spend the money.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MURPHY: I have no hesitation in saying that the Government during the last eighteen months has built more political railways than were built in Queensland before.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Didn't you vote for them?

Mr. MURPHY: We voted for some of them. The Government brought down the Commissioner's reports pointing out the possibility of areas of land being open for close settlement; and we voted for them because under the Act of 1906 there is a guarantee of 3 per cent. Possibly I voted for the Tara Railway, but if I did so it was on the recommendation of the Commissioner for Railways. Members who do not know the country to be traversed by a proposed railway have to depend upon the reports submitted by officers of the Railway Department. The hon. member for Cambooya, who accuses me of having voted blindly for some railways upon the recommendation of the Commissioner for Railways, voted for the expenditure of £250,000 for a railway from Rockhampton to the mud flats at Port Alma, though every report of every official of the Railway Department, and the report of a special board of inquiry appointed to investigate the proposal, were against it absolutely. But if I voted blindly for railways in the past, I am not going to vote blindly for railways in the future. I am not going to accept a railway proposal straight away because the lands through which the railway will pass have to pay 3 per cent. on the cost of constructing the line, nor because the Hon. the Secretary for Railways recommends it and the member for the district rises in his place and assures the Committee that the construction of the line will be an advantage to Queensland. In the future I shall want a lot more information. I must admit that the Minister for Railways endeavours to give us all the information in his power, but I contend that the only reason given by the Commissioner for recommending this railway is that it may bring trade to Brisbane. We can see behind this project the wool brokers, the big merchants, and the sellers of hides and tallow in Brisbane, who have induced the Government to undertake the construction of this line because New South Wales is going to build a railway in that direction. The member for Maranoa quoted from the report of the railway commission which was appointed to consider and report upon this line, and he showed from that report that the continuation of this extension would not be likely to bring a great deal of trade to Brisbane. In any case, Brisbane is not Queensland. For a very long time past Brisbane has had all the advantages of Government expenditure. The present Government, with all their talk about their railway policy, have simply constructed railways in the South, and have neglected the North altogether. There is plenty of money for the South, plenty for the Central district, and plenty to assist the big Mount Morgan Company, but nothing for North Queensland. If this question goes to a division, I shall record my vote against the construction of the railway, because I am not satisfied that it will assist closer settlement or develop large areas of agricultural land, and because I do not think it is necessary at the present time.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I rise for the purpose of backing up a promise I made at an earlier hour in the evening, that I would ask the Commissioner to reconsider the route of this line to the Moonie River. I find that in one or two instances when permanent surveys of railways have been made, we have deflected the course of the line, in order to avoid flooded country, to the extent of 5 miles. I believe that the route of the Talwood Railway was deflected as much as 5 miles in order to avoid flooded country; but the terminus remained as shown on the plan. The terminus of this proposed extension is stated to be on the Moonie River, so that it will be possible for the Commissioner to take advantage of the powers conferred upon him under the various Acts of Parliament. Section 9 of the Railways Act of 1863 winds up by saying—

> And to give such orders and directions for the due carrying out and execution of such works, and for the effective control and direction of the said Commissioner and other officers in carrying out and executing the same as shall appear most expedient for the interests of the public.

Section 17 says—

> And in case any material deviation from the said line indicated in such map or plan shall at any time afterwards be deemed by the said Governor and Executive Council to be desirable, the like notice, as aforesaid, shall be given by the Commissioner relative to the proposed deviation.

In view of the information which has been given by various members, I think, subject to further information and advice, we may reasonably expect that the route, as shown on the plan hung on the wall, will be deflected some miles further to the north, so that the Weingallon lands, which comprise 300 square miles and

which have been cut up into 1,280-acre selections, will be better served by the projected railway than they will be by the route marked on the plan.

Mr. MACKINTOSH (*Cambooya*): I know the country which this railway will traverse very well, and I am surprised at the members of the Labour party, who supported such an iniquitous railway as the Tara Railway, objecting to this one. I was against the Goondiwindi extension from Warwick, because I hold that the proper starting point is Pittsworth, but as that extension has been started we must endeavour to make the line a success. We must, if possible, extend that railway east and west—right to the border of South Australia and down to Warwick to connect with the via recta. I do [11.30 p.m.] not intend to go into the merits of the country through which the railway passes, because that has already been discussed by so many hon. members, but as the railway has been started there we must have it extended further west and east. I think it only right that the Warwick people should have the via recta railway instead of having to go 60 miles round with their perishable products. I am going to give the railway my hearty support. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. RYLAND: I am pleased the Minister has given a promise that he will change the route of the railway to a certain extent towards the north. Looking at the proposed route on the map, it is quite evident the railway will go too near the border of New South Wales, and it will also run through the lands of the Australian Pastoral Company, while, at the same time, we have large areas of land lying to the north, where the railway should go—about 200,000 acres already designed, and in course of being designed, for closer settlement. I am pleased the Minister has given an assurance that he will divert the course of the railway so that it will not run practically parallel with the boundary of New South Wales, but go into country where it is likely to do more good—that is, towards the Wiengallon lands, and make these Crown lands available for settlement. The hon. member for Balonne has put a lot of earnestness into the debate, and I think his constituents ought to feel proud that he has secured the promise from the Minister that he will divert the line a little more towards the north than is at present proposed. That being so I have no objection to the line.

Question—Approval of plans, etc.—put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the resolutions.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I beg to move that the resolutions be agreed to.

