

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 6 DECEMBER 1910**

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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 6 DECEMBER, 1910.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (W. D. Armstrong, Esq., *Lockyer*) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

## QUESTIONS.

## JUSTICE AT HUGHENDEN.

Mr. MAY (*Flinders*) asked the Chief Secretary, for the Attorney-General—

1. Has his attention been drawn to a paragraph in the *Hughenden Observer* of 26th November last, in which a solicitor named Marsland, of Charters Towers, in his address to the jury in a recent case held at Townsville, made use of the following words:—"What justice could be got in a trumpery place like Hughenden?"

2. As the above statement is a reflection on the town, police magistrate, and justices of the peace of Hughenden, will he cause inquiry to be made regarding the truth of the statement?

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

1. Yes; by the hon. gentleman.

2. The department has no power to take cognisance of a statement of this kind made by counsel or solicitor when conducting a case. Besides the hon. gentleman "No one will be one penny the worse."

RAILWAY REVENUE, HUGHENDEN TO WINTON,<sup>o</sup>  
AND CHARLEVILLE TO CUNNAMULLA.

Mr. ALLAN (*Brisbane South*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

Whether he can lay before the House particulars of the actual revenue, for the year ended 30th June, 1910, received from the two sections of the railways, Hughenden to Winton and Charleville to Cunnamulla, including—

- (a) The revenue from passengers directly received on all tickets issued between the points named and all stations between, but not including tickets for points beyond;
- (b) The proportion of revenue which might be credited on all tickets, single or return, which were issued from stations beyond these points to stations in the section, and *vice versa*. Through tickets from points east of Hughenden and Charleville, and terminating at these towns, not to be included;
- (c) The estimated revenue on all goods and parcels traffic, outwards and inwards, belonging to these sections, worked out on the same basis as the passenger traffic?

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

The information asked for is not provided in the traffic revenue tables, and to obtain it will involve very considerable labour and expense. A fair comparison of the two lines can be made from the following:—

Sections.	Total Revenue.	Revenue per Mile Open.	Revenue per Train Mile.
Charleville to Cunnamulla—	£	£	s. d.
1907-1908 ... ..	14,095	116	8 4 $\frac{1}{2}$
1908-1909 ... ..	13,523	112	7 2
1909-1910 ... ..	16,525	136	6 8 $\frac{1}{2}$
Hughenden to Winton—			
1907-1908 ... ..	19,279	147	10 7 $\frac{1}{2}$
1908-1909 ... ..	17,100	130	11 4 $\frac{1}{2}$
1909-1910 ... ..	19,537	149	9 4 $\frac{1}{2}$

*Hon. W. T. Paget.]*

## SPECIAL TRAIN, DALBY TO TOOWOOMBA.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*), for Mr. Morgan, asked the Secretary for Railways—

1. At whose request was it agreed to run a special train from Dalby to Toowoomba on Wednesday, 30th November?

2. Was same guaranteed?

3. What was the number of passengers that travelled by train, and the revenue derived?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

1. The Toowoomba Cricket Association.

2. No.

3. Eighty-two passengers; receipts, £20 19s. 5d.

## INSANITARY STATE OF SLEEPING CARS.

Mr. BLAIR (*Ipswich*), for Mr. Lesina, asked the Secretary for Railways—

Is he aware that the old sleeping-cars running between Brisbane, Rockhampton, and Longreach are in a most insanitary state, being infested by bugs (*Cimex lectularius*), which get into travellers' luggage?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

For the information of the hon. member, I have to inform him that I am not aware from personal experience of the presence of *Cimex lectularius* in certain railway cars, but am causing inquiries to be made. It is well known to railway officers, however, that bugs are taken into carriages by passengers. As soon as bugs are discovered, the upholstery is removed and the pest thoroughly eradicated.

## GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY BILL.

## COMMITTEE.

Clause 1 put and passed.

On clause 2—"Construction of Great Western Railway approved"—

Mr. MURPHY (*Croydon*) moved the insertion, after "Railway," on line 8, of "by the day-labour system." The clause would then read—

The construction of the Great Western Railway by the day-labour system is hereby approved—

etc. He thought that it was very desirable that we should, in connection with this expenditure of £4,500,000, insist that there should be no departure from the system of construction of railways by day labour. Since that system had been introduced into Queensland it had been very satisfactory. They had heard of no scandal, no big arbitration cases, and no waste of public money in big law cases between the Government and the contractors, and he would like the assurance—he would like it stated very distinctly—that the Great Western Railway would be constructed by the day-labour system. The position which had been taken up by some members of the Government side on the second reading was that it was very desirable that the old contract system should be reintroduced; and they had it by interjection from members of the Cabinet that it was proposed to call tenders for the construction of some of these railways. He thought it would be a great mistake to depart from a system which had been so successful. Take the case of the Cairns Railway. We knew what that cost the country in legal expenses between the Government and the contractor. It was a veritable scandal. The country was really "rooked" in connection with the construction of that railway. It would be absurd for the House to agree to the expen-

[*Mr. Murphy.*

diture of £4,500,000 without laying it down very clearly that this railway was to be constructed on the day-labour system. If they were going in for a big financial drunk, they should see that those who were going to build the railways were fairly treated. The expenditure of money in railway construction would mean an increase in the value of land, and we wanted to make things better for those who built the railways. If we were going to go back to the old contract system, we should have the days of the ganger standing over the railway gang, and abusing the workmen, telling them that they must dig the shovel right in, up to the maker's name, and that they must keep their backs bent. He knew men in this House who had worked on railway construction in the old days, who had told him that they never had time to go for a drink of water. When they became thirsty they had to sing out for water, and the contractor would not give them time for a smoke. That was not likely to come about in Queensland again, because the men were too well organised, and they were better prepared to-day than at any previous time in the history of Australia to fight for their rights. But that was no reason why, when members were considering a big proposal like this, and when they were in a position by their votes to make it very clear that the work would be constructed on the day-labour system, they should not take this opportunity of having it inserted in the Bill. He therefore moved the amendment.

Mr. MULCAHY (*Gympie*) was very pleased that this amendment had been moved. When speaking on the second reading of the Bill he had called attention to this matter. He had had a long experience in connection with railway works, and if we went back to the old contract system it would be a very bad thing for the men engaged on the railway, and it would be worse for the Government of Queensland and the taxpayers generally. He well remembered the construction of a tunnel on the line from Warwick to Stanthorpe. The contract was let to a sub-contractor, who made a failure of it, and the men were "rooked" and cheated out of their money. It was not a matter of hearsay, because he was there, and saw what had happened. Of course, he knew that if the men had complained to the Minister that they would have got their money, but men got tired of waiting about for their money, and cleared out, and the result was that the contractor "bagged" the lot, and added it on to the profit of his contract. Then, with regard to the material which the contractors put in, the Government had to keep a host of inspectors and supervisors to watch them the whole time—far more than they would have to do if the work were carried out by day labour. The material used by contractors was inferior, especially in culverts and bridge work. In every way it was infinitely better for the taxpayers to have the construction of their railways carried out by day labour. He knew that the present Government had wished for some time to go in for the contract system of building railways. It placed something in their hands with which they could placate some of their followers by giving them a sop. They gave the railway contractors a sop in that way, and expected to receive their support when there was an election. He hoped the Labour party would put up a determined fight for the work to be carried out on the day-labour principle. It was a sound principle; the

experience of the past had proved that it worked all right, and as the mover of the amendment, Mr. Murphy, said, it would mean that there would be no litigation. They knew what litigation there had been in the past in connection with the work done under the contract system. It was not the contract which the contractor made his money out of, but the "extras," for which he could charge almost what he liked. If the Government had no desire to depart from the day-labour principle, there would be no difficulty about the amendment being accepted. He would like to see it carried.

Mr. LENNON (*Herbert*) was strongly in favour of the amendment, and it was his intention to have moved a similar amendment later on.

Mr. MURPHY: This is the better place to move it.

Mr. LENNON: He saw that, and commended the hon. member for moving it. They had an ample opportunity of comparing the day-labour system with the contract system. He remembered that the tramway from Townsville to Ayr was carried out some years ago under the day-labour principle under the supervision of Mr. Minehan; and it was found that it cost £25,000 less than the estimated cost of the job. That was the introduction of the day-labour system in the State, as ever since then all the railways in Queensland had been carried out under the day-labour principle. They wanted no further evidence than that to prove that the contract system could not compete with the day-labour system. In the case of a contract there had to be Government supervision, and the Government had to employ supervisors, engineers, time-keepers, and a double staff of highly-paid men, while under the day-labour system only one staff was necessary. The Government talked about the cost of material increasing, but if the cost of material increased, he could assure them that the cost of living had also increased, and that did not justify the Government from departing from the principle of constructing the railways by day labour. He hoped the Government would not return to the contract system. He reminded the Committee that, in the construction of the line from Cairns to Mareeba many years ago, millions of tons of earth were removed by landslips from the mountain, and the contractor, Mr. Robb, was paid for it as "extras" without incurring one penny of cost in removing it.

The PREMIER: You mentioned that several times before, didn't you?

Mr. LENNON: It was quite possible that he had, but it would bear repeating. (Hear, hear!) It could not be mentioned too often. He wanted to instil it into the minds of hon. gentlemen opposite, and hoped they would not depart from the day-labour system at all.

Mr. RYLAND (*Gympie*) hoped the Minister would accept the amendment and carry out the work under the day-labour principle. The work could be constructed a good deal cheaper under that principle than under the contract system, and it was done better. It had come under his observation the way contractors carried out the concrete and bridge work. The Government engineer was in charge of the job, supervising it, but the contractor watched the Government man all the time so as to put in cheap material. He remembered, in the case of the construction of

the railway from Maryborough to Gympie, that the piles for a bridge were measured, put in, and passed by the Government inspector, and as soon as the Government inspector's back was turned those piles were taken out and 7 or 8 feet, and in one case 15 feet, was sawn off the end of the piles, which were put into the ground again, and the Government were charged the full price for them. The result was that some of those bridges had to be taken up and rebuilt. It was the "extras" that enabled the private contractor to make money, because he could make the Government pay practically anything he liked. Although the construction of the railways under the Government control was not as satisfactory as it should be, because the Government did not give the men better conditions, still it was better than the private contract work, as the contractor only looked to make thousands out of it. They were entering on a bold policy of railway construction, and it was only fair that it should be carried out by the State under the supervision of the Government engineers. There was a suspicion that the Government were departing from that excellent system and going in for the contract system.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The suspicion exists only in your own mind.

Mr. RYLAND: They heard a lot of talk about it in the streets and elsewhere. They were told that the contractor would be given a big contract, so that he would be able to go in for a big plant and would be able to recoup himself for the expenditure on his plant. The Government were not making the change just to give it a trial and see which method was the cheaper one, but it was the policy of the Government to depart from the day-labour system in favour of the contract system. It would be for the best interests of the taxpayers to stick to the day-labour system, and it would be far better for the workmen to work under the Government than under a contractor. The Government could pay 30 or 40 per cent. more wages and still do the work cheaper than a private contractor.

Mr. MANN (*Cairns*) did not agree with the construction of the railway at all, but, if it must be constructed, then he hoped it would be built by day labour. He had not worked on any railways constructed under the day-labour system, but he had worked on them under the old contract system. The deputy leader of the Opposition talked about the Cairns Railway. He (Mr. Mann) had worked on that railway, and although he did not know anything about the contractor, Mr. Robb, being paid for the landslips, he knew that it was the object of the contractor if he found a weak place to make it still weaker, and then he used to get 4s. 6d. a yard for each yard he shifted, and it did not cost much to shift a large quantity of the stuff. It only meant a few cases of dynamite put into the mountain side and tons of earth were shifted out of the road, for which the contractor was paid at so much per yard.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There are no mountains on this railway.

Mr. MANN: He knew that. Was the Minister going to accept the amendment?

He knew that half a ton of [4 p.m.] dynamite and nine kegs of powder were used to blow away enough stuff to occupy nine or ten men two months in shifting; and it shook all the formation on that part of the line.

*Mr. Mann.]*

The PREMIER: That was away back in the dark ages.

Mr. MANN: It was not so many years ago. He would ask the Premier to go along the line from Gladstone to Rockhampton and ask the settlers what took place when that railway was being built by contract. He happened to be on the Cairns line on one occasion when there was a crack in one of the tunnels; and the concrete was so rotten that a big lump of it fell to pieces with a blow from a big hammer. On the last occasion he was in Cairns there was a crack in No. 13 or No. 14 tunnel, and he would like the Minister to inquire as to the reason—whether it was bad material or what it was. Under the system of day labour such a thing would not occur. He remembered being in a ballast pit on one occasion when any sort of stuff was shovelled in, until one day the contractor came round and said the Government inspector was coming, and they were to put in only clean ballast. The late Mr. Annear said two years ago that the contract system would come back, and it seemed that it was coming now. They all knew what the contract system cost the country in connection with the construction of the Cairns Railway, and in connection with the claim brought against the Government by Robb, the contractor.

Mr. BLAIR (*Ipswich*): It would facilitate the passage of the Bill if the Minister would explain the attitude of the Government in the matter. Personally he was in favour of the amendment, and was glad the deputy leader of the Opposition endorsed the views of the hon. member for Croydon, because he had heard no valid reason why the system of day labour in connection with the construction of our railways should be departed from. He believed some line of this kind should be built, and it was his firm conviction that Queensland would never be what she was destined to be until such a line was built; still, he thought it would be a great mistake if the system of day labour was departed from. The contract system was bad in this way: The contractor naturally was endeavouring to make a profit, and his profit was what would go to the State under the day-labour system. Another thing, the contract system tended to the use of inferior material, and the line being imperfectly built. The senior member for Gympie put his finger on a very weak spot in the contract system when he referred to the absolute want of protection for the men employed by the contractor by reason of the work being let to sub-contractors, from whom the workmen would not be able to recover any claims that might arise. For these and many other reasons, which he would not go into, he hoped the Minister would accept the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He might say straight away that he did not think the amendment was at all necessary, or that such an amendment should be put into the Bill. The hon. member for Gympie said there was a suspicion that it was intended to let big contracts in connection with the Great Western Railway. All he could say was that the suspicion existed in the minds of members of the Opposition only, for he had not had any discussion whatever with any members of the Cabinet or with the officials of the Railway Department in respect to the letting of contracts in connection with this Great Western Railway scheme.

Mr. MULCAHY: I saw it in the paper.

[*Mr. Mann.*]

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Did the hon. member believe everything he saw in the paper? Of course, he believed what he wished to believe.

Mr. MANN: It was in the organ of the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Of course, members in opposition must believe evil of the Government—it was their business to do so. He did not think it was advisable that such an amendment should be put into the Bill, especially when, as hon. members knew perfectly well, that for eight years past there had not been one mile of railway constructed by contract.

Mr. MULLAN: Will you give us an assurance?

Several HONOURABLE MEMBERS interjecting,

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: In reply to numerous interjections, he might say it was not owing to the opposition of hon. members on the other side that railways were now being constructed in Queensland by day labour. He did not think this or any other Government should be charged with giving contracts to their political followers as sops. At any rate the present Government would not do so. At the present time there were 430 miles of railway being constructed in Queensland, and the whole of the work was being performed by day labour.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: And it is very satisfactory.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He had not a word to say against it. Last year and the year before he told the House that the officers of the department had expressed a wish that a railway should be built under the contract system in order to check their figures. He repeated that statement now, and would go further and say that he was under the impression that the Mount Morgan-Dawson Valley Railway would have been an excellent line to build on the contract system for the purpose of checking the departmental figures, as the line was 68 miles long, and there was some difficult work on it. But when he looked into the matter, with the view of advertising for tenders, he found that the Premier had promised that the line should be built by day labour. Had that not been the case, he would have let a contract for the construction of that railway, in order to comply with the wishes of the officers of the department. He did not think it would be wise to insert the amendment in the Bill, for the reason that it might pay the Government at some future time to see whether some work on this line could not be performed more expeditiously and economically under the contract system.

Mr. COYNE (*Warrago*): The Minister had placed himself in an awkward position by the statement he had just made to the Committee. The hon. gentleman admitted that the day-labour system had been an unqualified success so far, and yet said that he intended to have one line constructed under the contract system last year, but found that the Premier was against it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He promised it in the House.

Mr. COYNE: The line referred to was rather a difficult line to construct, as there were a number of tunnels and that sort of thing on it, but on the line now under consideration there was no heavy cutting, and why on earth, then, should they give the benefit of that work to a contractor? If it

were a difficult line to build, there might be some justification for letting a portion of the work to a contractor, and letting him take the risk instead of the Government. But there was nothing of that kind. The officers of the department should be able to tell the Minister right off hand what the railway would cost. The fact that the Minister would not allow this amendment to go into the Bill cast suspicion on the whole thing. The contract system in the past had been a dead loss to Queensland and to every other State in the Commonwealth. If the amendment was accepted, it would mean the saving of thousands of pounds to the people of Queensland. Why, then, did the Government not accept it? It was common talk that there were a number of contractors waiting on the carpet now for these lines to go through.

The PREMIER: I am glad to hear it.

Mr. COYNE: The hon. gentleman by that interjection gave the whole case away.

The PREMIER: No; that means competition.

Mr. COYNE: They did not want competition in this matter, because the State could do the work more economically and more satisfactorily than it would be done under the contract system. This line was on all-fours with the Goondiwindi Railway as far as construction was concerned; there were no more engineering difficulties on it than there were on the Goondiwindi Railway. The other day the hon. member for Warwick stated that it was not intended to start this line for the next two years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Where was that?

Mr. COYNE: At Warwick.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You have been dreaming.

Mr. COYNE: He had not been dreaming, because that statement was made. The people of Queensland should be assured that there was to be no jobbery in connection with this railway.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There will be no jobbery under this Government.

Mr. COYNE: There might be. It was a big scheme, in fact it was too huge altogether, and it was just as well that the Government should give the people a guarantee that there would be no jobbery as far as contractors were concerned.

Mr. D. HUNTER (*Woolloongabba*): He had always been strongly of the opinion that they should introduce the day-labour system as much as possible.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: And the minimum wage.

Mr. D. HUNTER: Yes, and the minimum wage; and he had always supported any proposal having that object in view, when it was not made for political purposes. The Commonwealth system of carrying out works was a very good one. Under that system the Government asked the department to tell them the price they put on a certain piece of work; then they called for tenders for the work, and if the tenders exceeded the estimate of the department, the work was done by the department itself. That was a fair system, and anyone who objected to it objected to the Labour party in the Commonwealth Parliament. It would be very foolish

to insert the amendment in the Bill, because it would tie the hands of the Government to a policy which might be a very bad policy for the workers themselves. What brought wages up to their present standard on Government railway works in New South Wales? The Government were paying men employed on construction works 7s. a day, but when a contract was let for railway work the contractor, in order to get the best men in the Government employment, came along and offered 7s. 6d. a day, which compelled the Government to increase the wages to that amount. A second contract was let, and that contractor offered 8s. a day to men, and that was the reason that 8s. a day was being paid on Government railways to-day in New South Wales. The member for Cairns had stated that if this and other railways were proceeded with there would be a scarcity of labour, as men would be attracted from the agricultural districts, presumably because agricultural labourers were paid a low rate of wages, and if they were attracted from that work to railway construction work it would be because of the rate of wages paid. The employer of men engaged in railway work could not do as he liked, because the men would be able to get a wages board, and perhaps they would come under the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act, so that they would be able to get good wages from a contractor just as easily as from the Government. Many a time day labour did not pay, and many a time it was not satisfactory. Let members look at the work which had been done in connection with Parliament House, and they would see that the cornices were cracking already. He did not blame day labour for that, but he mentioned the fact to show that there was cracking in work done by day labour as well as in work done by contract. If day labour did not pay, why should they adhere to it? Some members opposite had made motions the object of which was to force the Government to pay higher wages, and yet they now tried to get all this work done by a boss which they said was paying too low wages. They were afraid to let the contractor come in and compete with the Government, and thus raise the wages of the men. One contractor, whether that contractor was the Government or a private individual, could do as he liked, but competition resulted in a raising of wages. He hoped the Government would not be so foolish as to accept the amendment.

Mr. NEVITT (*Carpentaria*): The hon. member for Woolloongabba had now assumed a new rôle—that of apologist for the contractor—and said he was prepared to support a minimum wage, provided it was not proposed for political purposes. If a man opposed the establishment of a minimum wage on any such ground, it showed that he did not care very much about the interests of the men. The Secretary for Railways did not give one reason for not accepting the amendment. The hon. gentleman did not say that no portion of this railway would be built under the contract system; he simply said that there was no necessity to include the amendment in the Bill, practically implying that the railway was going to be built by day labour. Why, then, did he not accept the amendment? That was a logical conclusion for anyone to come to.

The PREMIER: It would not make much difference; it would not save five minutes' time.

*Mr. Nevitt.]*

Mr. NEVITT: He did not take everything the Premier said as gospel. If the amendment was accepted, there would be nothing more to say on this side. We had had ample experience to prove that the day-labour system was the best. He understood that the chief engineer, upon whom the Government relied for getting out the estimates in connection with this railway, said, in his report, that the day-labour system had been a good thing for Queensland. As an example of the advantage of day labour, he might instance the contract for the painting of Victoria Bridge in 1902, at a cost of £3,278. During the present year, the bridge required painting and cleaning again, and it was resolved to have it done by day labour, with the result that it only cost £1,096, or considerably less than 50 per cent. of what it had cost under the contract system. The price of material had gone up considerably, and yet under the day-labour system the bridge board saved 50 per cent. In connection with contracts of this kind, there was great scope for scamping work.

The PREMIER: Are you not pouring water on a drowned mouse?

Mr. NEVITT: No. If the Premier would accept the amendment, he did not think anyone else would speak. The hon. member for Townsville, when discussing this question last year, said he did not believe [4.30 p.m.] in the day-labour system, as he believed that we got better work under the contract system, and it seemed to him (Mr. Nevitt) that that must be "the power behind the throne" to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We have sixteen lines built by day labour.