Mr. COYNE: I do not know whether this is the proper time, but I have an amendment to move by way of a recommendation to the Commissioner in connection with these plans. I could not get it in in Committee, but I think I can now. I move it now as a recommendation, but previously I wished to move it as a mandate. I do not think the Minister will have any objection to this recommendation. [The hon. member then moved the amendment he had previously moved in Committee, and which had been ruled out of order.] My object in moving this recommendation is that in all fairness to the people of St. George and that district, whose votes made possible the building of the railway to Goondiwindi, they should also have an opportunity of recording their votes to say whether they are in favour of this extension from Talwood to Bullamon. I think it is only a fair proposition, and we are not making it mandatory, as we are prevented by our statute from doing so. I am just moving it by way of a recommendation to the Commissioner, and I do not wish to take up the time of the House any longer in doing so.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I cannot agree to this recommendation being added to the resolution, and I would like to point out my reasons for it. Section 4 of the Railways Act of 1906 reads—

(1) From and after the passing of this Act, the Commissioner shall, with the statement required under section 16 of the Railways Act of 1888 Amendment Act of 1896—

which says he is to present the Minister with plan, section, and book of reference—

to be furnished by him to the Minister with respect to any railway proposed to be constructed by the State, transmit also a map and description under his official seal of the district which in his opinion will be directly benefited by the construction of the proposed railway.

Subsection (2) says what is to be done after a certain time—that is a map and description have to be displayed at certain offices. Then subsection (3) reads—

(3) At any time within two months from the first publication of such notice any owner or occupier of land within the said district, and any local authority having jurisdiction therein may, by notice in writing to the Minister, make objections to the boundaries of the said district, and state the grounds for such objections.

The Minister may, if he thinks necessary, authorise an officer of the Commissioner or some other person to hold an inquiry with respect to such objections or any of them, and report to him thereon.

The Commissioner may amend the boundaries of the said district in such manner as he thinks right and just, and in such case the map and description aforesaid shall also be amended accordingly.

I think it is within the jurisdiction of the Commissioner to define the areas in the boundaries of the railway district, and having done that under the Act, I take it that it is the duty of the local authority, if the boundaries are to be altered, to ask the Minister to say whether they shall be altered.

The SPEAKER: I do not see anything in the Act which would prevent the House making this recommendation if it so desires.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: The effect of course is considerable delay. The period which must elapse after the Commissioner published his recommendation, in order to allow anyone to protest, has still to prevail. After the House makes the recommendation to the Commissioner the amendment in the boundaries takes place. I think the House has the power, if it so desires, of making such a recommendation. The question arises as to the form in which the amendment should be moved, and it might be better if it were moved in the form that after the word "December," the words "he recommends to the Commissioner that" be added. Then the motion would go on.

Mr. COYNE: With the permission of the House I beg to make the alteration.

Alteration made accordingly.

Mr. LAND: I would like the recommendation to be carried. I asked the Minister the question to-night if St. George was benefited, and the Minister said "Yes." Everybody knows that St. George must benefit by the railway if it is built.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It does not necessarily bring it in the benefited area.

Mr. LAND: The fact of the Minister and Commissioner saying that St. George will benefit was a great reason why it should be in, and I would like the Minister to tell us why he did not put it in. Why did this benefited area run right

up to a town, and the town was left out? The shire council have jurisdiction in this district by the fact that they have rateable property in the district. It is run right to the town boundary, and there it stops. I will tell hon. members why I want St. George in the benefited area—because I want the people who are interested in the district to have an opportunity of saying whether they will have the railway or not. It looks as if it is left out on purpose. The Talwood extension was brought about by the votes of the people of St. George. Goondiwindi had its railway, and the people of that place did not want the railway to be extended, and so they voted against the extension to Talwood. The St. George people were included in the benefited area, however, and they voted for the extension. Now we find that the line is to be turned in another direction. Why are not the people of St. George to have an opportunity of voting for the railway?

The TREASURER: They will not be paying for it.

Mr. LAND: Never mind whether they will be paying for it or not. Will they not be paying for it? Most of their rateable property will be in the district, so they will have to pay for it. It is a shame and a disgrace for any man who is paid by the people of Queensland to draw a line as that line is drawn up on the map. It is too plain why it has been done, and I hope the House will carry the amendment. I am perfectly satisfied that, if the railway runs to where the Minister has indicated it is to run, it is a shame and a disgrace and a robbery of the people of Queensland to have 200,000 acres of Crown land cut up into 1,280-acre blocks——

The SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. member is using language that is too strong for the present occasion.

Mr. LAND: I am very glad you have pulled me up, Mr. Speaker, but I feel so warmly on the subject that it is no wonder I have used language that is not quite parliamentary. I hope that the House, in its wisdom, will carry the amendment.

The PREMIER: I did not quite understand, though I heard the hon. member speak earlier in the debate, why he was so anxious to have St. George included in the benefited area. But the latter part of his speech has made it quite clear that the amendment has been moved with the object of preventing the railway being built.

Mr. LAND: If they do not want it.

The PREMIER: The people of St. George do not want this railway.

Mr. LAND: If they do not want it.

The PREMIER: And because they do not want it, the people to the south are not to get railway facilities. How would the hon. member like, if a railway were brought before this House to go from Dalby or Toowoomba to St. George, if the hon. member for the district to the south were to move an amendment like this to prevent St. George getting that railway? Hon. members for neighbouring districts should try and attend to their own business and let the people of other districts get the railways they require, and which it is the duty of this House to give them. If hon. members want to prevent the railway being built, why do they not vote against the railway instead of trying to defeat it by a side wind in this way?

Mr. LAND: The railway is in my district. I know what I am talking about.

The PREMIER: I am not interested in whether the railway is in the hon. member's district or not. I am interested in the interests of the people of St. George—or the alleged interests of the people of St. George—being set up against the interests of the people to the south because the people of St. George want something else. If this railway is refused, then everything is aboveboard, but it is not creditable to try to defeat it by a side wind. It is not even arguable. I think it is desirable—and what is of more consequence, the Railway Commissioner thinks it is desirable—that this Southern railway should be proceeded with without delay. One reason why the line should be proceeded with at once is because the work at present under construction will soon be completed, and it is better to keep the men and plant at work in extending the railway than that the men should be dismissed and the plant laid up. We have been pushing on with this railway from Warwick in accordance with a general line of policy; and, if we are going to continue that policy, it is better that we should do so now than that we should stop the work for twelve months. I do not consider it a sufficient reason for stopping work that the people of St. George want the railway taken to them. I would not propose to this House a railway by this route to St. George. That town should get its railway from the north-east. Any person who takes the trouble to look at the map will recognise that a railway to St. George should commence from somewhere about Toowoomba or Dalby, somewhat in the direction that the Tara line takes. It would not only be an
[12 a.m.] unfairness to the people of that district to block this line, but I think it desirable to push on with this line now. I hope the House will reject the amendment. Some people may say that it will do no harm to make the recommendation to the Commissioner, but I think that the Commissioner should pay some attention to a recommendation coming from this House, and if this amendment is carried it will mean stopping the railway from being built altogether.

Mr. LAND: I did not say it would block it.

Mr. COYNE: Why do you say it will stop the railway?

The PREMIER: It is admitted that this amendment is for the express purpose of blocking the railway.

Mr. COYNE: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in imputing motives that have been absolutely denied by members on this side of the House who have spoken on this question.

The SPEAKER: It is the privilege of every speaker to give his reasons why a motion has been moved. The hon. member is perfectly in order in expressing his views on a motion that has been proposed by an hon. member.

The PREMIER: The hon. member for Balonne did not make any mystery about it. He gave this Chamber to understand quite clearly why he wanted the people of St. George to have a voice in this matter, and he did not make any bones about it. If the majority of members of this House think it is a mistake to continue the building of this line, they have only got to say so, and the line will not go any further. It is a matter entirely in the hands of the House. I hope they will reject the amendment.

Amendment (*Mr. Coyne's*) put and negatived.

Original question—That the plans, etc., be approved—put and passed.

Mr. RYLAND: Knock-off time now.

Mr. LENNON: Don't you think it is a fair thing to adjourn?

The PREMIER: I do not think it is fair at all.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

(Mr. W. D. Armstrong, Lockyer, in the chair).

AGRICULTURE AND STOCK.—CHIEF OFFICE.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. T. Paget, *Mackay*) moved that £11,490 be granted for "Chief Office." This was an increase of £982. The increases included £50 to the Under Secretary. An increase was provided for in the Estimates of the Director of Sugar Experiment Stations in place of Dr. Maxwell. It was necessary that a director should be appointed so that assessments could be made. The chief clerk received an increase of £25, the accountant an increase of £25, and Mr. Wilson, the senior correspondence clerk, was shown to have an increase of £45. This was made up by an increase of £20 on his former salary and £25, which was formerly paid out of the meat and dairy fund, was included in this vote in accordance with the practice adopted in other departments of lumping all the emoluments that an officer got under the one head. The senior record clerk received an increase of £20. The plans clerk an increase of £20, Mr. Iliff, the brands clerk, an increase of £20, Mr. Hutcheon, of the accounts branch, an increase of £15, and the £25, which he previously received from the meat and dairy fund was also included in this salary. A new salary of £110 was provided for Mr. England, commercial clerk; Mr. Fay, general clerk, received an increase of £20; a correspondence clerk an increase of £10; and three clerks an increase of £10 each. Mr. Lymburner, clerk, had been transferred to the Justice Department, and this item showed a decrease. Mr. Quodling, agricultural inspector, received an increase of £20, and another clerk an increase of £10. Mr. Mobsby, photographer, went to England in connection with the Franco-British Exhibition, and on his return was transferred to the Chief Secretary's Department. He was now retransferred to the Agricultural Department and £100 was down for his salary for six months. Two other clerks received increases of £10 each, and two messengers £10 each. In contingencies (subdivision) there was an increase of £500 in the vote for wages, travelling expenses, postages, telegrams, and incidentals. This was required in connection with the department's exhibit at the Jubilee Exhibition held in August last. For the departmental library there was an increase of £15, and the other items were the same as last year. The number of bursaries at the Agricultural College was twelve.

Mr. LENNON: Before proceeding to discuss the Estimates of this department, he desired to ask the Chief Secretary to make arrangement for the debate being reported for an hour or two. Dealing first with State farms, he said it would be in the recollection of hon. members that the late Secretary for Agriculture, Mr. O'Sullivan, made a trip to North Queensland about eighteen months ago with the ostensible object of selecting a site for a State farm, but the object of the trip was only a pretence. State farms entailed considerable expenditure, but not too much to have a State farm at Rockhampton, which had a maw big enough to swallow up half the revenue of Queensland. The people of the North were justified in thinking that a State farm should be established in that part of the State somewhere north of Rockhampton, betwen Mackay and Cairns, and he honed the matter would receive the serious consideration of the Government. With regard to the increases to salaries, of course the Under Secretary got the biggest bite; but this department was an exception to the rule, of giving all the substantial increases to the highly paid officers and showing little consideration for those receiving lower salaries. The increases given to officers in this department appeared to be general, and that was satisfactory. There was an expenditure of £2,152 under the Diseases in Plants Act, and he was a little dubious as to whether they got value for that money. With regard to the administration of the Shearers and Sugar Workers' Accommodation Act, he would remind that Minister that some time ago a deputation waited upon Mr. O'Sullivan, the then Secretary for Agriculture, and urged upon him the necessity for the appointment of more inspectors in connection with both sugar workers' accommodation and shearers' accommodation. It was pointed out by that deputation, of which he was a member, that there should be at least three inspectors to do the work in connection with sugar workers' accommodation in the North, and Mr. O'Sullivan distinctly promised that those three inspectors would be appointed. But according to those Estimates there were only three inspectors for the whole State. It was perfectly absurd to expect that three inspectors could supervise the accommodation provided for sugar workers and shearers throughout the State.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There are other inspectors who are officers of other departments.