Mr. NEVITT: The hon. gentleman admitted that if he had an opportunity he would let one of these lines by the contract system. In regard to the sixteen lines built by day labour, that was not altogether due to the hon. gentleman. The Premier promised that the lines should be built by day labour, and the hon. gentleman had to do it. He hoped the Minister and the Premier would accept the reasonable and rational amendment which had been moved.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is not the slightest chance.

Mr. ALLAN (*Brisbane South*) thought it was only right that hon. members should know that the illustration given by the hon. member for Carpentaria was utterly wrong.

Mr. NEVITT: I have taken it from the newspaper.

Mr. ALLAN: The hon. member might have taken it from the newspaper, but it was wrong. He said that when tenders were called for the painting of Victoria Bridge some eight years ago, the cost was £3,278, and that the bridge was lately painted at a cost of a little over £1,000.

Mr. NEVITT: £1,096.

Mr. ALLAN: But the specifications were entirely different in the two cases. The contract carried out eight years ago included the burning off of the paint and the thorough scraping of every part of the bridge, and as a matter of fact the contractor who undertook the work had to throw the thing up, as it was not paying him. The work done recently was different altogether. There was no scraping, nor anything like the work. He thought that hon. members on the other side must be

[*Mr. Nevitt.*

really afraid—strong, able, brainy men, afraid that comparisons would be made between contract and day labour. Reference had been made to what the man in the street said—that there was a fear that contract labour would be introduced. He had often heard the man in the street refer to "the Government stroke," and to the fact that if work was let by contract it could be done much better than under the so-called Government stroke—that was a very common expression. He thought hon. members opposite would have welcomed the opportunity of making a comparison between contract labour and day labour, if only to show that the contract system was bad. If we went on with day labour altogether, we should have no means of comparison, and he would welcome the opportunity, if for the purposes of comparison only, of introducing the contract system.

Mr. FOLEY (*Townsville*) doubted whether the hon. member for Brisbane South knew very much about what he was discussing, particularly in regard to the contract in connection with Victoria Bridge. He was doubtful whether the hon. member would know whether they got an honest job done on that bridge, notwithstanding that he was one of the bridge committee.

The PREMIER: You might tell him.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! This is a discussion as to the relative cost of day labour and the contract system, and I hope the hon. member is not going to enter into a discussion on the painting of Victoria Bridge.

Mr. FOLEY: He was showing how even the bridge board could be deceived by a contractor. Members on his side discussed this question from personal experience, as some of them had worked in these branches of trade, and knew what they were talking about. The day-labour system, as compared with the contract system, was a more honest system. An employer would be more likely to get a better job by day labour than if he let the work to a contractor, he did not care how honest the contractor might be. A contractor generally fixed on the amount of profit he would get out of the job. The Premier said he was glad to say that there were likely to be several contractors for this job, as it would mean competition. Where there was competition, the man who got the job had to cut his price below the other fellow, and he would scamp the work wherever he got an opportunity of doing so. He knew a job in Townsville where tenders were called for painting, labour only, by contract.

Mr. D. HUNTER: The worst kind of sweating.

Mr. FOLEY: The contractor who got that job was supplied with the best white lead and oil. He was supposed to make up the paint on the job out of these materials, but, instead of that, he made the paint in his workshop out of whiting and kerosene oil, and carted away the white lead and the boiled oil from the job to his own place. The owner of the property did not know the difference between the paint made from whiting and kerosene oil and that made from boiled oil and white lead. There was another case in Townsville where tenders were let for the building of a house. The brick piers were to be made from cement, and the "compo" was to be two of sand and one of cement. There was a loamy soil in

Townsville which could be got for half-a-crown a yard, just the price of carting it to the job. This soil mixed up like cement mortar, with half the quantity of sand, and it was difficult to tell it from the real cement mortar. He had worked on the job himself, and mixed up heaps of this stuff at the dictation of the contractor. (Laughter.) He was simply a servant, and had to do as he was told. These were things which could be done by the contractor, and the Government would be no wiser. If it was a day-work job, the Government simply sent out a gang of men, and told them to do certain work, and these men had no interest in doing anything else but the right thing; whereas the contractor, if he could do the work with a cheaper material than the one specified, was going to do it every time. No one knew that better than the hon. member for Woolloongabba.

Mr. D. HUNTER: No contractor ever got me to do it.

Mr. FOLEY: The Minister said that there would not be a repetition of the things which took place on the Cairns Railway, but these things would be done just the same to-day as they were thirty years ago. The Government said that inspectors were appointed to look after these things, but they knew that in times past inspectors had been got at. If the Government were to get the best bargain for their money, it was necessary that this work should be done by day labour, because the men would have no interest in doing anything else but what they were told to do. The Minister admitted that the Government for the last eight years had built every line of railway by the day-labour system, and it had proved successful. The yarn about the officers of the department wishing to have a job done by contract in order to check their own figures was, in his opinion, so much bunkum. The officers themselves must know that in times past, when they make an estimate for a job, the estimate was less than the tenders which were accepted, and the same rule applied to-day as in times past.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I told you what the Chief Engineer himself says, but I do not expect you to believe me.

Mr. FOLEY: The Chief Engineer himself knew that there was a chance of the work being scamped, when it was let by contract, in order that the contractor might make some thing out of the job.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. MULCAHY: The Minister in charge of the Bill was very anxious to have the contract system tried, because he said that he made an effort to have that system tried in the construction of the Dawson Railway.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I told you so in the House last year.

Mr. MULCAHY: That showed clearly that the Minister was totally against the day-labour system.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No, no. That is a misstatement.

Mr. MULCAHY: He would not say totally against, but the Minister was anxious to get the contract system going.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I did not say that.

Mr. MULCAHY: The reason which the Minister gave for wishing to introduce the contract system was the most flimsy one

imaginable. He wanted to compare the two systems. In the past Queensland had ample opportunity of judging of the relative merits of the two systems. The hon. member for Brisbane South, Mr. Allan, said they were afraid to give the contract system a trial, but as a matter of fact they had given it a long trial, and did not want it any more. So far as they could judge from their engineer's reports, the day-labour system had worked very well for a number of years, and he did not see anything in the Chief Engineer's report to show that he was anxious for the change. The contract system all over Australia had been a failure as regarded the material put into the work and the work when it was carried out. There was something more than the question of wages to be considered in contract work. He knew in one of the biggest works in Queensland to-day where the men were working on contract work where, taking them all round, they were working for much less than they would receive if they were working for wages. In the Mount Morgan Mine the contract system was growing every day. Did they think that the company were doing that in the interests of the men? Not at all. The Premier said that they wanted competition. Look at what competition meant in the old world! See how it rack-rented the farmers.

The PREMIER: No company has been better to its men than the Mount Morgan Company.

Mr. MULCAHY: No mine in Australia made a greater profit than Mount Morgan. The Mount Morgan Company were not doing it in the interests of the men at all, and the men were leaving there daily on account of the dust there. In connection with contract work the material, timber, and everything else was not up to the standard, but in the case of day-labour work it was. The contractor always got as much as he could out of his men to make as much as he could out of the job.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN indicated that the hon. member's further time had expired.

Mr. MANN: The hon. member for Woolloongabba did not claim that the contractor did better work, but he said that the contractor paid better wages than the Government, and as a supporter of the Government that hon. member should see that the Government paid better wages. In the case of a man getting a contract, if men were scarce the contractor might get men from Europe.

Mr. D. HUNTER: With a Labour Government in power in the Commonwealth?

Mr. MANN: That Government might not always be there or the men might be brought in in secret. John Robb, the contractor for the Cairns line, brought out shiploads of men from Europe and started them to work at 7s. 6d. a day, while the ruling rate in the district was 8s. a day. That was the benevolent contractor! In the construction of the third section of the Cairns Railway the men were paid 7s. a day by Messrs. O'Rourke and Mackenzie, and it was only in a few cases that able-bodied men were paid 8s. per day. Many of the sub-contractors were experienced navvies, who had saved a few pounds, and had their horses and drays, and they did not clear their "tucker" bill. There were often three and four in a party, and they did not get a red cent out of their contracts. The contractor sometimes paid their "tucker" bill and horse-feed bill, just to encourage them to keep going, in the hope they would get

*Mr. Mann.*]

more later on. If the Government were anxious to make a comparison, let them compare the work and the price charged on the third section of the Cairns Railway to Mareeba, which was done by contract, with that from Mareeba to Atherton, which was done under the day-labour system. The work was practically of the same nature, and they could have a good test. The hon. member for Woolloongabba seemed to think that with the contract work it would mean better times and better wages for the men. It might be so if labour was scarce, but not otherwise. If the contract system was restarted, the contractors would move heaven and earth to get that system back again. Then they might want to get out labour, and the Federal Government would perhaps block them. There would then be a cry raised against the Federal Labour party, that they were blocking labour from coming out here, and that would be the cry raised against them at the next Federal election. The contractor would want to get out cheap Spaniards and Italians, and it would be fighting the battle of cheap labour all over again. This was a cheap-labour Government, and that would be their cry at the next election.

The PREMIER: It was most amusing to see the presumed and apparently earnest manner in which hon. members opposite spoke. Hon. members opposite had all the afternoon been thumping away at that dead horse, as they were opposing the railway lock, stock and barrel—

Mr. LENNON and other OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No. That is not true.

Mr. NEVITT: I am not opposing it lock, stock, and barrel.

The PREMIER: They are trying to gain a little kudos out of one little point. He, personally, and the present Government were in favour of constructing all public works by day labour. There were many advantages in constructing public works by day labour, and it was not to this Government that the credit of starting public works by day labour was due, but to the Philp Government, who started it in 1900. Ever since 1901 public works had been constructed by day labour in Queensland. So it was the Philp Government, and not this Government, or even the Labour party, that should get the credit for introducing the day-labour system in Queensland.

Mr. FOLEY: They were forced to do it.

The PREMIER: Well, why not force the Government this afternoon to do it?

Mr. FOLEY: We will try to do so.

Several OPPOSITION MEMBERS interjecting,

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope hon. members will keep order when the Chief Secretary is speaking. He has only got the same time as any other hon. member, but as soon as he gets up to speak there are a lot of interjections.

The PREMIER: The Minister had given ample reasons why they should make an experiment to compare the contract and day labour systems. Did not hon. members opposite think that the day-labour system would stand it? If they made the experiment of building one or two lines by contract, the result, he believed, would be that they would come back more convinced than ever to the day-labour system. That was his opinion.

Mr. COYNE: The cost of the experiment will be a big one.

[Mr. Mann.

The PREMIER: They had carried out the construction of railways for the last eight years on the day-labour system, under the supervision of the engineers, who made their own estimates and carried out the railways in accordance with the estimates which they made.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And supervised their own work.

The PREMIER: And supervised their own work in connection with the estimates which they made. It was very necessary that they should make this experiment. Some member said that the department could do it cheaper if the contractor could do it cheaper, and the money should be saved to the country. It did not follow because the contractor could do it cheaper, and pay his men

[5 p.m.] better wages, that the money would be saved to the country if the department did the work. The skill and the personality of the man in charge counted for a great deal. (Hear, hear!) He agreed with the officers of the department that it might be well to try whether they were going along sound lines. Personally he had little doubt as to the result, but he thought it was well that the hands of the Administration should not be tied in the way they would be tied by the amendment.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN (*Kennedy*): The Premier had put the position in a very nice way, but he was not going to be deceived. He wanted an assurance that the line would be constructed by day labour; he did not want any expensive experiment. The British Government would not allow any piece-work in connection with the construction of their ships for fear it should be scamped; but in America they allowed piecework in connection with the construction of their ships, with the result that a lot of work was scamped. He was told of an instance, under the old contract system, in which a lot of sleepers were condemned by the contractor, who eventually worked them in, thus doing both the timber-getter and the Government. The Mount Morgan Company built their great west works and the mundic works by day labour. They had a dam built under the contract system, but it was not done as well as the work they had done by day labour, and they did not want to try an experiment to see which system was better. Though he thought the majority of the people did not believe in this line, they wanted the work done honestly, and in the best interests of the workers as well as the taxpayers.

Mr. COLLINS (*Burke*): He had had a little experience of the two systems, and so far as the workers were concerned the contract system was a very bad system indeed. And as far as the work was concerned, it was not as good as the day-labour system. He was working on the Kilkivan line when it was constructed, and there was a wonderful difference between that line and lines that had been constructed by the day-labour system. He did not think even the day-labour system was an ideal system; there was any amount of room for improvement, but it was much better than the contract system. If they were going to build railways, they should put the best possible work into those railways; and nobody would argue that a contractor was going to put in the best work; there would have to be an inspector at every culvert. Something should be done

to make the conditions as good as they could be made for the workers on the railway. He was in Queensland in the eighties, when hundreds of immigrants were put on railway works, and the contractors showed them no mercy. Under the day-labour system more consideration would be shown to immigrants engaged on railway construction than under the contract system. When the Kilkivan line was being built, newchums were sacked by the dozen. They were not accustomed to the climatic conditions, and they did not receive from the gangers the consideration they would have received under the day-labour system. If they adopted the contract system again, it would be the worker who would suffer. As to the "Government stroke," that only existed in the imagination of some members opposite. The men working on the railways did an honest day's work, and that was all that should be expected of them. When working under the contract system in South Australia, he saw a man drop dead in a railway cutting; and such cases might occur in Queensland under the contract system. Men were forced beyond their endurance under the contract system, and he had heard gangers use language which he would not dare to use in that Chamber.

Mr. ALLEN (*Bullo*): Admitting, as stated by the hon. member for Woolloongabba, that wages in New South Wales had been raised as a result of the contract system, who was responsible for keeping down the wages of the navvies previously? It was possible to pay the highest rate of wages without the contract system. The contractor had to pay the cost of the material, the cost of labour, and he had to make a profit besides; but under the day-labour system there was only the cost of the labour and the material. The hon. member for Woolloongabba did not tell the Committee the difference between the cost of the work done in New South Wales by day labour and that done by contract; and even if they were equal he gave no idea of the kind of work done by the contractor. They could save money by the day-labour system, and at the same time avert the danger of having work slummed. They had no guarantee that the contractor would not go in for sweating, and the chances were that work done by contract would cost a little bit extra. They would not only have to pay for the extra rate of wages, but they would also have to provide an extra nest-egg for the contractor. The Government could get just as good engineers and workmen, and could buy material as cheaply as a contractor, so that there was no necessity for the Government making a present to a contractor. He took serious objection to letting contracts for the purpose of checking the cost of railway construction under the day-labour system—not that he feared the comparison, but because he objected to the country bearing the expense of such an experiment. Nobody asked that railways should be built by contract, except a few contractors who wanted to get a foot in and resurrect the old system under which contractors made such large profits. If an engineer wanted his work checked, the best way to check it was to get another more up-to-date and more business-like engineer. An engineer who desired to have his work checked in the way proposed, practically confessed his inability to perform the work with which he was entrusted, and he should like to know why such an officer did not make way for someone else, and have his work checked in that way. When any business-like amendment was proposed with the view of

keeping the Administration in the straight and narrow path, it was generally met, as in this instance, with the stock argument that it would tie the hands of the Government. What Administration had any right to object to difficulties being put in their way to prevent them doing wrong? How could their hands be tied by laying down a hard-and-fast rule? The Government said they were going to adhere to the day-labour system. Then where did tying of their hands come in? No promise given by the present Administration would be binding on their successors, but if the amendment was placed in the Bill it would be binding on their successors. With regard to whether it was or was not the intention of the Government to let railway work by contract, it was well known that the man in the street did hear things sometimes, and he would not be a bit surprised to find that in the future some excuse was brought forward by the Premier for letting railway work out under contract. It was not the first time in the political history of the State that the Premier had found it convenient to go back on a more definite pledge than that given by the Premier in connection with this matter, and members were, therefore, justified in demanding that the Premier should agree to the condition being placed in the Bill. A man who was going to keep to the road did not object to fences. It was the man who wanted to wander about all over the place who objected to having his hands tied by the erection of fences on both sides of the road.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Brisbane North*): While it could not be denied that the subject under discussion was of great importance, he was inclined to think that they were discussing it at the wrong place. He did not think the amendment should be inserted in the first line of the second clause, as proposed by the hon. member for Croydon. They were dealing with one of the largest railway schemes that had ever been submitted to the Queensland Parliament, and the result of discussing the amendment at that stage would probably be that important provisions in the Bill would go through in the early hours of the morning without sufficient discussion. The subject of the amendment was one which might very well be discussed, but it should be discussed in its proper place, and he thought the hon. member for Croydon would be wise if he withdrew the amendment, with the view of making it a special clause, and not allowing the present discussion to interfere with the consideration of important provisions in the Bill.

Mr. MURPHY: Oh, no; I will not withdraw it.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Charters Towers*): If the Government had given any indication that they would accept the amendment and insert it in another part of the Bill, the discussion would have come to an end before this, but no promise of the kind had been given.

Mr. MURPHY: If they do not propose to let any contracts for this line, why don't they accept the amendment?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Exactly. He could not understand why they should object to the amendment if they proposed to carry it out in practice. Quality, not price, was the test of cheapness in railway construction as well as in other matters. Where work was

*Mr. Winstanley.]*

done cheaply it would be found that in the long run it was a "Penny-wise-pound-foolish policy" to have work so done. For the work done by day labour honest value had been obtained, but that could not be said of the contract system. The Government were of opinion that they had not thrown any money away during the time they had been building railways by the day-labour system, and no reason had been adduced, either by the engineers or by the Minister, why that system should be departed from. He certainly thought that the man who drew the plans and prepared the specifications was the person best qualified to see the work carried out. The Premier had said that he was glad there were a number of contractors in Brisbane at the present time. But he (Mr. Winstanley) would remind hon. members that where contractors were plentiful and contracts few, prices were cut down to the lowest possible figure—down to bedrock; and the result was that the workmen suffered, as the contractors took the very last drop of blood out of the men, and either put in smaller quantities of stuff than were specified or an inferior quality of stuff. He did not care how vigilant an inspector was, he defied such an officer to watch a big job from beginning to end and see that material of the specified quality and quantity was used. He had heard contractors say that they had laid themselves out to get the best of an architect. In cases where the best Portland cement was specified they had bought German cement 4s. or 5s. a cask cheaper, and put it in Portland cement casks. The inspector never dreamt of testing the cement, and the result was that the man who paid for the work was robbed from beginning to end. The same kind of thing had occurred with regard to the quality of timber used in a contract, and it had been done over and over again. With regard to the construction of railways by day labour, though the wages of the men had not always been what they should have been, he was confident that the conditions of men working under the Government were better than they would have been if they had been working for a contractor. Something had been said about the "Government stroke." He was satisfied that a man who worked eight hours a day on the Western plains of Queensland at railway construction earned every penny he was paid, and that any member who tried it for one day would endorse that remark. The Premier said something about the

[5.30 p.m.] great personality of the contractor. Great personality might have some effect in Parliament, but he questioned whether the personality of a contractor had much to do with contracts in a place like Queensland. The ganger was the person who got the work out of the men. The Minister might assure the Committee that so far as this railway was concerned, as there were no engineering difficulties, and it was not a line which would afford a basis of comparison for other work, none of it would be let on contract. He felt confident that whenever the Government let a large contract in Queensland they would pay dearly for their experience. He believed the people of the State were quite satisfied that we had been getting value for the money spent in day-labour construction, and the Government would be making a move in the wrong direction when they departed from the day-labour system to the contract system.

Mr. LAND (*Balonne*) supported the amendment, as he failed to see any reason why the Government should depart from the system they had tried so long and so success-

[*Mr. Winstanley.*

fully. The idea of the Minister telling them that the Chief Engineer wanted it. Why had he carried on the day-labour system in Queensland for all these years if it was a bad system? But he never said there was anything wrong with it, or that he could not get the men; on the contrary, he said in his report that the day-labour system was successful in every way. There were several things to be considered in connection with the day-labour system. The Cabinet had the control of all the work, and they had their own railways to bring the ballast and the sleepers, which might have to be drawn a long way, and it was only a matter of bookkeeping; but if a contractor got the work he would have to get it in hard solid cash. The contractor would require to be paid for the cartage of the stuff over that line.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The railway pays for it now when it is being built.

Mr. LAND: The contractor would pay for all the stuff carried over the present line, and accordingly he would have to be paid in cash, because his contract price would be based on what he had to pay. Why could the Chief Engineer not supervise the job as well as any other man? The contractor would have to pay the wages just the same, unless he was going to sweat or scamp the work; but if he did the same kind of a job as the Chief Engineer would do, the day-labour system was clearly the best. He did not believe the Chief Engineer required the work to be done by contract for the purpose of test or comparison. He did not doubt the Minister when he stated that it was at his request, but if it was at his request, there was some other reason for it. Would anyone in the House say that the Chief Engineer was not as competent as anybody else they could let a contract to? His hands were not tied, and he could go into the market and get labour. The Minister should either have accepted the amendment or given a reasonable assurance that the line would be built by day labour. He did not think the Minister had any idea as to what the cost of the line would be, because they had compared it with other lines which were not similar at all. The Minister had his own ideas just the same as the Premier, but those ideas were coloured a good deal by people who should not influence him. It was all very well for the Minister to smile. If the day-labour system was carried out the people would be satisfied, but other influences were at work which were not for the best interests of the people of Queensland.

Mr. MURPHY would like to point out to the hon. member for Brisbane North that, while he did not profess to be able to judge as to the best place to put this amendment in, he certainly thought the amendment was very necessary. The Secretary for Railways assured the Committee that but for the intervention of the Premier the Dawson Valley line would have been built by contract. In the face of that statement, was it not absolutely necessary before they agreed to the construction of a railway of 800 miles in length to provide that it should be constructed on the day-labour system? If the hon. member for North Brisbane was anxious that no clause of the Bill should be discussed in the early hours of the morning, he and those associated with him were in the happy position that they could compel the Government to adjourn at a reasonable hour, and not gag it through in the early hours of the

morning. The hon. member could take no objection to an amendment being moved at this stage, because they were not proposing to interfere with amendments moved by the hon. member. When they were dealing with £4,500,000, a Bill of this nature should not be forced through in a single sitting. If members sitting behind the Government allowed them to do so, that was their business, but that was no reason why members on this side should not make a vigorous protest. He did not intend to withdraw the amendment, but would press it through to a division.