Mr. LENNON: He could assure the hon. gentleman that there was an absolute necessity for the appointment of at least three inspectors for the North—inspectors who should devote the whole time to the performance of the duties connected with the office. No doubt three inspectors were also required to inspect the accommodation provided for shearers. Had the inspection work under the Act been properly carried out in the North, he firmly believed that the unfortunate strike which occurred at Goondi about a fortnight before the last general election would have been averted. He admitted that in some few isolated cases people who employed a large number of men in connection with the sugar industry went beyond the requirements of the Act, but a large body of employers ignored the Act, and did not provide even decent accommodation for the workers. More inspectors of slaughter-houses were also required. Of course in large centres there was a sufficient number of inspectors, but in the more remote districts where the work was left entirely to the police, who were overloaded by the number of extraneous duties they had to perform, the proper inspection of slaughter-houses was an impossibility. He would suggest that in the more remote districts some two or three places should be grouped together and placed under the charge of one officer who would have nothing else to do but inspect slaughter-houses. With regard to the dairy fund, he found that the Auditor-General said that while the securities for advances were generally in good condition, the following were exceptions:—

The Mackay Co-operative Butter Factory, Limited. Advance, £2,000. Surveyor states, "Closed down and neglected by the company, consequently depreciation is taking place."

The Peak Downs Butter Factory Company, Limited. Advance, £2,000. Surveyor reports, "Building and machinery neglected since removal to Emerald."

He would like the Secretary for Agriculture

to explain what prospect there was of recovering this £4,000. It appeared to be in imminent danger of becoming a bad debt. The amount for refrigeration on the Northern steamers last year was
[12.30 a.m.] £500, while this year it was only £292. That showed it was a gradually vanishing quantity. He urged that the department should not be content with one experiment in that connection. A great deal of hard work had been done by the people in the North in the raising of tomatoes and cucumbers for the Southern markets, where they found a ready sale, and if assistance were given to encourage the growers to send small quantities the trade would be very much encouraged.

Mr. TOLMIE said a word of praise was due to the Agricultural Department for the excellent report presented to hon. members. It contained a large quantity of information which would be very valuable to hon. members and people outside as well. He urged that additional State farms should be established in different parts of the State, as those in existence had done an incalculable amount of good. Some two or three years ago a system of apprenticeship had been established whereby young men who were unable to take advantage of the Gatton College received a good agricultural education. That system had proved a success in connection with the Hermitage and Biggenden State Farms, and he hoped it would be carried out in other districts. He would like the Minister to give them some information in connection with dairy farming, as they had just passed a railway into a district which was regarded as partially dry, and it would be a good thing if it could be made a success. With regard to the Irish potato blight, which existed in some parts of Southern Queensland, strenuous efforts were being made by the growers to eradicate the disease, and he should like to know whether the department had been able to cope with it. He was glad to note that pastoral affairs showed such activity, and that there was such an increase in the number of stock. Great prominence was given in the report to the subject of wool-growing. On the Downs a number of persons were taking up the industry on a small scale, and he urged that assistance should be given to these small wool-growers in a similar way to which we came to the assistance of small dairymen by the establishment of travelling dairies. If wool was not properly classed, the grower was not going to get the fullest advantage; and if the department would give instruction in wool classification, it would be a step in the right direction. One striking statement in the report was that in Victoria they had increased the value of their horses within the last two or three years to the extent of £60,000 per annum, which had been brought about by proper provision of stallions that were allowed to be used in the country for the service of public mares. Queensland should adopt stringent regulations to prevent the use of unsound sires, unless they wished to see the horses bred in the State deteriorate. He advocated increases in the salaries of the managers of the State farms.

Mr. COLLINS urged the appointment of additional inspectors under the Shearers and Sugar Workers' Accommodation Act in the sugar districts, as neither the food
[1 a.m.] nor the accommodation provided for the men was what it should be, especially in the Mackay district.

Mr. GRAYSON regretted that they should be compelled to discuss the Estimates of such an important department at that late hour. He complained of the action of the New South Wales Department of Agriculture in prohibiting Queensland pigs crossing the border at Wallangarra, for the alleged reason that swine fever existed in Queensland. He hoped the Queensland Department would endeavour to have the restriction removed. He had no fault to find with the department, though there were one or two matters in regard to which it needed shaking up. It was a great pity that the manager at Gatton College and his officers were tied to the College all the year round. The manager should be allowed to attend the agricultural shows and act as judge. They could spare him for six months to visit Europe, but he could not be spared to judge at shows in his own State. The time had arrived when scientific agricultural instruction should be given in the closely-settled farming districts by the officers of the department, at stated periods. He also advocated the supervision of the class of seed sold to farmers.