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

AYES, 27.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Mann
„ Barber	„ Maughan
„ Blair	„ May
„ Breslin	„ Mulcahy
„ Collins	„ Mullau
„ Coyne	„ Murphy
„ Crawford	„ McLachlan
„ Ferricks	„ Nevitt
„ Foley	„ O'Sullivan
„ Hamilton	„ Payne
„ Hardacre	„ Ryan
„ Hunter, J. M.	„ Ryland
„ Land	„ Winstanley
„ Lennon	

Tellers: Mr. Crawford and Mr. Nevitt.

NOES, 33.

Mr. Allan	Mr. Hawthorn
„ Appel	„ Hodge
„ Barnes, G. P.	„ Hunter, D.
„ Barnes, W. H.	„ Kidston
„ Booker	„ Macartney
„ Bouchard	„ Paget
„ Brennan	„ Petrie
„ Bridges	„ Philip
„ Corser	„ Roberts
„ Cottell	„ Somerset
„ Cribb	„ Stodart
„ Denham	„ Swayne
„ Forrest	„ Tolmie
„ Forsyth	„ Walker
„ Fox	„ White
„ Grayson	„ Wienholt
„ Gunn	

Tellers: Mr. Hodge and Mr. D. Hunter.

PATR.

Aye—Mr. Douglas. No—Mr. Mackintosh.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. MULCAHY moved the insertion of the words “at a minimum wage of ten shillings per day” after the word “Railway,” on line 8. It would then read—

The construction of the Great Western Railway at a minimum wage of ten shillings per day is hereby approved, etc.

This amendment was only in keeping with what he said on the second reading of the Bill, when he forecast his intention of moving it. As the Government had made up their minds to go in for a great boom policy, and as they were going to spend a lot of money out West in order to fatten up the great monetary institutions and the squatters, then the workmen engaged on that work should at least receive a fair day's pay. It was all the more necessary when they considered the hardships that the men would have to put up with away out in that Western country, with no creature comforts at all. The chances were that they would have fever and lots of other things to contend with, and it was only fair and reasonable that a minimum wage of 10s. per day should be granted to them. Of course, the contractors or the Government—whoever engaged the men—could go up as high as they

liked above that sum, but that would be the minimum. If the work was going to be carried out by contract, then there was all the more reason why the men should be paid a minimum wage of 10s. per day. He had great pleasure in moving the amendment.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He could not accept the amendment.

Mr. COLLINS: Give us some reasons why.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Because he did not think it was advisable.

Mr. COLLINS: You don't think that 10s. a day is sufficient?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It was not whether he thought 10s. a day was sufficient or insufficient. As a matter of fact, the Railway Department, in building the Mount Elliott Railway, paid 10s. a day to the workmen, but he thought it was inadvisable that a special rate of wages should be fixed for work that would, at any rate, last for a number of years. He said that in the interests of the men who would be employed on that railway.

Mr. COLLINS (*Burke*): He was sorry to hear the Minister say that he could not accept the amendment.

Mr. MAY rose to a point of order. Was it in order for members to keep up a conversation so that a member could not hear what another member addressing the Committee was saying?

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I am sure that it is not for want of being reminded by the Chair that the conversation is carried on. I have referred before to the fact that members have no right to carry on a conversation when another member is addressing himself to the question before the Committee.

Mr. COLLINS: He was sorry that the Minister could not see his way to accept such a reasonable amendment. It merely asked that the men who would be employed on the railway would be protected from either the Government or the contractor, whoever employed them. The amendment only asked that a living wage be paid. After all, whose money was it that they were going to spend? It was not the Government's money, but the money of the people of Queensland, and the people of Queensland had a right to see that the employees working on that railway were decently paid. What was 10s. a day out in the far West.

Mr. ALLEN: Not much.

Mr. COLLINS: The Minister himself admitted that the Government paid the men 10s. a day on the Mount Elliott Railway.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I did not admit it; I stated it.

Mr. COLLINS: As this railway would be built under similar conditions to the Mount Elliott Railway—as the line would pass through similar country—surely the men should receive a decent wage! There was going to be £4,500,000 spent in that part of the country, and, as the workmen would have to take their wives with them, they should receive at least a living wage. All the Government were concerned about was in increasing the salaries of men who were getting fairly large salaries at the present time. (Hear, hear!) When it came to a question of considering the real wealth producer—the man who made it possible to bring the wool to market—and when they had a proposal brought forward to give that man a minimum

*Mr. Collins.]*

wage, then the Minister got up and said he could not accept it. He would like to know from the Government: Were they going to accept any amendments at all from the Opposition side of the House? Were they going to let them alter a single word? If the Government were not going to let them do that, then they had better let them know and let the country know. He believed that the proper place for members now in opposition would be outside of the House altogether.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and laughter.

Mr. COLLINS: Of course, they said "Hear, hear!" but wait till he finished. It would be better for them to be outside letting the workers know that the Government had refused to give them a living wage in connection with the construction of railways. They would be doing far more work if they went up to Rockhampton and told the electors there that when such a reasonable proposal as that was brought forward, that the Minister rose in his place and said that he could not accept it. The Minister would not accept anything that was for the benefit of the working man. He (Mr. Collins) was concerned in the welfare of the working man, as he knew the hardships that he had to endure; and the representatives of the people there had the right to say that the working man should get a share of the £4,500,000 which was going to be spent. He had no doubt that the Government would see that all the Government officials and supervisors were well paid. The Minister would look after that.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And see that the men are well paid, too.

Mr. COLLINS: They had an illustration of that in the Many Peaks Railway, where there was a strike on at the present time. Why did not the Minister see that the men were well paid there?

Mr. RYLAND: And the Herberton Railway.

Mr. COLLINS: What did the Minister mean by being well paid?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Six "bob" a day.

Mr. COLLINS: In the competition which the Government were going to bring about between the two railway policies, how did he know that wages would not be brought down to starvation point? He remembered in the time of the £10,000,000 loan when wages went down to 6s. and 7s. a day. He would be prepared to stay there till 6 o'clock in the morning if he thought they could get the Government to accept the amendment. Why did the Government not do something for the people, and not be all the time legislating for property, property, and property? With the Government human lives counted for nothing.

Mr. MAY (*Flinders*) supported the amendment. It was only a fair thing to offer 10s. a day to the men working out in that country. In the district he had the honour to represent, the Government built the line from Hughenden to Richmond at a very cheap rate, and the men did not care whether they did their work or not. The work was done in a hurry-scurry way and in the worst possible manner of any line constructed by the Government. When it came to continuing the line from Richmond to Cloncurry, better wages were paid, and better work was done. There was a strike on the line, and he introduced a deputation to the

[*Mr. Collins.*

Minister, asking for increased pay. He was successful, because the Commissioner himself had been up there, and saw the conditions that the men had to work under. In the trans-Queensland Railway the same conditions would prevail. The men were paid 10s. a day on the section from Julia Creek to Cloncurry, and they were paid 10s. a day from Cloncurry to Mount Elliott. When they remembered the conditions which prevailed in that Western country, the Minister would be doing only a fair thing to include the amendment in the clause as the minimum rate. He had not spoken on the matter all through, because he was in favour of the building of the railway going forward. He would like to see £10,000,000 borrowed for the construction of railways in Queensland, but they must have a minimum wage. On the line from Hughenden to Richmond, the men were getting 6s. a day, some of them 7s. and 7s. 6d. a day; and the only thing they looked for was Saturday night or the month's end, and they would

[7 p.m.] "slum" their work as much as possible. On the line from Julia Creek to Cloncurry the wages were good, and the work was done in a proper manner; and the Commissioner said he never saw better bodies of working men, particularly in the month of February, when he thought it was almost impossible for men to work in the intense heat and muggy weather. He (Mr. May) had said he would not be opposed to borrowing £10,000,000 for railways; but, of course, that referred to railways that would be reproductive, either directly or indirectly. The country through which this line would run was hotter and drier than country where men had been paid 10s. a day; and the amendment was a very reasonable proposition. The well-paid man was the cheapest in the long run; and he would rather give a good man 10s. a day than he would give a loafer 2s. a week. He trusted that the Minister would accept the amendment, because he wanted good wages to be paid whether the work was done by contract or by the day-labour system.

Mr. MACARTNEY: If the amendment was pressed to a division he would vote against it, not on the principle of 10s., or 9s., or any other wage being the proper wage for men working on the railway, but because he considered it had nothing to do with the subject-matter of the clause. The remarks he made on the previous amendment applied equally to this; and when the matter came to be discussed at the proper time, and in the proper place, he would cast his vote according to his opinion. This was merely an academic discussion—nothing more or less than political fireworks.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MAY rose to a point of order. The hon. member for Brisbane North said that everything Opposition members said was political fireworks. He objected.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order.

Mr. MACARTNEY: He could only say that, in his opinion, the amendment was of the same character as proposals which were ordinarily characterised as political fireworks. Strictly speaking, he thought the amendment was out of order. A similar amendment was ruled out of order by the Chairman last session when the Port Alma Railway was under consideration; but Mr.

Speaker Bell afterwards decided that it was in order. He did not think, however, that the Speaker gave the matter due consideration at the time; and it was clear that this amendment was absolutely irrelevant to the clause. It would be as much open to the hon. member to move that the men working on the line should be dressed in red suits. He did not say this in order to depreciate the views expressed by members supporting the amendment, but he wished the Bill to get the discussion it ought to get. If they occupied time in the discussion of irrelevant matters, it would lead to the Bill being rushed through in the early hours of the morning without the most material matters being discussed.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I may point out to the hon. member for Brisbane North that the amendment moved last session was on the plans and specifications of a railway, whereas this is a Bill.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The principle of relevancy is the same.

Mr. HAMILTON was rather surprised at the remarks of the hon. member for North Brisbane. He considered they had just as much right to discuss the wages to be paid to the men who would work on this railway as hon. members opposite had to advocate an increase of £100 a year to a highly-paid officer when the Estimates were under consideration.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I quite agree with you.

Mr. HAMILTON: It was shown by the Speaker last session that they could discuss the question of a minimum wage.

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

Mr. HAMILTON: He thought it was only right that they should get a promise from the Government that a fair wage would be paid. When the Etheridge Railway was going through they got a promise that the ruling rate of wages would be paid, but that promise was not carried out, and strikes had taken place in consequence. They considered that 10s. a day was a fair minimum.

The PREMIER: You would say 11s. if we said 10s.; and if we said 11s., you would say 12s.

Mr. HAMILTON: They were only asking that 10s. should be the minimum, and if they had not asked enough that was their fault. He thought the amendment was quite in order, and he would be happy to give it his support.

Mr. MANN: The hon. member for Brisbane North gave members a homily in regard to moving amendments, and said it would be just as proper to move that the men employed on the railway should wear a certain dress.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member is not going to discuss the point of order.

Mr. MANN: Very well, he would not discuss that matter. If this line was to be built, he wanted to see that the workers got a fair thing, but he did not quite agree with the amendment. There might be lads employed on the railway, and they would not be worth 10s. a day, and he thought the amendment should be altered so as to read "every adult worker." Whether the amendment was proposed in the right place or not, he

could not understand a man who believed in a fair minimum wage taking shelter under cover of the plea that the amendment was proposed in the wrong place. If this was the wrong place for the amendment, the hon. member for Brisbane North should have pointed out the proper place to insert it. When a similar amendment was ruled out of order in a previous session by the Chairman of Committees—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will not discuss that point, but that he will confine himself to the amendment before the Committee.

Mr. MANN: Very well, he would not discuss it. At one time he believed in fixing the rate of wages as the rate ruling in the district, but such a provision had not operated satisfactorily on the Etheridge Railway or the Atherton Railway. The local authority in the Atherton district were paying 9s. a day to their workmen, but the Government refused to pay that amount to the men employed on the railway. It was very hard to prove what was the ruling rate in a district, but it might be taken as a rule that the local authorities paid more than the Government. The Cairns local authority paid 8s. and 9s. a day, while the Government paid only 8s. a day. However, if the amendment was altered as he had suggested, he would support it.

Mr. D. HUNTER: He was going to oppose the amendment without any hesitation. Since he opposed a similar amendment in connection with the Mount Elliott Railway he had been before his constituents, and they had endorsed his action. There was a good deal of political fireworks in this proposal. As a matter of fact, this line was not likely to be built for the next six or seven years; at all events, it would be six or seven years before it was completed. Hon. members opposite told them that they expected to be in power within two years. If that was going to happen, why should hon. members on the Government side of the House fix the rate of wages on this line for the next six or seven years? Those hon. members had the opportunity, when the Wages Boards Bill was before the House, to give public servants the right to come under that Bill, but every one of them refused to give public servants that right. Had they not done so, the men employed on this railway might have had a wages board to settle their wages; but hon. members opposite, having refused to give them that opportunity when the Wages Boards Bill was under consideration, now wanted to make it appear that they were always in favour of giving the men 10s. a day. If the Committee were to carry the amendment, then the minimum of 10s. would become the maximum wage paid, just as the minimum wage fixed by every wages board in Queensland had become the maximum wage for the workers employed. He was against Parliament settling a minimum wage which would last until the railway was completed.

Mr. MURPHY: But you are not against settling a railway policy years ahead.

Mr. D. HUNTER: As a matter of fact, although this Railway Bill was being passed now, the railway could not be started for two years yet, and if the country was against it it would not be gone on with, and the country would have an opportunity of expressing its opinion on the subject at the

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next election. It would be very interesting to hear what hon. members opposite would say on the subject at the next election. It was very amusing to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Cairns on this subject. Let him quote what the hon. member said on a similar question in 1908—*Hansard*, vol. ci., page 939—

The hon. gentleman judged him by what he would get himself. No ganger would give him 10s. a day. (Laughter.) If the amendment were agreed to, then only men in the prime of life would succeed in getting work. Take, for instance, the lifting gang—the men who carried the bars and lifted the road—were they only to get the same wage as the men working in the ballast pit? He contended that there would always be different rates of wages for different classes of work on the railway. But under the hon. gentleman's amendment there would be no room for youths or old men on any of the numerous works authorised by Parliament.

Mr. MANN: I said that to-night.

Mr. D. HUNTER: The hon. member said on that occasion that the whole thing should be left to the Commissioner, but he did not say that to-night. Why had he changed his views? Simply because he had crossed the floor of the House. On one side of the House he voted one way, and when he crossed to the other side he voted another way. Members would have to go before the country before this railway was constructed, at any rate before the transcontinental portion of it was constructed, and it would afterwards be settled whether the wages paid should be 10s. or 12s. a day. On the Cloncurry Railway they were paying 11s. a day instead of 10s. a day, the amount for which hon. members fought, but if the amendment now under consideration was carried the minimum wage paid would be 10s. a day. He should vote against the amendment.

Mr. MANN: The hon. member for Woolloongabba forgot that when he spoke he suggested that the amendment before the Committee should be altered so as to make it apply to adult workers only. He also stated in his previous speech that at one time he favoured a provision fixing the rate ruling in the district, but after their experience of that with reference to the Etheridge and Atherton Railways, he had come to the conclusion that it was better to fix the rate of wages in the Bill. The hon. member for Woolloongabba was always finding mares' nests, and, wanting an excuse for his attitude towards this amendment, he had quoted from a speech delivered by him (Mr. Mann) in 1908. But the hon. member did not state that on that occasion he walked across the floor and voted for 10s. a day, and because he (Mr. Mann) did not do the same thing, but voted for the rate ruling in the district, the hon. member abused him like a pick-pocket, and said that if he was a carpenter he would not give him employment. When he suggested an amendment in the amendment now before the Committee, he clearly foresaw that there might be youths and old men working on the line, and that they would not be worth 10s. a day, and for that reason he desired to see the words "adult workers" introduced in the amendment. If it was altered in that way he would have no hesitation in voting for it.

Mr. D. HUNTER: The hon. member stated that he had altered his opinion with regard to the rate of wages ruling in a district because of their experience in connection with the Etheridge Railway. When the

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hon. member made the speech from which he had quoted, he gave the wages which had been paid on the Etheridge Railway.

Mr. MANN: The Chillagoe Railway.

Mr. D. HUNTER: No, the Etheridge Railway. The hon. member said on that occasion—

The hon. member for Woothakata knew that on the Etheridge Railway, because of the absence of the principle of the minimum wage which he had tried to insert in that Bill, they had been paid as low as 7s. 6d. per day.

That extract was from the speech he had already quoted.

Mr. ALLEN intended to support the amendment, because 10s. a day would be quite little enough to pay for railway construction work in Western Queensland, where men would have to work under the broiling sun at a temperature which sometimes ran over 100 degrees in the shade. With regard to 10s. becoming the maximum wage if that was declared the minimum, he would point out that when the Maryvale Railway was before Parliament it was proposed by the Opposition to fix the minimum wage at 8s. a day, but the amendment was defeated, the argument advanced on the other side being that if we laid down a minimum of 8s. per day it would mean no man would get more than 8s. How did things pan out? No man got 8s. a day. The maximum was 7s. 6d., and the minimum 7s. a day. To get 8s. a day the men had to go out on strike, which meant a loss to the men and to the State.

The Government could [7.30 p.m.] have settled the question in two minutes by accepting that amendment. It had been said that the Opposition was against anything the Government proposed, but it appeared to him that no matter how good an amendment was the Government refused to accept it simply because it came from the Opposition. He was quite sure that the men would strike to get 10s. a day, and it would save a lot of trouble by adopting the amendment, which he hoped would be dealt with on its merits. The argument had been used that it would be madness to lay down a minimum wage on a railway which would take six or seven years to complete, but it was no more madness than it was to pass this measure. He was satisfied that if every hon. member voted from a sense of justice the amendment would be carried.

The PREMIER: If he voted with a view of catching the men's votes.

Mr. MANN rose for the purpose of pointing out that the hon. member for Woolloongabba quoted, not the speech given by himself (Mr. Mann), but a speech given by the hon. member for Clermont. (Laughter.) He did not object to anything which he had said being quoted against him, but he did object to another hon. member's speech being attributed to him. The words quoted were these—

The hon. member for Woothakata knew that on the Etheridge Railway, because of the absence of the principle of the minimum wage which he had tried to insert in that Bill, they had been paid as low as 7s. 6d. per day.

He objected to the hon. member for Woolloongabba quoting another hon. member's speech to do him harm.

Mr. D. HUNTER: He had pointed out that the Etheridge Railway had been before the House. He was quite prepared to admit that he made a mistake, and had quoted the

hon. member wrongly, but he would now quote from the speech of the hon. member for Cairns on page 939—

It had been tried on the Etheridge Railway; and, although the amendment was not carried, still an attempt was made to put into operation the principle that, wherever the Government and a company worked together to build a railway, higher wages should be paid than on a purely State railway. He would not object to the amendment if it were not so delightfully vague. The hon. member gave them no idea of what he meant by a "workman." There were numbers of boys of sixteen or seventeen engaged in carrying water on the railways. Were they to get 10s. a day? If they applied to the ganger for work, he would say, "Well, my lads, I would like to give you a job, but I have to pay 10s. a day to adult, able-bodied men. If, when you are finished carrying water, you can go into the cutting and can take your share of the work, I will employ you." There were other young men engaged in carrying dog-spikes and bolts and laying them alongside the sleepers. There were others engaged sitting on the bars and holding up the sleepers for the men who did the striking. Were they to get 10s. a day? Then he had seen men of over sixty-five years engaged in breaking the big boulders among the river ballast. Were they to get 10s., or would they be put on piecework?

What he had pointed out was that, with all the experience of the Etheridge Railway before him, the hon. member made this statement—and it was proved by the speech of the hon. member for Clermont—and in defiance of that the hon. member for Cairns said, "Leave it in the hands of the Commissioner." Why should they not leave it in the hands of the Commissioner now? The sole objection was that the Premier was now in power, with whom he had quarrelled, and he was determined to make any political capital he could against him.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: You are bowled out.

Mr. D. HUNTER: The hon. member was having the ghosts of the past quoted against him, just the same as he had brought them up against the Premier.

Mr. MULCAHY: As there seemed to be some doubt in the minds of hon. members with regard to this preventing boys from working, with the permission of the House he would move the addition, after "day," of the words "to each male adult." There had been something said about old and incompetent men being prevented from working on this line, but his experience of railway work was that it was not suitable work for old and infirm men. They wanted men who were physically strong, especially in that Western country. The hon. member for Woolloongabba was all right some time ago, when he voted for a minimum wage of 10s., but he was going to change his front tonight, and claimed that he was right; but any common-sense man would view it as very inconsistent. The amendment would not prejudice the men in regard to higher wages. On the railways to-day some men got 7s. a day and some more, and so it was with other work. Contractors made a difference, because they paid some of the men to rush the others. There was nothing to prevent a man getting 11s. or 13s. a day if he could earn it; but he wanted to increase the minimum.

Mr. FOLEY supported the amendment, because he had been a worker on the railways, and knew what the work meant. It was amusing to hear the hon. member for Brisbane North trying to show the working men of Brisbane that the reason why he

could not support the amendment was because it was brought in in the wrong place. If the hon. member had to work on this railway out in the West, it would not trouble him where the amendment came in, so long as he got 10s. a day. His own experience was that whatever might be the minimum wage paid on a railway, a strong man could generally obtain a shilling a day more to induce him to lead the work. If they were assured that a man would not get less than 10s. a day, they did not trouble whether another man got 12s. or 14s. a day. When a man had to live in a tent on those Western plains, and put up with all kinds of weather, 10s. a day was not too much to ask the Government to pay the men working on this railway. If the work was done by contract there should be a clause in the contract that no man should be paid less than 10s. a day. He hoped hon. members would rise to the occasion and support the amendment, in order that the men working on this railway should be paid at least a living wage.