Mr. MORGAN suggested the establishment of experimental plots in different parts of Queensland, especially in the wheat-growing districts, on the lines adopted in Victoria. Queensland was the only State in Australia which now had to import wheat, and the establishment of experimental plots would put an end to such a discreditable state of affairs. He advocated the establishment of farms to demonstrate to farmers that the land was capable of producing much more than it did at present. He hoped that the Government would never again buy brood mares in the State, as they had done at Maryvale, competing against the people in Queensland. They should get their mares from other countries. He opposed the suggestion that Mr. Mahon should judge at agricultural shows, because he might have to judge the progeny of the stock kept by the College.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE and Mr. KEOGH rising together, the CHAIRMAN called upon the Secretary for Agriculture.

Mr. KEOGH objected to other hon. members being called upon when he had risen before them.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! When several hon. members rise at the same time, and they address me, and the hon. member does not, I shall not call upon the hon. member.

Mr. KEOGH said that he had a perfect right to address the Committee, and he would do so.

The CHAIRMAN: I call upon the hon. member to resume his seat.

Mr. KEOGH: I don't care what you say. I have a right to address the Committee.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: With reference to the establishment of a State farm in North Queensland, it was difficult to select a site when there were applications for its establishment from so many localities. It was advisable to show the people in North Queensland that other crops could be grown there than sugar-cane. With regard to the inspection of the accommodation for sugar workers, the three inspectors who had been appointed were stationed in the West, but that was not to say that the inspection was not properly carried out in the sugar districts by the officers whose duty it was to carry it out. The two butter factories alluded to by the hon. member for Herbert had fallen into

the hands of the department as mortgagee, but he believed there was a big future for dairying in the Northern coastal districts in time. Negotiations were being carried on for the purpose of carrying on the service for the shipment of fruit and vegetables from Bowen. In the past the growers were to blame for not having availed themselves of the service to a still greater extent than they had. In spite of that, he was not disheartened, and, provided the terms were not prohibitive, he intended to ask the Cabinet to agree to the continuance of the service. He agreed with the hon. member for Toowoomba as to the value of the departmental report. He desired, if possible, to extend the apprentice system to the Roma State Farm. With respect to dry farming, he had commissioned Senator McColl to procure from America specimens of wheat from the dry belts in that country. Regarding the prohibition by New South Wales of Queensland pigs, he hoped to be able to get better terms from the New South Wales department. It was not possible for the Queensland department to supervise the selling of true seed to farmers.

Mr. COYNE said that he had received several complaints about the lax administration of the Shearers and Sugar Workers' Accommodation Act, and he asked that separate inspectors should be appointed in the Southern portion of the State.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We have one at Winton, one at Longreach, and one at St. George.

Mr. COYNE: The inspector at St. George was very little use for service in other parts of Southern Queensland. Greater power in instituting prosecutions should be given to the inspectors.

At twenty minutes to 2 o'clock,

The CHAIRMAN called upon the senior member for Drayton and Toowoomba, Mr. Tolmie, to relieve him in the chair.

Mr. TOLMIE took the chair accordingly.

Mr. COYNE proceeded to deal further with complaints about the lax administration of the Shearers and Sugar Workers' Accommodation Act in South-western Queensland. The accommodation on some of the stations was a credit to the owners and managers. He asked for the appointment of an inspector who was not a stock inspector. A short amendment of the Act was necessary empowering inspectors to take proceedings against anybody who deliberately flouted the Court.

Mr. KEOGH criticised the increases which were given to certain officers drawing large salaries, whilst other officers' claims were overlooked, although they actually did the work. He complained of the way in which Mr. Mahon had been overlooked in this respect.

Mr. WHITE referred to the disproportion between the extent of tobacco produced in Queensland and the salary paid to
[2 a.m.] the tobacco expert. The decreases in the area under wheat and sugar-cane were rather disappointing. In his own district the decrease in the cane crop was due partly to the cost of cultivation and partly to the deficient rainfall. The report of the Sugar Bureau was nothing but a mass of statistics, but it contained no information about manures and their analyses. He urged that the Sugar Bureau in Bundaberg should be used to impart technical and scientific instruction in cane cultivation to young farmers in the district. He suggested the establishment of an experimental plot in the same locality. If that could not be done, he hoped the Minister would appoint an agricultural chemist in the district to analyse the cane for farmers as a check upon the mills. The accommodation and food provided for the sugar workers in the Bundaberg district was very good. The hours might be long in the mills, but the work was not hard. The report of the department was an excellent one. He was pleased with the stock at the Agricultural College, but the agriculture there was disappointing.

At 2.15 a.m.,

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

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I am satisfied that there is a quorum within the precincts of the House.

Mr. THORN contended that the officers of the department should act as judges at agricultural shows. He congratulated the Government upon allowing Mr. Mahon to visit the old country, and hoped he would be instructed to purchase some stock for the department while there. The school teachers on the Darling Downs had been carrying on work on experimental plots for the last two years. He complimented the department on the report, and he expressed his opinion that the Government were doing good work in assisting the agricultural industry.

Mr. MAY eulogised the work of the inspector appointed at Winton under the Shearers and Sugar Workers' Accommodation Act. All the officers but three had other duties to perform, and he contended that inspectors should be appointed who were familiar with the requirements of the shearing and sugar industries. With regard to the statements of the hon.
[2.30 a.m.] member for Musgrave about the conditions of the sugar industry, he advocated the application of concentrated manures to prevent soil exhaustion. Farmers should receive instruction in scientific farming. He expressed his satisfaction with the work carried on at the Agricultural College, but the operations and scope of the institution should be enlarged. He suggested that when Mr. Mahon was in the old country he should visit the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester, and some of the experimental farms in England. He should also pay some attention to the matter of pedigree wheats.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER complained of the Estimates having to be discussed at that late hour. He was pleased at the increase in the vote, but he would like to see it very much larger, as he regarded the department as the chief department in the State. The officers were not discharging the full functions they should undertake. The outside work was not receiving the attention it should. The *Agricultural Journal* was an excellent publication of its kind, but it should be distributed more widely, and special subjects should be dealt with in bulletins, sent to people and districts interested in the special subjects. The department was not doing all it might to assist farmers how to erect silos, and a sum might be placed on the Estimates from which advances might be made for the purpose. No provision was being made to conserve the fodder for the increased numbers of stock in the farming districts in case of drought. He regretted that there was no indication that the Franco-British Exhibition had produced tangible results in the way of a larger export of Queensland products to the markets of the old world. Pigs and poultry should be distributed through the farming districts from the State farms, and every effort should be made to build up an export trade in eggs. The department was too slow.

Some HONOURABLE MEMBERS repeatedly interjecting,

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! He must ask the Committee to observe the rule that a member speaking was entitled to be heard in silence.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER continued his remarks. He was strongly in favour of an increase in the number of State farms, which were most valuable institutions. With regard to inspectors of slaughter-houses, they had so many other duties to perform that they were unable to properly carry out the duty of inspection.

At 3.20 a.m.,

The ACTING CHAIRMAN, under Standing Order 171, called upon the hon. member for Croydon to relieve him in the chair.

Mr. MURPHY took the chair accordingly.

Mr. MACKINTOSH said he intended to speak on the agricultural industry for a couple of hours.

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

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I am satisfied that there is a quorum present within the precincts of the House.

Mr. MACKINTOSH continued his remarks, in the course of which he was frequently interrupted by Mr. Keogh, who was several times called to order. He opposed the spending of £50,000 on the department.

At 3.30 a.m.,

The ACTING CHAIRMAN, Mr. Tolmie, resumed the chair.

Mr. MULLAN drew attention to a noise outside the Chamber, and asked if the hon. member for Burnett was in order in interrupting the member who was addressing the Committee?

The ACTING CHAIRMAN said the hon. member for Burnett was not within the Chamber, and the hon. member for Cambooya had not complained of being interrupted.

Mr. MULLAN said the Acting Chairman could not help hearing the interruption. He moved that the ruling be disagreed to.

Question—That the Acting Chairman's ruling be disagreed to—put and negatived.

Mr. MACKINTOSH continued his remarks.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN, having previously called the hon. member to order several times for wandering from the ques-
[4 a.m.] tion and for being guilty of tedious repetition, called upon him, under Standing Order 134, to discontinue his remarks.

Mr. KEOGH said he hoped he would be within his right in asking the hon. member for Cambooya what were his views with regard to dry farming.

[4.10 a.m.]

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: No. Under Standing Order 171, he called upon the hon. member for Croydon to relieve him in the chair.

Mr. MURPHY took the chair accordingly.

Mr. MANN addressed the Committee.

At 4.15 a.m.,

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

The ACTING CHAIRMAN said he was satisfied that there was a quorum present within the precincts of the Chamber.

At 4.20 a.m.,

The ACTING CHAIRMAN, Mr. Tolmie, resumed the chair.

Mr. MANN continued his remarks, in the course of which he made several quotations from the annual report of the Department of Agriculture and Stock, and dealt with the work done by various branches of the department.

Mr. SWAYNE thought the farming members had something to complain about in the time the discussion on those Estimates had been brought on seeing that they had
[5 a.m.] not been discussed for many years. He complimented the officers of the department on the very excellent report submitted to the House. The Gatton College had done very good work in regard to increasing the standard of milk from their herds, and if the same thing were done by all dairymen it would be of considerable advantage. He had intended to deal fully with many matters in connection with the department, but owing to the lateness of the hour he would defer his remarks to some future time.

Mr. KEOGH said the hon. member who had just resumed his seat had spoken his (Mr. Keogh's) sentiments exactly.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the hon. member that during the whole of the debate it has been considered only fair that hon. members should speak on the matter but once. I would draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that he has already addressed the Chamber, and while I do not take from him the right which he undoubtedly possesses of speaking again, I would like to point out that if others follow the example he is setting, the debate might become interminable.

Mr. KEOGH thanked the Acting Chairman for his strictures.

Mr. MURPHY: Seeing that these Estimates had not been discussed for the last four years, out of courtesy to the Government
[5.30 a.m.] supporters, the majority of whom represented farming districts, they should have been brought on at an earlier hour. He complimented the department on the excellent report presented to hon. members, which showed that the farmers had nothing to grumble at in the treatment they were receiving from the present Government or from past Governments. He dealt with the work of the Gatton College and State farms, which he considered had been very successful. He was pleased to note from the report that the farmers were obtaining such good prices for pigs, and when that fact was generally known, it should greatly encourage that industry. He was also pleased to notice that the butter industry had made such great strides, and that a cotton mill had been established at Ipswich. He hoped that those who had gone in for cotton growing would be able to keep the mill going, and would have a happier time than what had been the experience of those who had gone in for that industry many years ago.

Mr. MANN said when speaking previously he had omitted to deal with the question of dry farming. The experiments had not
[6 a.m.] been altogether successful, and it seemed a curious thing that they were made in a district where they were rendered futile owing to the very heavy rainfall experienced. It was a regrettable thing that 95 per cent. of the bananas grown in Queensland was grown by Chinese labour, and he could not understand why that industry was not taken up by white farmers. If people only understood the food value of the banana it would be one of the chief articles of diet on every table.