Mr. FERRICKS (*Bowen*): Although he intended to support the amendment, he preferred it in its original form, because there were many young men of eighteen or nineteen years of age who were better physically than the men over twenty-one years. On the railways to-day there were a lot of young men employed as lad porters. They started at 10s. a week, nominally as boys, but they were as good men as they ever would be. It was such differentiation in these matters that made such hardships, and the amended amendment would operate in that way. There was every justification for including a minimum wage of 10s. a day for the far Western districts. Any man knowing the conditions which existed out there would never oppose the amendment. When the division bell rang hon. members opposite would come trooping in and vote against the amendment, but that was because they did not know the conditions as they existed out West. While some conditions of Western life had been quoted, they were not the working men's conditions. There were a couple of members on the other side who had been in that part of Queensland, but they saw it from a first-class carriage or else from a motor-car. A man who had to go for a couple of days without a good supply of water, and who had to cross flooded creeks in times of flood, these were the men who had a competent knowledge of Western conditions. The project advanced by the Government was essentially a big man's affair. It was not in the interests of the small man, but in the interests of the capitalists. Later on he presumed that amendments would be moved from the other side in the interests of the employers. That was why he was endeavouring to get something for the employee. The question of the minimum wage proving to be the maximum had cropped up. As a matter of fact the minimum did not become the maximum. In Parliament it was not so, as the Premier got £1,300 a year, his Ministers got £1,000 a year, and the private members got £300 a year. Yet members on the other side had the thoughtlessness and audacity to say that the minimum wage would become the maximum wage. Just think of a man working in the blazing sun with the thermometer at 120 deg. in the shade! Perhaps he would be a married man. Was he not worth 10s. a day? They heard a lot about "the Government stroke" on the railways, but it would have to be a very modest and very slow stroke that was not

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worth 10s. a day in Western Queensland, where the thermometer registered 120 deg. to 123 deg. in the shade. If they went to the country before that proposal was put through, the people would be in favour of paying the men 10s. a day for this railway, which they were told was going to do so much for Queensland. They were told that it was only fireworks coming from the Opposition side, but as they had been told by members opposite that the railway would not be finished for the next six or ten years, it was simply fireworks on their part for the next election. However, when they did go to the country the Labour party had no fear of the result. He hoped the Minister would accept the amendment, or advance some argument why it should not be accepted. They were asked to trust the Government in the matter. They trusted the Government in the past in connection with the Herberton Railway. The Government last year would not listen to the arguments of the Opposition, and would not accept their amendment regarding a minimum rate of wages. They were told that if they left it to the Commissioner for Railways, the Minister for Railways, and the Government, everything would be all right. The result was that the men working on the Herberton line had to adopt other methods. Deputation after deputation went to the Minister and a deaf ear was turned to them. They then went to the last resort of striking, and the Minister hung up the work in the endeavour of starving the men into submission. The Minister might laugh, but that was a fact, and it was only some time afterwards that the Minister agreed to give the men what they had asked for last year. He hoped hon. members opposite, who had fluked a few Labour votes that enabled them to get elected, would get their reward in the future. Those who voted against the amendment refused to give 10s. a day to men who worked out in the far West under a broiling hot sun, where the water was very scanty, and where a dozen other hardships had to be undergone that were unknown to the city worker or dweller. He hoped hon. members who voted against the amendment would get their reward in the future.

Mr. RYLAND: There was no doubt about it, that if they did not put the amendment into the Bill their experience would be the same as it had been in the past. What they could do in five minutes by placing in half a dozen words might prevent a lot of the discomfort which had been experienced in the past. He was up at Herberton, and he was present at the deputation to the Commissioner. The Commissioner said he was sorry that he could not agree to their request as it was the policy of the Government, and he asked the men to go back at the old terms. The Commissioner himself admitted that it was only a fair wage to pay the men. There might be some difficulties in the West, and the men might become discontented and go on strike and thus delay the work for months and months. If they included the amendment, they would prevent all that. Look at the time that the men lost on the Many Peaks Railway! In the construction of the Boyne Valley Railway the men were also weeks and weeks out of work owing to difficulties in connection with the wages. Each engineer wanted to do the work cheaper than the other engineer, but they should all go out equal, and they should be told that if they were going to make it cheaper it should be done in connection with the engineering and not at the

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expense of the working man with the pick and shovel. What was the use of talking about filling up the waste places in Queensland if they would not give 10s. a day to the men who went out into the far West? There was one thing that they would remember, and that was that they had a higher Parliament to appeal to, and if the State Parliament would not give fair play to the workers, they would soon be able to ask the Federal Parliament to look after industrial matters and bring all workers under it, the railway employees as well as the employees of the private employer. The time would soon come when they would have the Federal Parliament controlling these matters, and then they would get a fair day's pay for a fair day's work for every workman.

Mr. THORN (*Aubigny*) agreed with some of the remarks made by members opposite. He remembered the time when the hon. member for Gympie was working on a railway, and was quite satisfied with what he received; and he could say that [8 p.m.] the men working on that line were satisfied, because he happened to have been the contractor himself. He could tell hon. members that wages on railway contracts twenty-five years ago were better than what were paid to-day. The Labour party wanted every man to get the same wage; but if they were going to bring about a minimum wage, half the people in Queensland would be out of work, and then they would be able to talk about all the people out of employment. Why not leave it in the hands of the Government? He was sure the Commissioner would not pay a bad wage. He would pay a fair day's wage for a fair day's work; and what more did they want?

Mr. FERRICKS: He will hang the work up like he did at Herberton.

Mr. THORN: He could not do so; the work must go on. The hon. member for Gympie, Mr. Mulcahy, was right in saying there were hundreds of young men better able to do hard work than the old people; but, for all that, he was not going to support the amendment. He did not want to do anything that would have a tendency to drive people to Dunwich.

Mr. MULCAHY rose to speak.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Question! We have been two hours on this.

Mr. MULCAHY: This was a very important question, and he did not care if it took five hours. If he was to be curtailed, he would be of very little use there. The Premier said the object of the amendment was to try and catch votes.

The PREMIER: Nothing else.

Mr. MULCAHY: It was nothing of the kind. When that hon. gentleman was a member of the Labour party, fighting the Government, he spoke for hours on the rights of the people of Queensland. What they wanted to do was to see that the men engaged in hard work of this description got a fair and reasonable day's wage; and he did not think an hour or so spent in discussing the question was time wasted. As to leaving the matter to the Commissioner, the money for the work would be provided by the Government; and the rate of wages

would depend a good deal on the amount of money provided, unless a minimum rate was stated in the Bill.

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

## AYES, 24.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Mann
„ Barber	„ Maughan
„ Breslin	„ May
„ Collins	„ Mulcahy
„ Crawford	„ Mullan
„ Ferricks	„ Murphy
„ Foley	„ Nevitt
„ Hamilton	„ O'Sullivan
„ Hardacre	„ Payne
„ Hunter, J. M.	„ Ryan
„ Land	„ Ryland
„ Lennon	„ Winstanley

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

## NOES, 33.

Mr. Allan	Mr. Hunter, D.
„ Appel	„ Keogh
„ Barnes, G. P.	„ Kidston
„ Barnes, W. H.	„ Macariny
„ Booker	„ Mackintosh
„ Bouchard	„ Paget
„ Brennan	„ Petrie
„ Bridges	„ Philp
„ Corser	„ Roberts
„ Cottell	„ Somerset
„ Cribb	„ Stodart
„ Denham	„ Swayne
„ Forrest	„ Thorn
„ Forsyth	„ Tolmie
„ Gunn	„ White
„ Hawthorn	„ Wienholt
„ Hodge	

Tellers: Mr. Gunn and Mr. Swayne.

## PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Douglas, Mr. Blair, and Mr. Lesina,  
Noes—Mr. Rankin, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Morgan.  
Resolved in the negative.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER moved the omission of all the words after “and,” in line 12, with the view of inserting “submit the same to Parliament for its approval.” The reason for the amendment was obvious. In the early days the State Parliament, in its wisdom, provided that the plans and book of reference of every proposed railway should be submitted to the House for its approval, and there were many reasons why that policy should be continued. One reason was that Parliament thus took the responsibility off the shoulders of the Government and the Commissioner of deciding the route of a railway, the manner in which it should be constructed, and all other matters connected with it. Another reason was that Parliament, which was responsible to the people for the way in which public money was expended, should have the last word in connection with the authorisation of a railway. He was not going to accuse the Government, or the Commissioner, of any desire to get behind Parliament for any unlawful purpose, but he did say that if the course of procedure laid down in the Bill was followed it would be possible for a good deal of corruption to creep into railway building.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: How?

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: The answer was patent to anyone who thought about the matter for one moment. Seeing that it was considered desirable to submit the plans and book of reference of other railways, however small, he thought it was more desirable and necessary that the Government should submit to Parliament the plans and book of reference

of a railway 1,282 miles long, and costing over £4,000,000. It was a strange thing that such a huge proposal should be brought forward by the Government in the dying hours of Parliament, and that members should be called upon to hurry it through the House. There was really no reason for such haste. If there was any semblance of truth in the statement of the hon. member for Woolloomgatta, that it would be seven years before this railway was started, there was ample time to prepare plans and book of reference and submit the same to Parliament. But even if such a course should mean delay, he maintained that the cost and magnitude of the undertaking would warrant a still greater delay that such a procedure would involve. It was too big a scheme to be rushed through in the way the Government were rushing it. The proposal should have been referred to a Select Committee, or a commission, or some parliamentary committee for inquiry and report, as proposed in the amendment submitted on the second reading of the Bill, before it was definitely decided upon, and then the department should prepare plans and book of reference, and submit them to Parliament.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member argued that Parliament should retain control of the building of this railway, and that it should approve of the plans of the railway. If the hon. member would turn to clause 2, sections A, B, C, and D, he would see that Parliament was there asked to approve of the building of railways in four railway districts which were delineated on the plan printed as Schedule I. to the Bill. Parliament would retain control over the building of the railway, inasmuch as it would have to vote the appropriation for the railway year by year.

Mr. HAMILTON: Why do you wish to bind future generations?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Because it was thought advisable, with such a scheme as this, which would open up 180,000 square miles of Western Queensland, that there should be some continuity of policy; and that was why it was proposed to depart from the usual practice of tabling plans and books of reference for each section of the railway as it was built. When plans of railways were tabled in the House, how many members examined them? Generally they were examined only by those members who were interested in the railway, and who knew the district in which the line was to be built.

Mr. RYLAND: There is never very much time to examine them.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Plans had been lying rolled up on the table for weeks, and very few members had taken the trouble to examine them. There was no reason why in a scheme of this sort they could not trust the Commissioner to go on with the work, more especially as Parliament would every year have in its hands the policy of continuing the scheme, inasmuch as no money could be expended upon the railway until it was appropriated. He could not accept the amendment.

Mr. HAMILTON was in favour of the amendment, but not for the reason given by the hon. member for Maranoa in his concluding remarks—that the money could be better spent in building railways in the coastal districts. They wanted railways built in the

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Western districts, but he objected to the clause as it stood, because it would shear Parliament of its power. No Government that had been in office in Queensland had ever shorn Parliament of its power to the extent that the present Government had done. They had curtailed the right of speech, and in a previous session they had carried a measure empowering the Government to purchase estates of the value of £500,000 in one year without reference to Parliament. He contended that the plan and specifications of this proposed railway should be laid before Parliament for approval. Why should they trust the Commissioner with the expenditure of £4,000,000 or £5,000,000?

**THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:** You are not asked to do that; Parliament will vote the money every year.

**MR. HAMILTON:** Then why attempt to bind future generations? If the next Parliament would have the power to refuse to vote the money, and stop the construction of this railway, why should they give the Commissioner power to build the line without tabling the plans? If the railway could not be constructed for twenty years, as the hon. member for Woolloongabba said, why should they bind a future Parliament? The fact of the matter was that the proposal was only an advertising and electioneering dodge. The Premier wanted to pose as a great man who had brought forward a great scheme, and had outrivalled Sir Thomas McLlwraith, and he wanted to be able to say, "Alone I did it!" (Laughter.) He believed Parliament should have that right, because members on both sides were not agreed as to the route. All

[8.30 p.m.] they had was a map drawn by somebody in Brisbane, showing a straight line from one point to another, but nothing about the features of the country. When there was such a large amount of money involved, they should demand reasonable safeguards in the shape of plans, sections, and books of reference, so that members would know what they were doing. A scheme like this justified a special session of Parliament to consider it, and by that time members would know what they were voting for. Last night the hon. member for Leichhardt and himself had spoken to a gentleman who had purchased one of the biggest stations in Queensland, and he was surprised when he heard what was contained in the Commissioner's report, that even if the railway earned the same as was earned between Hughenden and Winton it would still be liable to 8s. 9d. a mile. It was not the full 3 per cent., but it was a big impost. If that gentleman knew nothing about it, it was certain that the people who had to guarantee it knew nothing about it.

**THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:** It is the railway which has to carry the wool.

**MR. HAMILTON:** It was all very well for people to howl for it, because they were outside the benefited area, and had not to contribute a penny. It was most unjust that a few people had to bear a guarantee of 3 per cent. on a scheme involving millions of money, while the people in Brisbane and the cities of Southern Queensland were not called upon to guarantee a penny. He did not think the people had had time to consider the matter, and were not aware of the provisions of the measure, and all information possible should be given to members. The reports they had would not justify them spending £400 or £500, let alone £4,000,000

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or £5,000,000, and the proposal should be deferred until plans and specifications had been laid before Parliament.

The PREMIER thought hon. members would see from the discussion which had taken place that the subject matter of the amendment had been fairly threshed out on the second reading. The amendment of the hon. member for Maranoa was simply a negation of the whole Bill.

**OPPOSITION MEMBERS:** No, no!

**THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:** And on which we took a vote at 3 o'clock on Saturday morning.

The PREMIER: To accept this amendment would simply mean that it would be foolish to go on and carry any other part of the Bill. If they had to stop in order to get plans and specifications the remainder of the Bill would be of no consequence. He did not say there was no reason in the hon. member's contention that they should not go on with this extensive scheme of railway development until the House had been shown plans and books of reference; he only said that they had had that matter threshed out very fully on the second reading. It was quite proper for the House to decide that it would not go on until it saw plans and specifications. The Government knew quite well the unusual thing they were asking the House to do.

**MR. J. M. HUNTER:** That is not the only unusual thing.

The PREMIER: They were asking a great deal from the House. They discussed the question whether it would not be better to go on with the plans and books of reference of the whole scheme before coming to the House at all, and it was quite evident that if they did that it would be a long time before any railway could be built. Their railway policy ought to be carried out on a comprehensive plan, and the House should know what it was, and if, in connection with this proposal, they took the present ordinary method of building our small railways, we would wait a long time. If they took this method, and the House approved of it, then more than half, or probably two-thirds, of the railway would be built before it would be possible to get down plans and books of reference to the House. It was a matter for the House to settle, and he thought they had settled it on the second reading of the Bill. They were now in Committee, where they ought to consider the details of the scheme, as they had settled the principle.

**MR. J. M. HUNTER:** That is one part of the detail.

The PREMIER: The thing had to be gone on with, and it was only the details of the scheme that the Committee had now to settle. To accept this amendment would be simply to cancel the rest of the Bill. Although it was quite correct in form, yet, strictly speaking, it was not a matter of detail for Committee. The House was quite competent to say whether they were prepared to go on with the scheme.

**MR. MAUGHAN:** Is this to be a precedent for future railway Bills?

The PREMIER: He thought it would be better to ask the next Government. (Laughter.) From all he could hear from the other side of the House, it would not be long before we should want another Government. (Opposition laughter.) He hoped the Committee would not accept the amend-

ment, and that a great deal of time would not be taken up in discussing what, after all, had been dealt with on the second reading.

Mr. MANN was supporting the amendment because he could quite clearly foresee that the Government might not require to come down to the House to get money passed until such time as they had built so much of the railway that the route would be determined for the rest of the way. The hon. senior member for Townsville and the hon. member for Carnarvon both urged delay, and did not agree with the scheme in all its details. The House having on the second reading affirmed the principle of a Western railway, they were quite justified in asking the Government before the House adjourned, or at least before it met early in the year, to come down with a certain portion of the plans and specifications, not necessarily for the whole route, but for, say, 40 miles from each starting point. The House could meet in May, and pass the Bill if it thought the route was justifiable. All the Premier wanted was to get the Bill through, so that he could drag the railway where he liked. When the Talwood-Moonie line was being built the House had a sort of assurance that it would go through a quarter of a million acres of country cut up for selectors, but the line went 12 miles from the block, and they were coolly told, through the medium of the Press, when the House had adjourned, that the Government could not alter the line because the House had approved of it. They got it through the House by political trickery, and then said the Governor in Council could not alter it. He himself should vote against the Bill because he did not believe in it, but the House should have the specifications before them. There had been many attempts to alter the route of a railway which the House had agreed to, and every week he was receiving letters from people on the Tolga-Johnstone line who wanted the line to take a certain course. If they gave the Minister and the Commissioner a free hand, they could make the railway go in a zig-zag direction, if they liked, to suit a subscriber to the People's Progressive League, who always gave them a coach and four to drive them about.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MANN: They had only to travel over any line in Queensland to find that it could have been taken in a better direction. Take the line between Tolga and Atherton. They ran round about, and left the station in a hole, just to oblige a landowner. They should have plans and specifications before them before they voted any money for this line. If they did not get the plans and specifications, the Government had sufficient money to go on with the line, and would build it where they pleased, and they could then come and say, "We have put this railway 60 or 70 miles out, and must continue it now." For the reasons he had given he would support the amendment.

Mr. RYLAND: He disagreed with the statement of the Premier that the amendment would have the effect of wiping out the whole Bill. The amendment simply meant that as each section was to be gone on with, then the plans and specifications should be tabled and approved of by Parliament. The plans and specifications could not possibly be completed before June next; Parliament could then meet in May, as that was the

proper time to meet, and it could pass the plans and specifications. It was too much to ask the House to accept the Bill without having any plans and specifications placed before them. He always gave his attention to every railway that was passed by the House, and on one occasion when the book of reference was taken away he felt it necessary to vote against the railway because of that. He referred to the railway to the Isis. He did not know who took that book away—whether it was the hon. member for Maryborough or anybody else—but he had to vote against the line because that book was missing, and he did not have an opportunity of seeing it. One privilege after another was being taken away from the Opposition, and here was another. The plans and specifications should be laid on the table of the House before they could do anything.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It would take three years to do anything.

Mr. RYLAND: He did not see how it could take three years. The amendment would not bear that interpretation at all. The amendment was not to wait until the whole scheme was perfected, but to go on with each section as it was ready. He would vote for the amendment.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN supported the amendment. He did not believe in giving a blank cheque at all, and this was merely a blank cheque. Last year, although a new member, whenever a railway was going through the House he always took the opportunity of asking the member through whose electorate it went about the engineering difficulties, if any, or any other information connected with it, and in that way they enlightened him and guided him, and he was fortified further by the plans and specifications laid on the table of the House. They were going in for a big railway policy, but with regard to this railway it was going in the dark completely. It said in the clause—

The Commissioner is hereby authorised and directed to prepare the plans and thereupon proceed with the construction of the said railway.

Parliament should see these plans and approve of them. They had it from the Minister and from the Premier that this railway would not be proceeded with for seven years.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No, no!

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Several hon. members on the other side said so, and it was also stated by the hon. member for Woolloongabba.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No. He said it would be seven years before it was completed.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Why should they commit themselves to a great big railway policy like this without knowing where they were going? He would not agree to that. What would a member on the Government side think if a railway were being built into his electorate and there were no plans and specifications accompanying the proposal? If he could not tell his constituents where the railway was going to they would be up in arms against him. They had no idea where this railway was going. It was no use the Minister holding up the map to him, as the ordinary man outside could not understand from the map. This railway scheme had been hatched during the last recess, and there would be another big scheme hatched in the next recess. They knew that railways had been gerrymandered in Queensland in the past

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to such an extent that the State lost £6,000,000 over them. Here they were going in for another big railway, and there was no possibility of it paying for a number of years. He had no particular interest in the railway, as it would not affect his constituents, except as taxpayers. He hoped the amendment would be carried.

Mr. FERRICKS hoped the amendment would be carried, as it was a very reasonable and a very sensible one. The arguments advanced by the Government were not worthy of Parliament, who were supposed to be the representatives of the people. The Minister for Railways in referring to the fact that Mr. Amos went very quickly over the proposed route in a motor-car, sneeringly remarked that if he had gone over the country in an aeroplane it would have been better still. That was a ridiculous argument to advance. He hoped the Minister would give them some arguments as to why they should pass the railway without the plans and books of reference being placed on the table before them. The autocratic manner adopted by the head of the Government was well illustrated the other night when he said—

I can take a vote without speaking. If I am interrupted again, there is not a man will speak on this side of the House.

That was not the kind of legislation that the people wanted. They did not want railways forced on them without the plans and books of reference. This big railway was being constructed in the moneyed interests, and they were being asked to consent to it without having the plans and book of reference before them. They did not want the railway rammed down their throats without any information at all. It did not reflect much on the independence of the hon. members opposite when they allowed the Premier to talk like he did. They heard a good deal about the Labour caucus, but the Labour party only knew the A B C of caucus rule compared with the other side. The Labour party, at any rate, formed their own interpretations, but members opposite had theirs formed by the Premier, who in turn had his formed for him by the moneyed interests of Brisbane. (Hear, hear!) The people of Queensland should be consulted before the Bill was passed. The Government had not got a mandate from the people to go in for work of such a magnitude. One hon. member opposite said it would be seven years before the railway was completed.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is really making a second-reading speech. The question before the Committee is the amendment that plans be submitted to Parliament for its approval.

Mr. FERRICKS: In all the railways that he had seen passed previously they were accompanied by plans, books of reference, estimates of cost, etc., and that information should be supplied in this case.

[9 p.m.] Parliament should not be asked to buy a "pig in a poke." The reason that they were not going to have a special session of Parliament to deal with this particular proposal was that the Premier was going on his self-invited trip to the coronation. There should be another session early next year—in May—and in the meantime plans and specifications and other information should be prepared. He did not think even that was sufficient; he thought the question should be put to the people, and he believed they would say emphatically, "No," if they were asked whether this railway should be

constructed or not. This "pig-in-a-poke" business was not in the interests of Queensland, and he was going to support the amendment.

Mr. HARDACRE thought the Minister might accept this most reasonable proposal. He understood that the objection to the amendment was that it would cause delay in the construction of the railway.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It would destroy the proposal altogether.

Mr. HARDACRE: He did not think it would even delay the construction of the railway to any great extent, because before any part of the line could be constructed a Loan Bill would have to be passed, and at least a part of the loan floated. That could not be done much before the beginning of next session, and in the meantime plans and sections could be prepared and more information obtained. There had been no survey of the line, and they had no idea of the cost.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have the cost in the Commissioner's report.

Mr. HARDACRE: What was stated there was no criterion.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is also Mr. Amos's report.

Mr. HARDACRE: Mr. Amos had not been along the route. He was afraid there would be enormous cost in bridging some of those wide shallow rivers that were from 50 to 100 miles wide in flood time. The cost of the bridge work might amount to millions. If it was to be a low-level line—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is to be a low-level line.

Mr. HARDACRE: They should have some better estimate of the cost. Another fear he had was that the cross section might cross some range, unless a proper survey was made and further information obtained. He was not surprised at the Government refusing to listen to all reason, because they knew from certain things that had appeared in the Press that the route was fixed in the same way as the route of a certain railway was fixed by Peter the Great—by calling for a map and striking a straight line as indicating where the line was to be built. Did not the Premier declare that he conceived this idea some years ago, and that Lord Chelmsford told him he ought to bring it before Parliament? Anybody reading between the lines of Mr. Amos's report could see that Mr. Amos was instructed in regard to the Premier's opinion and was expected to bring in a report in accordance with that opinion. His report was a mere echo of the Premier's views.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Premier never saw Mr. Amos.

Mr. HARDACRE: My word, he did!

Mr. CORSER: Mr. Amos is not the man to report to order. That is not fair to him.

Mr. HARDACRE: Another thing, unless the Government got full power this session to borrow this money without bringing it before Parliament again, the Premier could not place a loan in the hands of the underwriters next year while he was engineering the whole thing in the old country. He prophesied that the adoption of this scheme would be followed by the Premier going home to the old country between then and next session to engineer the loan which would be necessary for the construction of

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this railway, and that was the reason why the Government wanted full power to build the railway without laying the plans and book of reference before Parliament. He should support the amendment, and he hoped the people would take note of how reasonable amendments were rejected by the Government, and how the Government would spend money in building railways, and go in for a policy of borrow, boom, and burst.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS wished to say again that Mr. Amos had received no instructions from the Premier or himself, but, as one of the most trusted surveyors of the Railway Department, was given a free hand to go west and report on the best methods of giving railway communication to those portions of Western Queensland. It was most unjust for hon. members, whether they meant it or not, to attack a public servant when that public servant had no means of defending himself; and while he was Minister for Railways he would defend any officer of the department attacked in that way. The attack of the hon. member for Leichhardt on Mr. Amos was absolutely unjustifiable.

Mr. HARDACRE: The whole thing he had contended for was admitted by the Minister, when he said that Mr. Amos got instructions from him, not to report on the advisableness of constructing a railway in Western Queensland, but on the best means of giving railway communication to that country. That showed that Mr. Amos had to recommend a railway through that country.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is what he went there for.

Mr. HARDACRE: Of course it was; he went there in order to report on a railway through that country, and he came back and reported in favour of such a railway, in accordance with the hon. gentleman's instructions. Mr. Amos did not recommend a route for the railway, except within a wide area.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He delineates the route he suggests on that plan.

Mr. HARDACRE: The Minister had not followed that route, and, as he had already said, Mr. Amos was instructed to report on the best means of constructing a railway in that district, and not on the advisableness of building a railway there.

Mr. LAND was in favour of the amendment. He had referred to Mr. Amos and his report in a previous debate, but had not attacked that gentleman. What he said was that Mr. Amos could not make a report in favour of this particular route, and produce logical arguments in favour of such a report after merely travelling through the country by means of a motor-car.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! We are not discussing the route of the railway just now, but an amendment proposed by the hon. member for Maranoa.

Mr. LAND: As he understood the amendment, it was that the plans and specifications of the route should be placed before Parliament for ratification, and he contended that it was impossible for any man to estimate the cost of this railway unless he had been over every inch of the country. Mr. Amos could write just as good a report as any other man could under the circumstances in which he saw the country, but a report made under such circumstances was not sufficient to justify hon. members in voting for the railway. They would be practically robbing the public

of Queensland if they voted for the railway on the slender information which had been supplied to the House. He was as sure as he was a living man to-day that £4,500,000 would never build the proposed railway. The line would cross the whole of the rivers and watercourses in that country, consequently, unless a man went over every mile he could not possibly tell what the cost would be. He did not think that Mr. Amos, with the knowledge he had of the country, was competent to make an estimate of the cost.

Mr. FOLEY intended to support the amendment, as it was a very reasonable one: It simply asked that before proceeding with the construction of that railway, plans should be submitted to Parliament for its approval. Under the clause as it stood it was imperative on the Commissioner to prepare plans and thereupon forthwith proceed with the construction of the whole of the 1,232 miles of railway, to cost something like £4,000,000 or £5,000,000 of money. It was unreasonable for any Government to expect the Committee to accept such a proposal as that without protest. Never in the history of Parliament had they been asked to vote such an enormous sum of money to build such an expensive piece of railway without plans and books of reference being submitted to the House for its approval. As he had stated before, the Government were proceeding along panic lines; it was nothing short of panic legislation to ask the Committee, in the dying hours of the session, to pass such an enormous sum of money as was involved in the construction of the railway, as had been admitted by the engineer whom the Minister said was a very efficient engineer.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He does not make reports to order either.

Mr. FOLEY: He did not say he did, but it was impossible for Mr. Amos, good man as he might be, to have gone into all the details of the route, and it was madness on the part of the Government to expect the Committee to pass the clause authorising the Commissioner to forthwith proceed with the construction of the line. The Government would be wise in accepting the amendment and allowing the matter to stand over till next session—until plans and books of reference of the different sections that Government wanted to proceed with were laid on the table. He had very much pleasure in supporting the amendment.

HON. R. PHILP (*Townsville*) hoped the Committee would not agree to the amendment. If the Bill was passed, the Government could not build a mile of railway until the Committee provided the money for it, and they would have an opportunity year after year to vote the money required for the ensuing twelve months. So the House had complete control of the building of the railway every year.

Mr. HARDACRE: Won't we pass a Loan Bill this year?

HON. R. PHILP: They passed a Loan Bill in 1884 to borrow £10,000,000, and some of that money was not spent yet.

Mr. MURPHY: £500,000 was voted in my electorate which we are not likely to get.

HON. R. PHILP: Yes, for the Cloncurry line, and another £500,000 for the via recta which had not been spent, and some had been voted for his own electorate which had not been spent.

Mr. HARDACRE: What is the objection to this amendment in that case?

*Hon. R. Philp.]*

HON. R. PHILP: It would mean delay. He took it that by passing the Bill they would be showing the country and the whole of Australia that they had a definite railway policy in front of them—not necessarily that they were going to build it mile by mile, as shown on the plan. The Government were asking permission to deviate 20 miles on either side. He hoped that the whole of the line would be built, as it would be a splendid thing for Queensland. He did not agree with the details of the Bill, but rather than lose the Bill he would see it carried out as it was. As he had said, the House had full control of the building of the railway, as they could only vote one year's expenditure at a time.

Mr. HARDACRE: Yes; but you can involve an expenditure before that time.

HON. R. PHILP: They could not build more than a few miles of railway each year. It was a fair thing for the House to say where the line would start from.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It says so in the Bill.

HON. R. PHILP: It was proposed to commence at four points, and during the next twelve months they could not build more than 150 miles of railway. Divide that by four, and how far had they gone? Then the Committee would have reports next year of the construction—of what had been done, and what the Government intended doing.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is a special clause in the Bill providing that the Commissioner shall furnish a report each year.

HON. R. PHILP: So far as he could see, the plan submitted to hon. members was just as much a plan as what they usually saw. When the plan, specifications, and books of reference were tabled, it was only the plan that hon. members looked at, so that they could see where the line was going to. If, during the next twelve months, it was found that they had made a mistake—that the reports showed that the line should go in some other direction, then the Committee could alter it, but in the meantime it was a line to connect the Western part of Queensland with the coast, and he thought every member of the Committee believed that that was a good thing. Personally, he would like to see the line go some other way, but he would go with the majority. They could not go very far wrong. Parliament had not done so in the past. They had spent something like £25,000,000 in railway building, and they had made very few mistakes indeed.

Mr. HARDACRE: What about the Central line?

HON. R. PHILP: The Central line is a well-paying line. The only line in the Central district that did not pay was the Spring-sure line, in the hon. member's own electorate.

Mr. HARDACRE: That is not my fault. It was a political job.

HON. R. PHILP: He did not know, as he was not in the House at the time the line was built, but he knew that the contractor, who was at present living in Rockhampton, said the Government had him for any amount of money over that line.

Mr. HARDACRE: It was a political job right through.

[*Hon. R. Philp.*]

HON. R. PHILP: Perhaps it did not go far enough. They had spent about £25,000,000 in railway building, and they were getting from them sufficient revenue within a few pounds to pay the interest. And look at the infinite amount of good the expenditure of that money had done for Queensland! Where would they have been without those railways; and the lines that paid best were the main lines to Charleville, Longreach, Cloncurry, and Winton. They had opened up an enormous quantity of country; and all those lines were opposed,

as the present line was being [9.30 p.m.] opposed; and he thought every member of the House now admitted that those were splendid lines to build, and if they went on those lines they could not go very far wrong. He thought it was a good thing to show the other States what they were doing. If they could stop that desert line from Oodnadatta to Pine Creek, it would be a good thing for Australia.

Mr. FERRICKS: You have not got a chance of stopping it.

HON. R. PHILP: If we could not, it would be a bad thing for Australia. It would be a good thing to take the line near the Northern Territory, where there was the best country in South Australia. The best country was on our border, near Camooweal. If we took a line there, he thought the Federal Government had sufficient common sense to know that the best junction they could make was from Pine Creek to Camooweal. That would be a transcontinental railway for the whole of the Eastern part of Australia. The people of South Australia offered an enormous quantity of land to get a line built from the Northern Territory to South Australia, but no one would take it up, and he did not believe the Federal Government would ever build that railway. Mr. Hughes, the present acting Federal Prime Minister, said distinctly that the agreement with the South Australian Government would permit them to take the line through Queensland if they wished.

Mr. ALLEN: Yes; but that is Birdsville.

HON. R. PHILP: They could go from Camooweal to Birdsville if they liked, but if they met at Camooweal it would be a splendid thing for the people of Australia. If they could adopt better routes, let them do it, but at the present time it would be very unwise to hang the Bill up by asking for plans and specifications, because they were controlling the building of the line so long as they had the right to vote the money every year.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. HARDACRE: The hon. member for Townsville gave as an argument against the amendment, that we did not want plans and specifications because we could vote the money for the line at the end of every session. If that was a good reason, it was a good reason against the plans and specifications of any railway, because we had exactly the same kind of control over our other railways. The reason why plans and specifications were introduced was for the purpose of giving Parliament information before the expenditure was sanctioned, and it was not sufficient safeguard to merely have the power at the close of the session in which the money had been expended to say "yes" or "no." They were forced to agree to it then because the money had been expended. In regard to the point that Mr. Amos had no instructions,

he thought that the instructions were involved in the first paragraph of the report, which stated—

Sir,—Acting under instructions contained in your memo. of 13th May last, I have examined the country from the vicinity of Hungerford to Camooweal and Cloncurry, with a view to locating the best position for a railway to serve this country, and also having in view the possibility of the line eventually becoming part of a transcontinental railway from the Southern States to Burketown or Port Darwin.

It was clear from that paragraph that the Minister sent him along that particular route from Hungerford to Camooweal, to report as to the best line in that locality, which involved the fact that the report was made to order.

The TREASURER: He was given two points.

Mr. HARDACRE: He had to go in a particular locality, and he was also unable to say that no railway should be constructed.

The TREASURER: The transcontinental line was mentioned in the Governor's Speech last year.

Mr. HARDACRE: And the surveyor was sent along that route to report on a railway along that route. He would take two paragraphs in Mr. Amos's report with regard to rivers alone—

Cooper's Creek is the principal watercourse to be crossed, and it, like other watercourses in the West of Queensland, has no sharp decided channel, but consists of numerous billabongs, which in flood time overflow and cover the country with shallow water for miles. Cooper's Creek in flood time is 8 or 10 miles wide just above Windorah, but rapidly spreads out below that town, and down towards the border is said to be nearly 100 miles wide at times.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Follow on with what he says.

Mr. HARDACRE: It was too awkward to build a line along that river without information. Then he said—

There being no real engineering difficulties on the line other than bridge work, it has been located for a minimum amount of same.

That was the whole trouble—immense bridge-work across shallow rivers. He went on in his supplementary report—

In my report of the 19th ultimo, I gave what I thought was sufficient data for arriving at the cost of the line from Hungerford to Camooweal, if built on the low-level system, and I have nothing to add to that information, except, perhaps, to mention that at the Cooper and Diamantina Crossings the water gets away very slowly, and in consequence a low-level line may, on an average of once in every six or eight years, be flooded for as long as a month or six weeks at a time. Both these watercourses are on the 510 miles of line that it is suggested to leave over for future consideration.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN indicated that the hon. member's time had expired,

Mr. FERRICKS: If they were asked to consent to the linking up of lines, without accompanying plans and specifications and books of reference which came before Parliament for ratification, he would say it would not be right; but, in that case, we should be well informed about the country to be traversed through these connections and the slight extensions west which would naturally follow. It was absurd for the Government or any member of the Government party to bolster up their attitude in forcing them to pass this Bill without Parliament having the right to ratify the descriptions. That was a very poor argument. Look at Queensland's past history in connection with railways! Although they had a large mileage of

railways, the Queensland legislators of the past made serious blunders in connection with the railways. They succeeded in closing ports. They had closed two of the best ports of Queensland—Bowen and Gladstone—and by this railway proposal they would shut out Gulf ports altogether, if the line were extended to Pine Creek. They would also have smothered up the port of Cairns, only that the past legislators of Queensland participated in the jobbery which went on in connection with the syndicate lines running into that port. When the Federal Parliament built railways they would not pass them without first having plans and specifications to go by. He believed in the defence of Australia, and he hoped the Federal Parliament would go on with their transcontinental railway, which would be a transcontinental railway. They had no chance whatever of checkmating the Federal Parliament with its transcontinental line, because it would be built just the same whether this trans-Queensland railway was built or not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are not concerned with what they do.

Mr. FERRICKS: And the Federal Parliament was not concerned with the State's line. The hon. gentleman only looked at the matter from the point of view of the moneyed interests in the populous cities while the Federal Parliament looked at it through national eyes. No member on the other side of the House should talk about the caucus after the exhibition of the Premier the other night.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! The question before the Committee is the amendment that the plans be submitted.

Mr. FERRICKS: The procedure that they had been witnessing was one of the strongest things that could be advocated for the abolition of the State Parliament. Parliament was being reduced to a farce. They had the Premier coming in and dictating to them and saying, "This shall be done." That was reducing legislation to a farce, and was not representation of the people, but despotism. They were asked to assent to the railway when it was not accompanied by books of reference and plans. That was not a fair deal to the State when they were dealing with a work of such a magnitude. Parliament was not supplied with the information it was entitled to have before committing itself to a policy of such magnitude. They were told the cost would be £4,500,000, but it would be nearer £6,000,000 or £7,000,000. They were told that Mr. Amos had a free hand in his report, but, as a matter of fact, the Premier outlined the whole scheme at the annual dinner of the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce before Mr. Amos went out West at all.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. ALLEN: He had not heard any logical argument brought forward against the amendment. Sometimes when they made haste slowly they made haste none the less surely, and that would apply to this particular case. The Premier said they could have the line half built before the plans were prepared. If such was the case, they must be going to get a spurt on, and must be going to do the work much quicker than they were doing it on the Tara line, which had only been proceeding at the rate of 20 miles a year. At that rate, if the Western Railway would be half built before the plans were prepared, the plans would not be finished for thirty years. He did not see why the public should not be given every information about the matter. They had been told that the work could not be gone on with unless the loan money was voted

*Mr. B. F. S. Allen.*

every year. Surely when the money was voted they could see the plans! If the plans were prepared it was just as well for the House to see them. The members who were interested in the different lines wanted to have a look at them, and the information they would gather would be of considerable advantage to them in criticising the loan vote to be spent on the work. He did not see why any Government caucus should prevent them from accepting such a reasonable amendment. It was childish the way they were acting to checkmate the Federal Government. The scheme was partly a hit at the Federal Parliament, as they had received hints to that effect all along. First they had the interjection of the hon. member for Musgrave, then they had it from the hon. member for Rosewood, and then that night they had it from the hon. member for Townsville, who told them not to bother about the plans, but to get in quick and they might have a chance of stopping the desert railway. If that was the reason for refusing to supply plans—the need for hurry—that was no reason at all. If the Federal Parliament wanted to build a line to Pine Creek, they would do so, no matter what other lines were built. It was not good business for Queensland to start building any railway without specifications being laid on the table. He had a letter from one of his constituents referring to one particular section of the line, and stating that pontoons would be required at certain times; and he wanted to know where those pontoons would have to be used. Mr. Amos never saw the route from Wallall to Tobermory; and he was prepared to say that if his report was not made to order, Mr. Amos knew what was wanted. No hon. member would start any work in his private business without thrashing out every detail; and what right had they to incur the expenditure of a very large sum of public money without full information? What right had they to start the building of a railway costing £4,500,000—which was mere guesswork—without any plans at all? Was it business? Was it common sense? There could be only one answer; and every member who was true to the interests of his constituents would vote for the amendment.

Mr. FERRICKS: With reference to the construction of a transcontinental line by the Federal Government, early in the session the Premier was asked if the Federal Government would bring their line into Queensland territory, and he said he would like to see them do so—as if it would be a shocking impertinence. Did the Premier still think it would be a shocking impertinence?

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. J. M. Hunter's amendment*) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 34.

Mr. Allan	Mr. Hodge
„ Appel	„ Hunter, D.
„ Barnes, G. P.	„ Keogh
„ Barnes, W. H.	„ Kidston
„ Booker	„ Macartney
„ Bouchard	„ Mackintosh
„ Brennan	„ Paget
„ Bridges	„ Petrie
„ Corser	„ Philp
„ Cottell	„ Roberts
„ Cribb	„ Somerset
„ Denham	„ Stodart
„ Forrest	„ Swayne
„ Forsyth	„ Thorn
„ Grayson	„ Tolmie
„ Gunn	„ White
„ Hawthorn	„ Wienholt

Tellers: Mr. Cottell and Mr. D. Hunter.

Mr. B. F. S. Allen.

NOES, 23.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Maughan
„ Breslin	„ May
„ Collins	„ Mulcahy
„ Crawford	„ Mullan
„ Ferricks	„ Murphy
„ Foley	„ Nevitt
„ Hamilton	„ O'Sullivan
„ Hardacre	„ Payne
„ Hunter, J. M.	„ Ryan
„ Land	„ Ryland
„ Lennon	„ Winstanley
„ Mann	

Tellers: Mr. Collins and Mr. Nevitt.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Rankin, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Morgan.

Noes—Mr. Douglas, Mr. Blair, and Mr. Lesina.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. MACARTNEY: This was a very important part of the Bill. He was not present when the second reading was before the House, but he wished to say that he entirely agreed with the general principle of the scheme which the Bill laid down.

Several HONOURABLE MEMBERS being engaged in conversation,

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I can hardly hear the hon. member for the conversation that is going on.

Mr. MACARTNEY: He was down at Sydney and Melbourne during the last week, and he noticed that the scheme comprised in this measure was the theme of general [10 p.m.] discussion. The scheme was regarded as one which was very much in the interest of Queensland and of the whole of Australia. As a member representing a Southern constituency, he thought he was called upon, though supporting the scheme generally, to direct attention to the effect which the proposal might have on the constituency he represented and on Southern Queensland generally. Anyone looking at the plan attached to the Bill must come to the conclusion that there were considerable alterations in the scheme originally laid down for the extensions of railways in Queensland. Extensions due west to Charleville, Longreach, and Winton had hitherto been decided upon as part of a definite scheme of railway construction, but the present scheme showed considerable alterations in regard to general policy, and, as far as he could gather from reading the reports of the debate on the second reading, it had not been fully explained upon what principle those alterations had been arrived at. There was one general statement made in the report, which was slightly accentuated in the debate, and that was that each district was connected as nearly as possible with its own natural port.

Mr. NEVITT: That is not so.

Mr. MACARTNEY: No doubt that was approximately so, but the scheme adopted in the earlier days of the State had led to the establishment of conditions in connection with trade to different ports which this scheme seemed likely to upset. While he admitted that the Chamber of Commerce, representing the business interests of Brisbane, held that the scheme generally was a fair one all round, and that no diversion of trade would take place, he must say that he had heard from many persons that there would be considerable diversion of trade if the scheme was adopted. His purpose in speaking now was more in the first instance to elicit some information which would justify the departure from the condition of things which had resulted from railway connections with different ports. He had heard it distinctly stated that the trade of Windorah came, and had come, during recent years, to Brisbane; and he had heard it definitely

stated that cattle and other stock from stations north-west of Windorah still came to Brisbane, notwithstanding their nearer proximity to Townsville and the Central district. If that was so, the matter required some explanation before they made such a considerable alteration in the existing condition as was proposed in the Bill. Brisbane being the capital of the State, and having special facilities for trade, it was quite reasonable to suppose that it would be a convenience for settlers out in the western district, about Windorah, to bring their trade to Brisbane, if they could possibly do so.