Mr. MULLAN asked what the Minister intended to do in regard to the native birds protection areas proclaimed in the vicinity of

Charters Towers, through which the sportsmen of Charters Towers had been pre-
[6.30 a.m.] vented from shooting on the lakes on the property of Mr. Marks?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE said the trouble was that the whole of the property surrounding the lakes in question was leased by Mr. Marks, and consequently the sportsmen could not go to the lakes to shoot ducks, etc., without trespassing.

Mr. SOMERSET seriously objected to the Estimates of the Agricultural Department being brought on at midnight, and consequently being debarred from dealing with the various matters as he should like to have done.

Question put and passed.

AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved that £7,423 be granted for "Agricultural College." There was an increase of £294 asked for, caused chiefly through a science master having been appointed at £200 per annum.

Mr. MANN suggested that a committee of five be appointed from the Legislative Assembly to visit the Agricultural College during the recess, and bring up a report on the
[7 a.m.] work done at the college. He also asked for information with regard to the labour at the Gatton College

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE said there were six farm labourers at the Gatton College.

Mr. MURPHY pointed out that in the report the principal of the Gatton College complained that he had been unable to obtain the necessary labour to carry on the work of the college. He hoped the suggestion of the appointment of a Select Committee to deal with the Agricultural College would be favourably considered.

Question put and passed.

BACTERIOLOGICAL INSTITUTE.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved that £1,775 be granted for "Bacteriological Institute." There was an increase of £98 in the salaries, while there was a decrease of £100 for contingencies.

Mr. MURPHY said there was a peculiar disease in the Gilbert River district, known as the Gilbert River horse disease. It was a most curious disease, which broke out annually amongst the stock in that district, and although there appeared to be no certain cure for the disease, he was pleased to notice that the department was doing its utmost to try and assist the farmers in the matter.

Mr. MANN dealt with the work of the institute, and asked for some information in regard to the matter of inoculation for redwater and ticks.

At 7.30 a.m.,

The ACTING CHAIRMAN said: I shall resume the chair at half-past 8 o'clock.

The Committee resumed at the hour named.

Question put and passed.

CHEMICAL LABORATORY.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved that £1,744 be granted for "Chemical Laboratory." All the officers received increases.

Question put and passed.

DISEASES IN PLANTS ACT.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved that £3,202 be granted for "Diseases in Plants Act." Nearly all the officers received increases. The vote was increased by £2,422, the reason being that those salaries were now paid out of revenue, whereas formerly they were paid out of Trust Fund. As against this there was a considerable sum derived from inspection fees on imported fruit, but the inspection fees on bananas in the North had been entirely abolished.

Mr. RYLAND asked for some information with respect to the objection of the Victorian Government to the importation of Queensland bananas on account of some alleged disease in the plant.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE explained that as a result of the visit of himself and the Under Secretary to Melbourne, which was followed by a visit to Queensland of the Victorian Chief Inspector of Fruit, who was shown through the whole of the Northern banana plantations, the most friendly relations now existed between the two States.

Mr. RYLAND asked if there was any increase in the spread of the codlin moth?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE said the item "£250, Destruction of Codlin Moth, Stanthorpe district," was new. The pest had come in by way of Tenterfield, and was confined to the Stanthorpe district, but it was hoped that it would soon be eradicated. An inspector had been appointed at Warwick and another at Wallangarra. The orchardists in the Stanthorpe district quite concurred in the district being placed under quarantine.

Mr. RYLAND was glad to hear this, because the farmers were in dread that the disease would come along.

Question put and passed.

SHEARERS AND SUGAR-WORKERS ACCOMMODATION ACT.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved that £950 be granted for the administration of this Act. The amount was the same as last year.

Question put and passed.

SLAUGHTERING ACT.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved that £3,490 be granted for "Slaughtering Act."

Question put and passed.

STATE FARMS, GARDENS AND NURSERIES.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved that £12,710 be granted for "State Farms, Gardens and Nurseries." There was an increase of £337 on last year's vote.

Question put and passed.

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved that £8,292 be granted for "Miscellaneous Services." There was an increase of £2,937 on last year's vote, which was more than accounted for by £3,000 for "Reserves and the Special Grant for Approved Improvements."

Mr. RYLAND asked if £500 was sufficient for assistance to local authorities for the erection of stock dips. The work came very hard on poorer local bodies, and the Government should not hold its hand with expenditure in this direction. How much was spent last year?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE said unfortunately the department had been "had" in one or two instances, and the grants were now made under the strictest supervision possible. No application had been refused.

Six hundred and ninety-two pounds seven shill- and threepence was spent last year, but portion of that amount was on account of 1907-8.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the resolutions, and leave was obtained to sit again at the next sitting of the House.

The resolutions were ordered to be received at the next sitting of the House.

RAILWAYS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

POSTPONEMENT OF INTRODUCTION.

The PREMIER: I move that this Order of the Day be postponed until after we have dealt with the Council's amendments in the Workers' Dwellings Bill, the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Bill, and the Justices Act Amendment Bill. There is nothing in any of the amendments to be concerned about, and they will not take more than a quarter of an hour; but if there is any inclination to postpone them, I am agreeable.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Go on.

Question put and passed.

WORKERS' DWELLINGS BILL.