Mr. LENNON: That being so, should not Brisbane be included in the benefited area?

Mr. MACARTNEY: He was not discussing the question of the benefited area now. He knew that when such questions arose certain members always cried out about the advantages which Brisbane enjoyed as the capital of the State and the seat of population. All he could say was that, whatever attitude members might take up with regard to Brisbane, the members representing Brisbane and the metropolitan electorates had never been backward in supporting the expenditure of money in any part of the State, no matter how small its population might be, and he did not think it was a nice or proper thing for members to be always making that particular point about Brisbane. There were not only the rights and interests of the people of South Queensland to be considered in this matter, but the rights and interests of persons outside, and if it was any advantage to them to have direct communication with the capital of the State, their interests should be considered. Not only was Brisbane a place which offered superior advantages to people out West, but the places along the route on the Darling Downs and Maranoa offered the West a market for their stock. The railway also offered the people of Darling Downs and the south-eastern district a means for sending their produce to the western country in times of drought. Those were matters also which required consideration. He was not going to enter on a long discussion, but he wished to say that the line, as indicated on the plan showing a dip down to Tobermory, would, if it became part of the transcontinental line, mean that the people coming down from the North would have to go down a considerable distance south and then turn north again before they came eastward to the capital, and the same inconvenience would happen to people going from the centres of population.

The PREMIER: At all the junctions along the line?

Mr. MACARTNEY: Perhaps so. That was the material disadvantage, at any rate, that connection with the line gave to the capital. He wished to discuss matters from a Southern Queensland point of view, and if it was shown there were good and sufficient reasons for the scheme proposed, that was another matter. In the meantime those considerations should receive careful scrutiny before the scheme was adopted, and therefore he proposed to move that the words "Gumbo-Gumbo Creek, near Tobermory" be omitted, with a view to inserting "Windorah."

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Bulloo has intimated to me that he has an amendment to insert on the first line of section "A," and I would ask the hon. member to withdraw his amendment to allow the hon. member for Bulloo to move his.

Mr. ALLEN: Let me hear what the hon. member wishes to propose?

Mr. MACARTNEY: He had no objection to withdraw his amendment, if necessary. He proposed to move the omission of the words "Gumbo-Gumbo Creek, near Tobermory" with a view of inserting the word "Windorah."

Mr. ALLEN: He was not at all antagonistic to the amendment which had been foreshadowed by the hon. member for Brisbane North, because that amendment would have his vote. He moved, on line 3, page 2, to omit all the words after the word "at," down to and including the words "forty-five," on line 13, with the view of inserting the words "Cunnamulla, and proceeding in a westerly direction to Thargomindah, a distance of one hundred and twenty." The object he had in moving the amendment was that the South-western portion of the State should not be overlooked. The distance from Cunnamulla to Thargomindah was 120 miles. The route had been surveyed, and he believed working plans had been compiled, and a bridge had been built over the Warrego River, which could be used for railway purposes. If that proposal were adopted, it would open up the whole of the South-western corner of Queensland. Most of that trade at the present time, with one or two exceptions, was lost to Queensland ports, and although Mr. Amos said one thing, he (Mr. Allen) said, without fear of contradiction, that if that line were built it would develop that portion of the State, and bring all the trade to Brisbane, even although it had to go round about a few miles, *via* Charleville. At the same time, that difficulty could be overcome by extending the border line along the Southern border of the State, linking up at some point near Cunnamulla. They would then have a line running from Thargomindah practically straight to Brisbane, when the *via recta* was built. It would be a Queensland line, and would bring the whole of the trade of Queensland to its own port, Brisbane.

Mr. FORSYTH: That would not bring the trade to Brisbane. It will be 100 miles nearer Sydney.

Mr. ALLEN: If the line came straight on from Cunnamulla to Bullamon, Thargomindah would be 100 miles nearer to Brisbane, and that line would open up some very good sheep country. There was country there at the present time in the hands of the Government, and no prickly pear on it, and if the line were extended in that direction some of the stations there would increase their flocks by 50 per cent. The Premier, in his second-reading speech, hinted that at some future time they would have a line built from Tobermory to Tuen. If the amendment were adopted, they would get 40 miles at the least nearer the south-western corner of the State than the original proposition in the Bill, and it would serve the south-western corner, as a whole, better. If the proposition of the hon. member for Brisbane North were also accepted, there would be no necessity for about 180 to 200 miles of the cross link at the back, because the purpose of that link would be served by the Charleville to Cunnamulla line, which would be of very little use if the whole of the proposals that had been enunciated by the Premier were adopted. He submitted that the line he proposed would be a good business proposition for the State. It was a line that had been advocated for many years. His predecessor was a very ardent advocate of the line; and the senior hon. member for Brisbane North had told him

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he had been on more than one occasion very favourably impressed with the remarks that gentleman had made in support of the line. Till they got to Thargomindah, the most of the country was under sheep; and to the west, beyond Thargomindah, sheep-rearing was being retarded at the present time on account of distance from railway. The amendment was a good one, and he hoped it would be accepted by the Committee.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: The hon. member desires to omit the whole of the subclause; but, in order to protect the interests of the hon. member for North Brisbane, I will simply put it down to Wallal, which will test the feeling of the Committee. The amendment is to omit after "at" on page 2, line 3, the words "at a point near Wallal."

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member for Bulloo had evidently overlooked the distance.

Mr. ALLEN: No, I have not.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member referred distinctly to what was called the border line to Tuen or Woorrooka.

Mr. ALLEN: The Cunnamulla line.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: At present Thargomindah was 720 miles from Sydney, *via* Bourke, and 720 miles from Brisbane, *via* Charleville.

Mr. ALLEN: If you build a border line it would be nearer.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Tuen would be 598 miles from Brisbane, provided the border line was built from there, and from Tuen to Thargomindah was 120 miles. That made a total mileage of 718 miles, exclusive of the saving by the *via recta*, which practically brought Thargomindah down to 660 miles from Brisbane.

Mr. LENNON: By the *via recta*.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. He was placing the figures as plainly as he could before the Committee; he had only just had an opportunity of running them out while the hon. member was speaking. It must be some years before the line could be built to Tuen. Mr. Amos said—

I cannot recommend any extension of the line from Cunnamulla westward, as, should New South Wales extend their lines from Bourke to, say, Hungerford, all the trade from as far north as Thargomindah, at any rate, would be diverted to Sydney—

Mr. ALLEN: That is not correct.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: and the extension west of Cunnamulla would remain a non-paying concern. This is owing to the line from Cunnamulla to Brisbane going so far out of the way through Charleville. If the Goondiwindi line were extended along the border, the conditions would perhaps be altered.

Prior to the conference held in Sydney respecting the border rates, in February of last year, there were differential rates given by the Railway Commissioner, under the powers he held, to certain stations at Thargomindah and down to the border, and by that means Brisbane got the trade of some of those stations, although they did not get all. He was credibly informed that since the arrangement was come to by which it was impossible for either State to give any differential rates to stations on either side of the border line, they had lost a great deal of that trade, and it now went to Bourke.

Mr. ALLEN: No.

[Mr. B. F. S. Allen.]

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member for Bulloo said "No." That was what he was informed by the officers of the Railway Department.

Mr. ALLEN: I am informed by local people, who know more than they do.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The economic point of trade was at Tobermory—the trade north of Thargomindah, when the line was built from Wallal to Tobermory, must necessarily come to Brisbane as the nearest port, but when you came south from Tobermory there would be in the future—of course, the lines were not yet built—the port of Sydney competing on equal terms with the port of Brisbane with respect to distances. He thought the hon. member, in proposing this route, was proposing something which was not in the interests of the South-western portion of Queensland, for the reason that that line would run at no great distance from the border, and at a point at which our trade could be tapped, and was tapped at the present time from Sydney, as against the proposal before the Committee as indicated on the plan; and, further, if the Committee adopted the proposal of the hon. member, then the railway district was completely done away with, and we must have a new railway district. The hon. member might say that that was very easily fixed up, but it was not a matter which was easily fixed up. The fixing up of these railway districts had been a work of very great labour. He was loth to see members attempt to alter these proposed extensions, which had been laid out with a view to try to give the business of the particular districts access to the nearest port possible, for the reason that if the routes were considerably altered it meant a redrafting of the whole of the railway districts.

The hon. member for Bulloo, when he came to look on the matter again, would think differently, although he quite understood that it was his business to try and press this forward in the interests of a portion of his constituents. If the route as suggested by the hon. member were adopted, then they would have a large area of country from Thargomindah to Windorah which would be practically untouched by a railway.

Mr. LAND was in favour of the amendment. In speaking on the proposal last week he had referred to the railway from Cunnamulla to Thargomindah. The line had been surveyed, and there was a bridge across the Warrego River. The distance was 120 miles, and there was close settlement for 50 or 60 miles on the other side of Cunnamulla. If the line were built from Cunnamulla to Thargomindah, it would be only 80 miles from the New South Wales border, and it would draw all the trade from the New South Wales border, and it would keep all the Queensland trade. The Minister said that New South Wales might extend the railway to Hungerford. Well, even then it would be 100 miles from Thargomindah, and it would be better for the trade to come to Brisbane. There were five New South Wales lines coming up to the Queensland border, and none of them went in the direction of Hungerford at all. They were building a border line to conserve their own trade, and they would never be able to hold it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why not? It is nearer to Brisbane than Sydney by that route.

Mr. LAND: The best way was to do away with the Wallal-Tobermory route altogether,

then build the Cunnamulla-Thargomindah line, and run the Northern connection straight out from Charleville. They would then have 120 miles of country between the Charleville and Cunnamulla lines and another 80 miles of country to the New South Wales border, and they would conserve all the Queensland trade in that part of the country. Then by and by, when the line was built from Cunnamulla to Bourke, it would open up two lines for the stock in that part of the country. Cunnamulla was 30 miles nearer to Brisbane than to Sydney, so Queensland would be able to conserve all her wool trade from there, and the Brisbane firms could surely supply their constituents in the West just as well as Sydney. Quite recently the Sydney buyers in Charleville waited till the Brisbane buyers refused, and then they bought because the road was open. But, if the two lines were built, the roads would always be open, and there would be two markets. The line from Wallal to Tobermory ran all round the country. It might look all right as it was, but they considered that they were laying down that line for all time, and that the people there would have no chance of getting another line there for years—perhaps for hundreds of years—because they would not be able to straighten it out, and they were compelling people to go on paying for miles and miles of railway that they should not be compelled to pay for at all. They knew from past experience that they had to pay for the extra distance which the trains were running over their lines. The trains were running a further distance every day than they need have, owing to the bad management of the past. They were in too much of a hurry altogether to pass this railway. They should get information from the people affected in different parts of Queensland. If the Premier and Minister for Railways went out there and had a talk with the people, they would not be so anxious to force the proposal through the House. If it were put through as it was, it would be a great mistake. The sensible proposal in connection with the border line would have been to take it right up to St. George. That would be serving our own country. The Premier could meet plenty of people who would give good, sound information which would alter his opinion. He hoped the amendment would be carried.

The PREMIER said he just wished to say that it would be the greatest foolishness to carry this amendment.

Mr. ALLEN: Last week he received a number of resolutions from Thargomindah and district, also a petition the other day for presentation to the Premier, as well as a good amount of information about how the trade went. These were the resolutions passed at a large public meeting of the residents of Thargomindah—

(a) Residents strongly opposed any extension from Wallal to either Tobermory Eromanga until survey made. Amos never travelled either route, therefore report estimate pure guesswork.

(b) Permanent survey already made Cunnamulla Thargomindah, distance 120 miles, with railway bridge already built across Warrego. Consider this extension would save Government least £10,000; also open up just good pastoral areas, and retain trade right to New South Wales and South Australian borders. Permanent unlimited water supply; electric light; up-to-date town.

(c) Against survey to made 170 miles Wallal, Tobermory, or Eromanga; have cross many miles badly flooded country on Paroo and Bulloo rivers, and also Grey Range. Tobermory no permanent water; even doubtful artesian. Eromanga very poor water supply.

(d) Consider Amos's assertion narrow-minded that, if line built here, trade would go Wales, as existing Queensland railways now receive greater portion trade South-west, even though flour sugar can be bought £1 10s. cheaper from Bourke than Brisbane.

Surely those people ought to know what was a good thing; and they were prepared to guarantee this line. He submitted that the line from Cunnamulla to Thargomindah was a good business proposition, and he hoped the amendment would be carried.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS said a survey had been made for 90 miles from Wallal towards Eromanga.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Allen's amendment*) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided:—

## AYES, 36.

Mr. Allan	Mr. Hodge
" Appel	" Hunter, D.
" Barnes, G. P.	" Keogh
" Barnes, W. H.	" Kidston
" Boker	" Macartney
" Bouchard	" Mackintosh
" Brennan	" Morgan
" Bridges	" Paget
" Corser	" Petrie
" Cottell	" Philp
" Coyne	" Somerset
" Crabb	" Stodart
" Denham	" Swayne
" Forrest	" Thorn
" Forsyth	" Tolmie
" Grayson	" Walker
" Gunn	" White
" Hawthorn	" Wienholt

Tellers: Mr. Cottell and Mr. Wienholt.

## NOES, 21.

Mr. Allen	Mr. May
" Breslin	" Mulcahy
" Collins	" Mullan
" Crawford	" Murphy
" Ferricks	" Nevitt
" Foley	" O'Sullivan
" Hamilton	" Payne
" Hardacre	" Ryan
" Hunter, J. M.	" Ryland
" Land	" Winstanley
" Lenuon	

Tellers: Mr. Ferricks and Mr. Murphy.

## PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Rankin and Mr. Fox.

Noes—Mr. Douglas and Mr. Blair.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. MACARTNEY moved that the words "in a south-westerly direction to Gumbo Gumbo Creek, near Tobermory," on lines 5 and 6, be omitted, with the view of inserting "to Windorah."

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS agreed with the hon. member for Brisbane North that this clause, defining the points from which the extensions westward should be made, was the most important part of the Bill. The Government had given the question of the extensions westward from existing lines very grave consideration, and had come to the conclusion that it was desirable to give the various portions of Western Queensland the nearest route to port possible. He was credibly informed that practically the whole of the trade of Windorah went to Rockhampton at the present moment. The extension from Blackall to Windorah was decided upon with the view of conserving the interests of the people in the railway district in the vicinity of Windorah, as it would give them a very much shorter route to a port on the eastern seaboard than they would get if a railway was projected from Charleville or Wallal to Windorah. The distance from

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Brisbane to Windorah *via* Tobermory was 815 miles, while the distance from Rockhampton to Windorah was 564 miles, a difference of 251 miles in favour of Rockhampton.

At 11 o'clock,

The ACTING CHAIRMAN said: Under Standing Order No. 171, I ask the hon. member for Drayton and Toowoomba to kindly relieve me in the chair.

Mr. TOLMIE took the chair accordingly,

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Mr. Amos, on page 4 of his report, made use of the following words:—

If this report were for Queensland railway proposals only, and without taking into consideration that the main line may eventually become a transcontinental one, the question as to whether the railway should be extended from Charleville through Adavale to Windorah Junction should perhaps be taken into consideration. It appears to me, however, that the trade with the Windorah country rightly belongs to the Rockhampton port, because Windorah Junction is fully 150 miles nearer Rockhampton than Brisbane, even with the line built direct from Charleville to Windorah Junction through Adavale. Possibly a solution of the difficulty will be to build a line—in addition to those shown in red—from Charleville to Adavale, and thence to Welford.

Mr. HAMILTON: You would have 4 or 5 miles then running side by side.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Of course that would not at all be good business, especially in pastoral country. He

[11 p.m.] wished to point out for the information of hon. members that taking the connecting links proposed, starting the Great Western Railway at Tobermory, that from Tobermory to the Windorah junction was 145 miles, and proceeding north-west from Windorah Junction to Spring Vale was 230 miles, and then again from Spring Vale to Sulieman Creek, which was called Carrandotta, was 136 miles, so that there had been some endeavour at any rate to fairly cut the country there up into sections. He could not see that the junior member for Brisbane North had made out a very good case for taking the railway about 80 miles again to the north of Brisbane, when they knew that Charleville was about 80 miles north of Brisbane. If they went north they trenched upon the trade of the port which was nearest to that part of Western Queensland. By starting at Wallal and going west and south-west they would conserve the trade of that particular part of Queensland for its own port. He hoped the hon. member would not press his amendment, as he (Mr. Paget) could not accept it.

Mr. PAYNE: He was going to support the amendment for more than one reason.

The PREMIER: For one reason particularly.

Mr. PAYNE: What was that?

The PREMIER: Particularly west of Longreach.

Mr. PAYNE hoped the Premier would not accuse him of supporting it for any paltry reason. It was an important matter, and he would support it for no other reason than that it would straighten that portion of what might some day form a section of the transcontinental railway. If anyone looked at the map they would see the dog-leg way the railway would run from Wallal to Windorah, and it would serve no useful purpose at all.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is no proposition to run from Wallal to Windorah.

[Hon. W. T. Paget.]

Mr. PAYNE: The Premier might accuse him of robbing Rockhampton of its natural trade, and he was very pleased, indeed, that the Minister had pointed out that even according to his own expert's report, if the line was built from Charleville through Adavale to Windorah, still Windorah would be 150 miles nearer to Rockhampton than to Brisbane. He would sooner support a railway from Charleville to Windorah through Adavale, but as he would have no opportunity of supporting a line of that description, he would support the amendment. A line from Wallal to Windorah would run across the heads of the Paroo River and the Bulloo waters, and it would run through country that was more or less adaptable for closer settlement. It would run through a very fine stretch of mulga country. The water was subartesian and was not too far below the surface. He did not want to labour the question, but let any hon. member pick up the map and look for himself, and anyone looking at it from a national point of view would at once vote for the amendment. It was absolutely the best idea he had heard in that matter, and, therefore, he intended to support the amendment.

Mr. LAND intended to support the amendment. When speaking last evening he had stated that if the Charleville line was extended straight out to Adavale and towards Windorah he would support it. He did not know whether the amendment would take the line to Adavale or not, but a straight line from Charleville would go very near Adavale. Another reason why he contended that the line should go straight out was because there was plenty of room for a line straight out. By the road it was very nearly 200 miles from Charleville to the border; Adavale would be further, and Windorah still further. Roughly, it would be 180 miles from Charleville to the border, and 200 miles by road. That would be a fairly straight line to Brisbane, and leave room for another line from Cunnamulla to reach out into the Western country. That was the best way to open up that country and connect it with Brisbane.

The PREMIER: One of the disadvantages in a general scheme of this kind was that it was apt to come into conflict with local ideas and interests, as shown by the hon. member for Bulloo, but he confessed that he hardly expected it from a member like the hon. junior member for Brisbane North. The hon. member quite frankly based his objections to the plan of the route on the fact that he thought it was going to rob Brisbane of some of its trade.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Going to alter the conditions.

The PREMIER: If hon. members would study the map, they would see that a very fair attempt had been made to do a fair thing as between the three ports; but, what was more important, to do a fair thing by the pastoralists, who had to pay for the line, and should be considered. He had already explained that it was the intention of the Government to continue a line from Tobermory to Tuen or Wooroorooka. He regretted that that had been taken out, because if the line had been continued from Tobermory to Tuen or Wooroorooka, hon. members would have seen that it was giving the people in that area the only outlet and best route to the coast. For the sake of the hon. member for North Brisbane, he would repeat a thing which he had pointed out to the members of the Brisbane Chamber of

Commerce, who had just the same local fear as the hon. member in this matter. They had a complaint that Brisbane was not getting its share of the Western trade, as against the other ports. Hon. members would see that from the northern border of Section A a straight line to Wooroorooka represented a distance of 240 miles, the trade of which would go to Brisbane. The next section, across to Windorah, was a distance of 140 miles, the trade of which would go to Rockhampton, and the next two sections represented a distance of 400 miles, the trade of which would go to Townsville. But it was quite evident that when the connection with the Gulf was carried out, all the trade from Cloncurry and Camooweal would cease going to Townsville, and go to the Gulf, its natural outlet. He defied any man to study the map and say that any injustice was being done either to Brisbane or any other port, and a fair attempt was being made to give the people of the whole of that district the best road to the natural port.

Mr. BRESLIN: Which is the natural port for the Central district?

The PREMIER: The hon. member for Brisbane North proposed to take this line from Wallal, but unless you were going to take the line from Blackall to Windorah, what would be the good of building a line from Charleville to Windorah? If you were going to take that out, and continue this line from Longreach west or south-west, then you would be doing an injustice not only to the people of Windorah, but also an injury to the people about Palparara and Springvale, and saddling them with from 100 to 150 miles extra railway carriage.

Mr. PAYNE: That is absolutely incorrect.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must not interject when moving about the Chamber.

The PREMIER: If we ran a line from Charleville to Windorah, then the people at Windorah would have 150 miles more railway carriage to pay than if we ran a line from Windorah to Blackall.

Mr. PAYNE: I misunderstood you.

The PREMIER: If they went in the direction of Palparara, or straight out in the direction of Springvale, they would saddle the people of that district with 100 miles extra railage. The people there were nearer to Townsville than Rockhampton. As a matter of fact, Longreach was nearer to Townsville than to Rockhampton, and Charleville was nearer to Rockhampton than Brisbane. He did not hesitate to state that if they could swing the railway to Charleville, 80 miles south, and swing the railway to Longreach, 80 or 100 miles south, it would be a wise thing to do it, but they could not do it, and they had to take things as they were, and they were trying to avoid perpetuating and increasing present disabilities. Some hon. members interjected about travelling down from Eromanga to Tobermory and then travelling up again, but the people at Claverton, on the Charleville-Cunnamulla line, would have to travel 70 miles due north to Charleville and 70 miles south again to get to Brisbane. Why perpetuate that kind of policy? Surely in a big railway scheme like this it was better to get away from Brisbane, Rockhampton, and Townsville and try to give the Western producer, who would have to pay for the

railway, as near as they could the shortest road to the coast. He did not say that they could give every township and every sheep station a bee line to the port. He could not do that, but if hon. members would look at the plan they would see that the people in that benefited area were getting approximately the shortest road to port. It would be a mistake to adopt the alteration suggested by the hon. member for Brisbane North. It would be a perfectly fair thing—and he would have no objection to an amendment if it were moved—

[11.30 p.m.] to extend the line from Tobermory to Tuen and Wooroorooka, as that would be in harmony with the general scheme, and it would not alter the boundary in any way. But he did not hesitate to say that if they altered the Charleville to Windorah route it would alter the whole Bill, and they must withdraw it to get the boundaries rearranged.

Mr. MULLAN: That might be a good thing.

The PREMIER: Yes, if that was the object, but that was not his object.

\* Mr. MACARTNEY: He quite agreed with the Premier when he said that it would make some difference if the scheme had included the line to Tuen and Wooroorooka. The Minister for Railways referred to the subsequent joining with Thargomindah, but it seemed to him that that would be practically bringing two Southern lines within 90 miles of one another. Mr. Amos, in his report, said that if it was a Queensland matter—and it was a Queensland matter primarily—perhaps the best interests of Queensland would be served by connecting with Windorah. That was the suggestion which he (Mr. Macartney) made. Mr. Amos further said that the Tobermory connection was open to question, and further on he also said that Eromanga might be a better junction from a trade point of view. He agreed with the Premier, as a matter of original principle, that the trade of each district should go to its natural port, but they were making an attempt in that proposal to alter the existing state of things. The Minister for Railways suggested the modest extension from Blackall to Windorah was made to conserve the trade from Rockhampton. The Minister said that the Windorah trade already went to Rockhampton, but he (Mr. Macartney) had information which went to show that it went to Brisbane. Brisbane received wool and sent supplies to Hammond Downs, Maroo, Tenham, Springfield, and Keeroongooloo, all in the neighbourhood of Windorah. The stock from there also came to Brisbane, as it was the biggest market; and why should not these places have the advantage of the biggest market? If they had not been altering the existing state of things he would not have been raising the objection he raised to-night. It was due to the district he represented that he should propose the amendment, and he was not asking anything out of the way in asking that the trade be conserved to the South. The Premier pointed out that the alteration of the boundaries would necessitate fixing up the schemes again. That was unfortunate. It was perfectly useless to talk about discussing details in Committee if they could not do that. He thought that what he proposed was a detail which could be dealt with in Committee, and, being a non-party question, he thought it would have been so admitted by the Minister. He was prepared to let his amendment be

*Mr. Macartney.]*

decided by the Committee. He was quite prepared to join in any reasonable alteration proposed by the Committee.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. MURPHY: When they were discussing the matter of a minimum wage and day labour questions that afternoon they were told to let things go quickly. That was done so that the hon. member for Brisbane North could bring in his amendment to bring the trade down to Brisbane. In dealing with a matter of this kind they should deal with it from the natural port standpoint. They did not want to perpetuate the evil that existed in New South Wales and Victoria. All the trade of New South Wales was dragged into Sydney, and all the trade of Victoria was dragged into Melbourne. It was to the credit of past Governments in Queensland that they had given each port the trade that was due to that port. In view of the amendment sprung upon them by the hon. member for Brisbane North, he thought the supporters of the Government should insist on an adjournment, so that members might give the matter careful consideration. If the trade belonged to Brisbane, it should go to Brisbane; if it belonged to Rockhampton, it should go to Rockhampton. No matter how much they might be opposed to the Premier politically, it would be bad business to record a vote out of pure enviousness against the Premier which might do an injury to the port of Rockhampton. Though he was opposed to this railway, he was going to cast his vote to give the trade to the port to which it rightly belonged. After looking at the map, and listening to the Secretary for Railways, he felt convinced that this Windorah trade really belonged to Rockhampton.

Mr. WIENHOLT (*Fassifern*): In a scheme like this he did not see how one could start making alterations without altering the whole scheme. The hon. member for Mitchell said he hoped that if the amendment was passed the line from Charleville to Windorah would some day be part of the transcontinental railway. He did not agree with that; he would much rather see the cross section go much nearer inside and end at Cloncurry, so that it might go on to the Gulf, or end at Camooweal and go to the Gulf later on. He did not think so much depended on the extensions of the lines as on the connecting links. He thought the more one looked at the scheme the more one realised that it improved on acquaintance, and for that reason he would not support the amendment. If they started tinkering with the scheme, they did not know where they would be.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): The discussion emphasised the fact that a scheme generally more acceptable to Southern Queensland could have been submitted if it had included the linking-up of the South-western border line. That, however, had not been included.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is part of the scheme.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It was part of the unwritten scheme. He thought they would do well at this juncture to accept the suggestion partly made by the Premier to alter that crooked line at Tobermory and bring the line down as far as Tuen.

Mr. HAMILTON: They all recognised that they could not develop all the South-western country by means of one railway. He would sooner see this railway extended to Eromanga and build another railway further south to Thargomindah. But to build a line from Charleville to Windorah was attempting to

[*Mr. Macartney.*

bring trade to Brisbane which geographically belonged to Rockhampton. If that were done, they would have to alter all the other lines. The Boulia district would then have to be connected with Longreach instead of with Winton, and, geographically, it belonged to Townsville. To go to Springvale from Longreach meant an additional length of railway for the people of the district to get to port. The trade of Windorah belonged to Rockhampton, and the best way to tap it would be from Longreach instead of from Blackall.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is 30 or 40 miles further *via* Longreach than *via* Blackall.

Mr. HAMILTON: But they would be travelling over good country, and the engineering difficulties were easier to overcome. The people out there did not want to be connected with Blackall. He took no notice of what was said by people who were not in the benefited area. It was the people who had to guarantee the railway to whom they should listen.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is only a case of running down the Barcoo or running down the Thomson.

Mr. HAMILTON: It was easier to run down the Thomson, and it would be a much cheaper line. It would not be so liable to be flooded. There were some very big floods in the Barcoo River.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And in the Thomson too.

Mr. HAMILTON: By running down the Thomson they would be able to keep to the high ground nearly the whole way. He could not support the amendment, because it seemed to be an attempt to filch trade from other ports for Brisbane.

Mr. MACARTNEY: To retain the trade that belongs to Brisbane.

Mr. HAMILTON: The great bulk of the trade of the Windorah district went to Rockhampton. Some of the stations which the hon. member had mentioned no doubt sent their wool to Charleville, but some of them were small stations. Windorah was 150 miles nearer to Rockhampton than it was to Brisbane, and the people in the district concerned should be considered.

Mr. ALLEN intended to support the amendment, at the request of the people in the Windorah district.

The PREMIER: Well might I say, "Poor Thargomindah."

Mr. ALLEN: All the trade east of Cooper's Creek at the present time came to Charleville.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: You wipe out your district.

Mr. ALLEN: His district was all right. It had been wiped out already to-night, but it would come again some other time. If separation took place, he would like to know which division Windorah would be in. At present it was at the back door of Charleville, and even the people who now did business with Rockhampton would prefer to have a line from Charleville to a line from Blackall. He had that morning received the following telegram from Mr. Purcell, the owner of Galway Downs, the largest station in that district, and whose trade at present went to Longreach—

No railway at all suitable this district except Charleville to Adavale and Windorah. Tobermory line out of it for us. Everyone against Blackall line. Residents holding meeting to protest on Thursday.

That was only one of several telegrams he had received from that district. If the Home Secretary

tary were in the Chamber he could bear out his contention, as the hon. gentleman visited the district rather more than eighteen months ago. At that time railway matters were a burning question, and the people wanted the extension from Charleville. Wool was not the only product to be considered. There was a big cattle business done with both Brisbane and Sydney. If they were compelled to get to Brisbane *via* Blackall, it would be going almost in a circle, and it would practically mean that the Brisbane and Sydney markets would be shut off. When he was out last, 150 miles beyond Windorah cattle were being sent off to Sydney. If they had a railway from Charleville, they could be got to Sydney in a remarkably short time. If they were commencing building their railway system over again, they could benefit by the mistakes that had been made in the past. But they had to take things as they were. He hoped the amendment would be carried, and that if the people of the southern portion of the Bulloo district could not get their railway to-day they would get it to-morrow.

Mr. COYNE was opposed to the amendment. In the south-western portion of Queensland, which was proposed to be tapped by a line to Tobermory, there was a certain amount of Queensland trade which had been lost to Queensland ever since Queensland was a separate State, owing to the fact that it had not railway communication, and the proposed line would gather some of that trade. If the amendment was carried, the line would cross the Bulloo about 30 miles south of Adavale. Both Adavale and Charleville were outside the benefited area, and properly so, but if the line went from Walla to Windorah, Adavale would certainly be included in the benefited area, and that would mean ruin to the place. For that reason he should vote against the amendment. If the line was taken to Eromanga, they would bring the railway from Blackall to Windorah and the railway from Walla to Eromanga too close together.

The TREASURER : As a member representing a metropolitan constituency, and as one who desired to see as much trade as could be got with ordinary fairness coming to Brisbane, he could not support the amendment. By taking the line down to Tobermory they would have a very good opportunity of getting a fair portion of the South-western trade, which at present went to Sydney. Moreover, Windorah was naturally best served by a railway to Rockhampton. Anyone measuring the distances on the map would see that it was the same distance from Windorah to Rockhampton as it was from Windorah to Dalby, so that there was a difference of 153 miles in favour of Rockhampton as the port for that district, and he thought that should be a sufficient reason to induce hon. members to carry the scheme as proposed in the Bill. The hon. member for Bulloo read a telegram from the owner of Galway Downs, in which that gentleman stated distinctly that his trade was done with Rockhampton, which was the natural port for that district. He thought the hon. member who had moved the amendment would be well advised if he withdrew it.

Mr. PAYNE : It had been argued that if this amendment was carried it would deprive Rockhampton of some of the trade that it had been getting for all time. If he thought that for one moment he would not vote for the amendment, but he did not think so. As the Minister had pointed out, the direct distance from Brisbane through Charleville and Adavale to Windorah was 153 miles greater than it was from Rockhampton to Windorah. How, then, could the adoption of the amendment take trade away from Rockhampton? He was going to vote for the

amendment, because he wished to shove Rockhampton along. The amendment did not propose a railway by the shortest route, but it would mean that Rockhampton would have to start wool sales of its own. The Treasurer stated that Galway Downs produce went to Blackall. That was not so. The produce from Galway Downs went to Longreach.

The TREASURER : What about the telegram read by the hon. member for Bulloo?

Mr. PAYNE : Mr. Purcell never sent an ounce of wool to Blackall; he sent it all to Longreach, and wool from stations even as far as Canterbury went to Longreach. Every ounce of the wool of both the large and small stations around Windorah went to Longreach, and even if you built a line straight to Windorah it would not rob Rockhampton of any trade; as a matter of fact, Rockhampton would get more trade, and that was the line that should be built.

HON. E. B. FORREST (*Brisbane North*) : There seems to be a difference of opinion as to where the trade of Windorah went at the present time. It had been stated by hon. members that most of it went to Longreach, and that very little of it came to Brisbane. Whatever might be said with regard to the trade of Windorah, there was no getting away from the fact that naturally it belonged to Rockhampton. When the Bill was introduced, it was stated that its object was to conserve to each port the trade that naturally belonged to it, and he was strongly in favour of that principle. The natural extension of railway communication to Thargomindah should be by the border line. It had been suggested that the railway should be extended to Tuen from Tobermory, and he was very sorry that extension was not included in the Bill. He was sorry he could not see his way to support the amendment to construct the line from Walla to Windorah, because if that were done he recognised that the Bill would be practically a dead bird. He would sooner see the line extended from Walla to Eromanga, and, if the amendment were altered in that direction, he would be glad to support it, and that would not interfere with the extension of the line down to Tuen. He therefore moved the omission of the word "Windorah" with the view of inserting "Eromanga."

Mr. MACARTNEY said he would be willing to accept the amendment suggested by his colleague.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS pointed out that substituting Eromanga for Tobermory would entirely alter Railway District A. If hon. members would look at the map in Schedule 1 they would see that Eromanga was only 20 miles from the northern boundary of the railway district and about 100 miles from the southern boundary, while Tobermory was about 75 miles south of the northern boundary of the railway district, and was about the same distance north of the southern boundary. After a good deal of consideration, it was thought that the southern end of the Great Western Railway should be at Tobermory, and for those reasons he could not see his way to accept the amendment.

Mr. MURPHY : Was the proposed amendment likely to interfere with the trade which naturally belonged to Brisbane?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS : No.

Mr. MURPHY : He realised that for the last quarter of the century those residents had complained about the trade which naturally belonged to the Gulf ports being taken to Townsville, and he did not wish to record any

*Mr. Murphy.]*

vote that was likely to interfere with the natural trade of any particular port. It was very unfair that in connection with any scheme which involved the expenditure of £4,000,000 or £5,000,000, members should be asked to sit up all night.

HON. R. PHILP: They wanted to build a line that would do the most good to Western Queensland, and while he did not altogether agree with the proposal in the Bill, he recognised that if they altered the route in the South they would also have to alter the routes in the Centre and North. He suggested that the line be built from Wallall direct to the Bulloo, which would benefit a number of stations carrying over half a million of sheep that would not benefit by the proposed line. It must be remembered that they were not building lines for to-day or to-morrow; they were building them for all time, and they should take care not to make the same mistake as New South Wales had made.

MR. G. P. BARNES sincerely hoped the hon. member would withdraw his amendment, as instead of going North they should go further South, and he suggested that they connect with the line at Miles.

HON. E. B. FORREST: The route proposed by the hon. member for Townsville, from Wallall direct to the Bulloo, appeared to come within the scope of the margin allowed by the Bill, and if the Government were willing to carry out that proposal it would be a very good thing, and he would have no objection to withdraw his amendment.

MR. COLLINS would like further information on the proposed route from members who knew the country before he gave a vote on the amendment.

MR. O'SULLIVAN: Although he did not know the country to be traversed by the proposed railway, he was of the opinion that the line should be due west towards the setting sun instead of that continual drooping down south.

MR. SOMERSET: It would be both easier and shorter to build a line from Charleville *via* Adavale to Windorah than the proposed route, but that would necessitate altering the whole benefited area scheme; he thought, however, the route should be a little further north than was proposed in the Bill, through Comongin, even though it went south again to Tobermory.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That can be done under the provisions of the Bill.

MR. COYNE pointed out that from the proposed terminus at Tobermory right away down to the corner the trade was all lost to Queensland, and if the line was taken to Eromanga that trade would all go to South Australia, and they would be depriving Thargomindah and the districts around there of railway communication, to which they were entitled.

MR. FORSYTH: Under the Bill they had power to deviate 20 miles, and if that were done it would meet the views of both the members for Brisbane North, and would take in the large sheep stations in that district. If the line went 20 miles north of the proposed route, there would be no necessity to alter the clause at all, and the line could then run down south to Tobermory.

MR. FOLEY argued that members should decide on a route which would give the greatest good to the greatest number, and it certainly appeared that if they took the railway further north they would be depriving a large portion of the South of railway communication, and he would support the Government rather than the amendment moved by the hon. member for Brisbane North.

[*Mr. Murphy.*]

MR. ALLEN: As the route to Windorah had been defeated, and his constituents had been deprived of what they wanted, he would vote for the next best thing. Evidently Thargomindah could not get a railway to the town, and he would therefore support the section as it stood in order to get the railway as near to Thargomindah as possible, the Windorah district being provided with communication *via* Blackall.

MR. FERRICKS intended to support the amendment, as it tended to bring trade to Brisbane which naturally belonged to it. He would advocate the extension of the three main trunk lines due west, and the linking up further east than was at present proposed. He therefore intended to support the amendment, and in doing that he would be making the best of a bad bargain. He did not believe in the railway policy of the Government, as it was many years before its time. He would like some members on the Government side to get up and expound their views on the amendment, as it was very desirable that the Committee should have further information on the matter.

MR. RYAN was more satisfied than ever, after the discussion, that the Committee should have had more information in regard to the whole proposal. It was not desirable that they should have a connection from Wallall to Windorah, and a connection from Blackall to Windorah. They should not have the two lines converging on the one point. There was no doubt that the trade of Windorah rightly belonged to Central Queensland, and, therefore, he thought the connection should be further south, towards Tobermory. They had also to take into consideration the fact that Mr. Amos recommended that the line should connect with Tobermory, and that he recommended no connection with Windorah on the South. He would certainly vote against the amendment.

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

MR. HAMILTON moved the omission of all the words after "Tobermory," on line 6, to the word "thereabouts," on line 13. That was in keeping with the statement he had made on the second reading, that while he approved of the western extensions, and was dead against the cross section, this amendment would wipe the cross section out. There was no necessity for that section, and they were saddling the people out there with the 3 per cent. interest on the construction of the western extensions as well as that cross section. He wished to see the railways linked up nearer the coast, and Mr. Amos had included the line from Winton to Longreach as one of the very first lines that should be built. If that extension were made at once, and they were in the throes of a drought in two years' time, the lessees would be enabled to shift their stock; but even if the proposal as contained in the Bill were carried, the lessees would be no better off, as it would take years to complete the line.

MR. PAYNE would support the amendment, as it was not a fair thing in a sparsely populated district to say to the people "We are going to build this line and saddle you with the 3 per cent. on the cost, and we are not going to allow you to say whether you wish it built or not." If the Premier would not agree to take the line direct to Windorah, it would be a wise thing to allow it to stop at Tobermory.

MR. NEVITT intended to support the amendment. As he had mentioned on the second reading, he had no objection to the western extensions, but he had a very strong objection to the trans-section. At the present time the line from Hughenden to Winton was only paying £1 16s. per cent., and the extension further west would not pay as well, and it would place a very

heavy burden on the lessees in those districts, and, according to the Commissioner's own report, those people would have to pay considerably more than 8s. 9d. per square mile towards the upkeep of those lines. He did not think the time was opportune for making the cross section.

Mr. LENNON was going to support the amendment. He was in favour of extending any of the lines from the coast further west, and he was also in favour of linking up the railways between Longreach and Winton, and had advocated the linking up of those lines for many years. The Premier had again referred to hon. members of the Opposition as wasting time. Had not the hon. member for North Brisbane wasted time?

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask the hon. member to confine his remarks to the question before the Committee. The hon. member should have replied to the Premier at the time he had accused hon. members of wasting time.

Mr. LENNON again asked the Premier to postpone the construction of the cross section until the Committee had further information.

Mr. FERRICKS could not support the amendment, as he was opposed to the construction of the cross section altogether. He would point out that it would take twenty-four years to complete the construction of that railway, and contended that although mistakes had been made in the past, they should not perpetuate those mistakes. In any proposal to connect Tobermory with Camooweal, it was a pertinent question to ask what was to become of the Gulf ports.

Mr. RYLAND was opposed to the construction of a line from Tobermory to Camooweal, as he considered it was too far out. He had in his hand the scheme proposed by Sir Thomas McLlwraith.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask the hon. member to confine himself to the question before the Committee. The scheme as proposed by the late Sir Thomas McLlwraith has nothing to do with the question before the Committee.

Mr. RYLAND: He was in favour of linking up the main trunk lines, but he considered that the present proposal was too far out, and the very line they were asked to agree to was the one which Mr. Amos recommended for consideration at some future time. He thought the Committee should vote unanimously in favour of the amendment. There was a sort of understanding that the proposed railway would be used in connection with the Federal transcontinental railway, and, if that was so, they should take into consideration the question of gauge, as if it was to be used in connection with defence it was absolutely essential that all the railways in Australia should be of uniform gauge, so that troops could be transferred from one part of Australia to the other without unnecessary delay.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. RYLAND, continuing, said: As the plans and specifications were not ready, they would not be able to commence the construction of the cross section for at least three years, and, therefore, the matter should be postponed to allow of the question of gauge being thoroughly investigated. He knew the advantages of the 3-feet-6-inch gauge, and also the advantages of the 4-feet-8½-inch gauge, and he understood that on the latter gauge they could carry the maximum load for the minimum expense.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN indicated that the hon. member's further time had expired.

Mr. MULLAN pointed out that Mr. Amos, in his report, not only did not recommend the construction of the cross section, but said it "may" be taken into consideration at some future time, and even at that late hour he thought the Minister might withdraw the proposal.

Mr. MURPHY would vote against the construction of that cross section, as it meant the expenditure of a very large amount of money. Believing this was a leap in the dark, he thought the matter should stand over for some time. He objected to the building of a line which the representatives of Western Queensland said it was a great mistake to build. If a division were taken he would vote for the amendment.

Mr. FERRICKS supported the amendment because he refused to be a party to what he considered would be the permanent stagnation of the agricultural industry if this line was built. If we launched into a proposal of this magnitude, the wants of agriculturists in regard to railways would not receive due attention. It would take about twenty-four years to finish the work, and there was another question which had to do with the introduction of this railway. The Premier had not received an invitation to the Coronation proceedings; while the other Australian Premiers had, so the Premier wished to bring his name prominently before the Imperial Authorities. He was surprised at the farming representatives supporting this railway, which was designed in the interests of the middlemen. They did not look after the interests of the primary producers.

Mr. D. HUNTER: If they passed this cross section, which hon. members opposite were objecting to the most, the people would have an opportunity of expressing their opinion at the next general election, as the cross section could not be commenced before that time. The Federal Government were proposing to build a line right through a desert, and to go in for a £10,000,000 loan, but this proposal would be of great benefit to Queensland. The House would hold the whole power in its hands, and would be able to say in two or three years whether the cross section should be carried out. The hon. member for Warrego had shown that it was going to do good for Queensland. Hon. members opposite were making a party move of this matter, so that they could make it a fighting plank at the next election.