COMMITTEE—CONSIDERATION OF COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

On the motion of the PREMIER, the Legislative Council's amendments in this Bill were agreed to without discussion, and the Bill was ordered to be returned to the Council, by message in the usual form.

METROPOLITAN WATER AND SEWERAGE BILL.

COMMITTEE—CONSIDERATION OF COUNCIL'S AMENDMENTS.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS moved that the Council's amendment to clause 9 on page 6 be agreed to. The Council redrafted the clause, which now read as follows:—

On or before the first day of March, one thousand nine hundred and ten, and thereafter before the first day of March in every seventh ensuing year, the Governor in Council shall appoint some person to be a member of the board and the president thereof, but upon the office of president becoming vacant the Governor in Council may appoint a president for the remainder of the term of his predecessor in office.

This was substituted for the clause passed by the Assembly and was a considerable improvement on the original clause.

Question put and passed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The next amendment of the Council was in clause 40, wherein the Council inserted the word "pure" to indicate that pure water must be supplied by the board. He moved that the Council's amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: In clause 41 the Council inserted an amendment providing for an additional number of hospitals to receive water from the board without payment. The clause as amended provided that the following hospitals should get water without payment, namely—

Sick Children's Hospital, Lady Bowen Lying-in Hospital, Lady Lamington Hospital for Women, Friendly Societies' Hospital, Mater Misericordiæ Hospital, and Queensland Blind, Deaf, and Dumb Institution, each 500,000 gallons.

He moved that the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. LENNON considered it was a better arrangement and made provision for future hospitals. He reminded the Minister that he did not accept suggestions from the Opposition side of the House, but he accepted them from the Upper House.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the Legislative Council's amendments in the Bill. The report was adopted, and the Bill ordered to be returned to the Council, by message in the usual form.

JUSTICES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

COMMITTEE.—CONSIDERATION OF COUNCIL'S MESSAGE OF 15TH INSTANT.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. G. Appel, *Albert*) pointed out that when the Bill came from the Council the Assembly inserted an amendment providing that nothing in the Act should prevent any justice from sitting on the bench when asked by the police magistrate to do so. He moved that the Assembly do not insist on the amendment which they made in the Bill.

Mr. KEOGH: Was it the intention of the Upper House that no justice should sit on the bench with the police magistrate unless he was asked to do so by the police magistrate?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Yes; that is right.

Mr. MANN was glad that the Minister accepted the amendment.

Mr. LENNON drew attention to the fact that another amendment was accepted from the Council.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee did not insist on their amendment in the Bill.

The report was adopted, and the Bill ordered to be returned to the Council, by message in the usual form.

RAILWAYS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved—

That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced providing for the salary of the Commissioner for Railways.

Mr. LENNON asked to be informed of the date of the last increase given to the Commissioner, and the amount of such increase.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Mr. Thallon was appointed to his present position at his present salary on the 1st of November, 1902.

Mr. LENNON: He got a rise two years ago.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No. He got £2,000 a year on his appointment in 1902, and it was the same now. This Bill proposed to increase his salary to £2,250. It would date from 1st November, the date of the Commissioner's reappointment.

Mr. KEOGH: Is it in order for members to travel outside the scope of this particular Bill?

The CHAIRMAN: No; it will not be in order for any hon. member to do so.

Mr. RYLAND objected to the increase. Seeing that the men on the construction works could only get 6s. or 7s. a day, he thought that £2,000 a year was sufficient for the Commis-

sioner. He would not oppose the clause then, but would try to wipe it out afterwards when it came before the House.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution, and the report was adopted.

FIRST READING.

The Bill was then read a first time, and the second reading made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move that the House do now adjourn. I would just like to explain the position to hon. members. In addition to the Education Estimates and Mines Estimates and Railway Estimates, for which I am trying to keep a little time for discussion at the end of the session, we have three small Bills which members see on the business-paper, and neither of them is likely to cause any great discussion.

Mr. COYNE: Bible in State schools.

Mr. KEOGH: You had better drop that Bill altogether.

The PREMIER: The three Bills are the Bible in State Schools Bill, this small Bill about the salary of the Railway Commissioner, and the Constitution Act Amendment Bill. There is nothing contentious in either of them. The Religious Instruction in State Schools Bill is not a question of the referendum at all, but a question of altering the date. We may differ as to the most suitable date, and I am not caring what date you fix. It ought not to lead to any acrimonious discussion. Then we have three small railway motions. Members may differ about the Commissioner for Railways' Salary Bill, but it is a simple matter which they can settle by saying "Yes," or "No." If members wish to disagree with it, good and well. I think the most convenient thing would be to put through the three small railway motions at the next sitting of the House, and then put through the Education Estimates.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: On Saturday.

The PREMIER: No; we will not sit on Saturday. It is asking too much to ask members to sit on Saturday. Then on Monday we can take these three small Bills—Bible in State Schools, Railway Commissioner's Salary, and Constitution Act Amendment Bill—and also put the Mines Estimates through the same night. We can have Tuesday and Wednesday for the discussion of the Railway Estimates, and on Thursday we will have the Supplementary Estimates and Loan Estimates, and a general washing-up. I think we can do that without sitting on Saturday.

Mr. COYNE: Do you mean by sitting all night

The PREMIER: No, we can get away at a reasonable hour every night. I will withdraw the motion standing in my name for sitting on Saturday.

Mr. RYLAND: It is very nice for the Premier to settle up all the business. We do not get a chance to speak when the reporters are in the gallery because members on the Government side take up all the time.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You were asleep last night and left us to do all the work.

Mr. GRANT: He went away.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-three minutes past 9 o'clock.