Mr. FERRICKS explained that he had had a considerable experience in the West, having engaged in fencing and other work, and he objected to the hon. member for Wolloongabba stating that he (Mr. Ferricks) knew nothing about the West, and opposed the proposal from party motives. Another thing, for the hon. member to say that the Federal Government was concerned about the effort to centralise trade here was incorrect; they would construct their railway through South Australia to Oodnadatta no matter what we did.

Mr. COLLINS said it had been stated that a person wanted to live in Central Queensland before he could vote on this railway, but that was a childish argument. They had been sent into Parliament to make laws for the whole of the State, and he had as much right to express his opinion on this railway as the man who lived in that particular district. He would vote against the construction of this cross section. They wanted a railway from Charlestown to Georgetown, but there was no money for that line, yet there was money enough for this squatters'

*Mr. Collins.]*

railway. A large amount of money would have to be borrowed for this cross section. The pastoral industry could be carried on without railways at their back doors. They were carting wool right down from Western Queensland to Broken Hill at the present time and making it pay. Therefore this cross section could wait for many years. The fact that the Government said it might not be started for two or three years proved that the Government would not have plans or specifications ready for a long time. It would take £2,208,000 for the cross section, which amount could be spent in a more reproductive manner.

Mr. FOLEY supported the amendment, on the recommendation of Mr. Amos in his report, in which he presented a lithograph with a red line showing the route over which he travelled. The dotted lines, denoting the cross sections, he said, might be taken into consideration at some future date. The Minister said we might have an election before this cross section was started, and if two years elapsed before a start was made, the proposal should be held over, but the Government refused to agree to that suggestion, which had been repeatedly made. He thought it was pushed forward because the Government thought, in view of the Federal Government taking over the State debts, they would not allow the State Government to spend the money required for the undertaking. He was not opposed to running the trunk lines out further West, as indicated by the full red lines in the report. Mr. Amos recommended a linking up between Longreach to Winton and Blackall to Longreach, which would be ample for many years to come, and if the Government would be satisfied with that part he would support it.

Mr. MURPHY would oppose this cross section. They had been told it was unlikely that any work on the line would be done for many years to come. The Premier said it would take twenty years to build the whole scheme, and where was the necessity for going in for this comprehensive scheme? If we spend all this money on this cross-section, how could we build all those model towns which the hon. member for South Brisbane brought news about from Canada? (Laughter.) If we wanted to open up the Western country we could do it better by building these model villages.

At 2.30 a.m.,

Mr. GRANT resumed the chair.

Mr. COLLINS pointed out that members opposite were advocating this railway, which Mr. Amos, their own expert, said would not pay. Was it the intention of the Government to borrow the money required for this cross section locally? The amount required would be about £650,000. He did not think this railway need be built for another generation. The Government were endeavouring to legislate for posterity. He was not prepared to tax the people of Queensland any more than they were at the present time. No sane business man would propose to build a railway for an industry which would pay without a railway, like the pastoral industry.

Mr. HARDACRE had no objection at all to the Western extension, but he was opposed to the cross section in the extreme West. Ten years ago they were asked to give relief to the pastoralists out there, on account of drought, which in 1900 had been raging for seven or eight years. This was nearly as bad as the proposed desert railway of the Federal Government, which he was not in favour of. Our past history

[Mr. Collins.

showed that the bulk of our population and stock were going to be settled nearer the coast. He remembered a map being shown which indicated that 68,000 square miles of country were affected by drought, and out of which 28,000 square miles had been thrown up by pastoral lessees in 1902. He read a report made at that time by Mr. Gibson, one of the land commissioners in the South-west, who had had twenty-two years' experience in connection with the rivers, and he said that the annual flood waters were insufficient to cut deep channels. The trees were not more than one-third of that of the trees 400 miles further East, which showed the dry nature of the country, and it was only rarely that artesian water was suitable for irrigation purposes.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN did not think this cross section would lead to much settlement. He had no objection to extending the trunk lines further west, but he objected to this trans-section. The best policy to pursue would be to settle the people on the land in districts already possessing railways. With regard to the line being useful for defence purposes, he could only say that if an enemy got into that part of the country he would not be able to live. The maintenance of the line would be very costly also, as there was such a deficiency of timber there. It was said that starving stock would make it pay; but if a drought occurred the pastoralists would want the stock carried for nothing, and there would be no profit from the line, and they would expect the fodder to be carried free on the railways. It had been said that this trans-section would benefit Brisbane; yet Brisbane escaped the share of responsibility for any loss which occurred. The Government evidently intended to refuse all amendments.

Mr. WIENHOLT expressed the opinion that this cross section was too far out, but he would not endanger the whole scheme because he considered it was too far out. As we proceeded with the work, the new experience gained might lead us to make the cross section nearer east. We did not commit ourselves until we started the cross sections. He would like to be assured that the cross sections would not be started until we had completed two of the extensions, and then we would have more experience to guide us.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER objected to these cross sections, as they would not promote settlement. They were too far west, and he should like to see them brought further east.

Mr. HARDACRE read a report published in the *Courier* in 1900, describing the state of the country at that time, which was before what was called "the great drought" commenced in Queensland. All the evidence went to show clearly that the normal condition of the country was drought-stricken. They were not justified in constructing a railway in such a country as that; it would not serve for the carriage of stock, but a line 150 miles further east would do so. There were numerous objections to running the cross sections in the extreme west of Queensland.

The PREMIER: Where the rivers are 100 miles wide. (Laughter.)

Mr. HARDACRE: That was when the water from the Northern watershed came down in flood time. The Premier would have a finger in putting the loan on the market. This cross section was there because it looked well on the

map, and appeared to be a big scheme. It was remarkable that every man who knew the Western country was opposed to the cross section there. He pointed out the insanity of putting the cross section where it would not serve one good purpose. The Premier said they had got power to alter it afterwards, and some members said it was not likely to be built, but they had no right to pass it if that was the case. Let them build a cross section in a place where it would serve the purposes intended.

Mr. COYNE explained that the country through which this cross section was proposed to be made was very poor country. The proper thing was to make the connection further eastward, where the rainfall was better, and where the people could better meet the liability on the guarantee. A line from Morven on to Tambo and Blackall would serve far better than this cross section. The country out there could only support a certain number of stock per square mile. With the good seasons we had had for seven or eight years, the country looked grand, but there was a different tale to tell when a drought came on. He mentioned one station on which there were 54,000 head of cattle, but after the drought there were not 100 head left. Why not build our Western extensions first, before we passed the cross section, which he was sure would be a dead weight on the people settled there at the present time. The people living out there were opposed to the cross section, and they were not actuated by anything but the most honourable motives.

Mr. RYLAND pointed out that the reports of Mr. George Phillips and other experts were in favour of linking up between Longreach and Hughenden. They all agreed that the present linking up proposal was too far west.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER contended that we were going too far west in starting a cross section from Tobermory. The point should be nearer east, so that both sides of the State could be served. Instead of being the main artery of the State, it was being put too far out in inferior country and where feeders could not be sent out on one side. He contended that a better route could be chosen, as was proved by Mr. George Phillips's report.

Mr. LAND was in favour of the amendment, because the whole of the cross sections were too far inland and away from the rainfall, and the country would not be able to raise the amount of stock to warrant the expenditure of so much money. The fact that the line would not pay was a strong argument against starting it at all. The rainfall could not be increased, and that was an argument against the contention that a much greater number of stock could be raised in that country. But if we opened the good country with a good rainfall, further east, there would be practically no limit to the number of stock which could be raised. This was too expensive an undertaking. It did not matter whether the Premier said they were stonewalling. They had a duty to perform, and were responsible to their constituents. It was his bounden duty to oppose the clause. If the first section of this scheme was passed, what chance had they of preventing the passage of the remaining sections? The day would come when the Premier would find out that he was making a mistake, and many things said by members on this side would prove to be right. He was born in Queensland, and he had seen many booms in which he had never profited as a worker.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Hamilton's amendment*) stand part of the clause—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 34.

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

Tellers: Mr. Cottell and Mr. D. Hunter.

NOES, 23.

Mr. Allen	Mr. May
" Breslin	" Mulcahy
" Collins	" Mullan
" Coyne	" Murphy
" Crawford	" McLachlan
" Ferricks	" Nevitt
" Foley	" O'Sullivan
" Humilton	" Payne
" Hardacre	" Ryan
" Hunter, J. M.	" Ryland
" Land	" Winstanley
" Lennon	

Tellers: Mr. Murphy and Mr. Ryan.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Rankin and Mr. Fox.

Noes—Mr. Douglas and Mr. Blair.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. G. P. BARNES moved the insertion, after "thereabouts," line 13, of the words "and also from Tobermory, proceeding in a south-easterly direction to a point near Wild, a distance of sixty miles or thereabouts."

Mr. MURPHY asked for some reason for the amendment. Was it part of the *via recta*? (Laughter.) If so, he would oppose it. Would the amendment not mean the shifting of the benefited area?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No.

Mr. MURPHY: Perhaps the Minister would tell them something about it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He would accept the amendment because it was a reasonable one. It would not need any alteration of the boundaries, and would give railway facilities to the people in the Thargomindah district.

Mr. COYNE: The amendment was one of the wildest and most insane amendments that had been proposed. The place had been abandoned, and was not on the main road to Thargomindah.

The PREMIER: The purpose is that the railway should go to Tuen.

Mr. COYNE: It should not go to Tuen at all. It should go to Thargomindah and then to Hungerford. The amendment took the line to a place called Wild Block, and it was a mad proposal to bring the line back in a south-easterly direction. He hoped there was no business in the amendment.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: The amendment was an absurd proposal. It was a triangle of land, and bad country, too, surrounded by a railway. It was a waste of public money to build such a railway. Even if the extra line did benefit the *via recta*, it should never be built. It was the

*Mr. J. M. Hunter.* }

height of absurdity to make such a proposal. It was just to show that Warwick was not forgotten in the great railway scheme.

The PREMIER: One good reason to extend the railway to the border of the benefited area was that when they wished to extend the border railway to Tuen they would not be able to extend the line to meet the border railway unless they put it in now. All that country would have the shortest route then to Brisbane, and also to Port Darwin.

Mr. LAND: If the line went to Thargomindah and Tuen, and then went on to meet the border railway, it would be all right. Why cut out an old-established town like Thargomindah?

The PREMIER: It will be within 30 miles of Thargomindah.

Mr. LAND: Surely the people who went to Thargomindah in the early days, and dealt with Brisbane all the time, were entitled to some consideration! There was some good country round Thargomindah, and it would be far better to run the line there instead of to Wild. There was nothing at Wild to justify taking a railway there. He appealed to members opposite to take a common-sense view of it.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: During the second reading the Premier said that the object was to connect with Tuen and Wooroorooka, and other speakers had referred to it. He argued that they would conserve all that trade for Brisbane by accepting the amendment.

Mr. HAMILTON: Mr. Amos was sent out to recommend a certain route, and they were departing altogether from the route he recommended, because of a little caucus of members behind the Government. Mr. Amos never recommended the extra 60 miles, and the Government accepted it at the wish of members sitting behind them, although the Government would not accept what Mr. Amos really did recommend. The New South Wales line might link up at Hungerford instead of at Wooroorooka. The amendment was accepted merely to please the hon. member for Warwick, and because the Government considered that an extra 60 miles did not matter. It was silly, and they might as well not have sent Mr. Amos out at all.

Hon. R. PHILP: It was a silly amendment, and he would oppose it. If they were going to extend the line at all from Tobermory, it should go to Thargomindah. It would make the whole thing a farce to come back in a south-easterly direction. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. NEVITT: If the amendment were accepted, it would make the Government look ridiculous. A more ridiculous amendment was never moved in any Parliament, and it was only accepted because the Government wanted to retain office.

Mr. ALLEN contended that it would be hard to conceive a sillier proposal. It was not serving his district, but rather placed a yoke on it. Why not take the line to Thargomindah, and go to the south-western corner and get some of the trade that now went to New South Wales and South Australia? Who asked for the amendment? The people out West did not ask for it. It was dragging the line across the Bulloo River a second time to a deserted place called Wild. They knew that public meetings had been held, and some people's political skins were in danger, and that was the reason for the amendment. The people in the South-western district would have to pay for the line without having a chance of saying whether they approved of it or not. The Government did not know where the line was going at all. It was patent to everyone what a trumpery affair the whole thing was. It ap-

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peared that Mr. Amos's report was only good in so far as he agreed with the red ink line adopted in Brisbane.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN indicated that the hon. member's time had expired.

Mr. MURPHY asked what would be the extra cost of mileage if they adopted the amendment? He believed it was to cost another £180,000. It was one of the wildest railway schemes imaginable. It looked as if the Government were going wild on railways (Laughter.) The people when they looked at such a proposal would consider that the members, instead of being sent to Parliament, should have been sent to Goodna. Why not build a railway from the Gulf instead of adopting such a proposal as was contained in the amendment? The Premier ought to put the whole thing before them at once, instead of doing it piecemeal. Let them have the Gulf line as well.

The PREMIER: In speaking on the second reading he explained what was the scheme of the Government in the matter of connecting the railways there. It would make no difference to the scheme, and after what had been said by hon. members he suggested that the amendment be withdrawn.

Mr. G. P. BARNES was sorry that hon. members did not see the advantage of his proposal. However, with the consent of the Committee, he would withdraw his amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. PAYNE moved that the word "Blackall" be deleted on line 14 with the view of inserting "Longreach." The line, if taken from Longreach, would be built for £1,300 per mile cheaper; it was a shorter line and it would pass through better country. It was 14 miles shorter than the proposed Blackall line. The Blackall people had distinctly refused to bear the 3 per cent. cost of the extension from Blackall, but the people along the extension from Longreach were willing to pay the guarantee.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: From Windorah it would be 30 miles longer to the coast *via* Longreach than *via* Blackall. The people at Ilfracombe thought the railway should go from Ilfracombe to Windorah, and the Longreach people wanted it to go from Longreach to Palparara. The Blackall extension would serve the people in that district much better than the Longreach extension, although he admitted there were good arguments in favour of both.

Mr. HAMILTON was sorry that the Minister would not accept the amendment. The Longreach extension would serve good sheep country, much better than there was in the other connection. The Blackall people voted against the proposal a few years ago, and now they were in favour of it because Blackall was outside the benefited area, and would not have to pay the guarantee, and they did not want to lose the trade there.

Mr. PAYNE: He would not have moved the amendment if it had taken the trade from the natural port. The Commissioner showed that it would cost less to build the line from Longreach. If it was going to take the trade from Rockhampton, he would not move the amendment. The line should never have gone to Longreach in the first place; but, as it did go there, they should make the extension from Longreach now, as it would run through some of the best grazing country in Australia, while on the Blackall extension there was a lot of inferior land. In the best interests of Queensland the Longreach extension should be made. There was no need to alter the boundaries of the benefited areas.

Mr. RYLAND supported the amendment. The map accompanying Mr. Amos's report showed that he favoured the Longreach extension. It was splendid country down the Thomson from Longreach. It was not so long ago that the people along the Blackall-Welford extension defeated the proposal to make that connection by a large majority, and it was better to build the extension from Longreach.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Mr. Amos did not in his plan or in his report recommend a line from Longreach to Windorah, but from Longreach to Palparara.

Mr. RYLAND: It looked from the map that Mr. Amos's proposed extension from Longreach was shorter.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is 30 miles longer.

Question—That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause (*Mr. Payne's amendment*)—put; and the Committee divided:—

## AYES, 34.

Mr. Allan	Mr. Hodge
" Appel	" Hunter, D.
" Barnes, G. P.	" Kidston
" Barnes, W. H.	" Macartney
" Booker	" Mackintosh
" Bouchard	" Morgan
" Brennan	" Paget
" Bridges	" Petrie
" Corser	" Ryan
" Cottell	" Somerset
" Cribb	" Stodart
" Denham	" Swayne
" Forrest	" Thorn
" Forsyth	" Tolmie
" Grayson	" Walker
" Gunn	" White
" Hawthorn	" Wienholt
<i>Tellers: Mr. Cribb and Mr. Thorn.</i>	

## NOES, 22.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Lennon
" Breslin	" May
" Collins	" Muleahy
" Coyne	" Mullian
" Crawford	" Murphy
" Ferricks	" McLachlan
" Foley	" Nevitt
" Hamilton	" O'Sullivan
" Hardacre	" Payne
" Hunter, J. M.	" Ryland
" Land	" Winstanley
<i>Tellers: Mr. Coyne and Mr. J. M. Hunter.</i>	

## PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Rankin and Mr. Fox.  
Noes—Mr. Douglas and Mr. Blair.  
Resolved in the affirmative.

Mr. HAMILTON moved the deletion of the words "Suliman's Creek," with the view of inserting "Rochedale." It would serve the Lady Fanny and other group of mines by accepting the amendment.

The PREMIER: There is a margin of 20 miles allowed on the cross line and connecting line.

Mr. HAMILTON: Twenty miles margin was not sufficient. If the clause were amended as he suggested it would serve the whole of the Upper Georgina. Rochedale was the best place to have the objective of that line, as it would serve a big mining district. It would serve more people and better country.

The PREMIER: He asked the hon. member not to press his amendment, not with the idea of not taking it there, but their idea was to take the railway to where there was the best chance of trade. They had a margin of 20 miles on each side, and it was suggested that it should be 25 miles. If it were found necessary to come to Rochedale if the mining development required it,

after coming from the Duchess, then with the margin of 20 miles they would be able to come through Rochdale.

Mr. HAMILTON: He was up in that country a few years ago and he was certain that Mr. Amos never went over the place marked on the plan in his motor-car, because there were some very stiff mountains there. It was all mountainous country, and the route of the line was shown through it.

Mr. MAY supported the remarks of the hon. member for Gregory. He had been all over the district last year, and even if the margin were increased to 25 miles it would not be sufficient to include Rochdale.

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

Mr. NEVITT moved the deletion of all the words after "Suliman's Creek," on line 49. A total of 250 tons of material was required for every 1 mile of railway. The distance from Townsville to Cloncurry was 488 miles, and it would cost £33,656 extra to bring the material from Townsville instead of from the Gulf port.

Mr. MURPHY: The object of the amendment was to run out a line from the Gulf port and save the extra cost in the haulage of railway material.

Mr. NEVITT: And to insure the trade for the natural port.

At 5.40 a.m.,

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Under Standing Order No. 171, I call on the hon. member for Woolloongabba to relieve me in the chair.

Mr. D. HUNTER took the chair accordingly.

Mr. MURPHY: The amendment desired to protect the trade of the Gulf for a Gulf port, and if a railway were built to a Gulf port it would save a lot in the cost of carriage.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He did not see how the amendment would bring about the connection between Cloncurry and the Gulf. The Bill proposed to tap the Barklay Tableland at Camooweal, as recommended by Mr. Amos, but the amendment proposed to knock that out.

Mr. NEVITT: The trade from Barklay Tableland would not go over the railway to Townsville. It would go by teams to Burketown, as it went at present. The trade of that district belonged to the port of Burketown. The railway from the Gulf should be constructed in order to save that extra mileage of railway.

Mr. MURPHY pointed out that Mr. Phillips presented a report on the best method of opening up the Gulf country, and he recommended that the railway should be built from Burketown to Camooweal.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Nevitt's amendment*) stand part of the question—put; and the Committee divided:—

## AYE, 33.

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

*Tellers: Mr. Cottell and Mr. Wienholt.*

*Mr. Murphy.]*

NORS, 23.

Mr. Allen	Mr. May
" Breslin	" Mulcahy
" Collins	" Mullan
" Coyne	" Murphy
" Crawford	" McLachlan
" Ferrieks	" Nevitt
" Foley	" O'Sullivan
" Hamilton	" Payne
" Hardacre	" Ryan
" Hunter, J. M.	" Ryland
" Land	" Winstanley
" Lennon	

Tellers: Mr. Breslin and Mr. Winstanley.

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Rankin and Mr. Fox.

Noes—Mr. Douglas and Mr. Blair.

Resolved in the affirmative.

HON. R. PHILP moved the insertion of "five" after "twenty" in line 57. [6 a.m.] He thought it would improve the Bill to increase the margin with respect to the route from twenty to twenty-five miles.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS said he thought the amendment would be an improvement.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. MURPHY called attention to the fact that the Railway Act of 1863 was passed to repeal a syndicate railway Act which had previously been passed.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clauses 2 and 3 put and passed.

On clause 4—"Application of Railways Acts"—

Mr. PAYNE protested against a distinction being made between this line and the railways constructed under the Act of 1906.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 5—"Section 4 of Act of 1906 not to apply to railway districts"—

Mr. HAMILTON opposed the clause. He believed in the guarantee principle, provided the people interested knew the conditions and had the right of veto; but in this case the line would be forced on them willy-nilly, and they would have to bear the cost of the guarantee without being allowed to have any say in the matter.

Mr. HARDACRE contended that the crushing burden imposed by the guarantee would drive out settlement. He opposed the clause.

Mr. RYAN argued against the clause, which took away the protection in the Act of 1906 to residents in the so-called benefited areas. It was a monstrous proposition to impose this guarantee on people without giving them a voice in the question as to whether the line should be constructed or not. In his district there were places in the benefited area that would receive no benefit at all: for example, Isisford, Stonehenge, and near Blackall. A spirit of fair play should induce hon. members to remove the compulsory guarantee. He would rather see clause 9 of the Act of 1906 made inoperative, so that the rents of holdings whose value was enhanced by the construction of the line might be reassessed by the Land Court. If there was an advancement in value, that should be made to bear any loss that might accrue. The Government would carry the railway in any case, and he could only fight to prevent an unjust imposition on some of his electors.

Mr. RYLAND protested against the clause on the ground that it was not fair to give the people in the benefited area no right of veto. In any case the guarantee should be based only on the increased value.

[*Hon. R. Philp.*]

Mr. PAYNE contended that it was not fair to put the leaseholder on the same footing as the freeholder in connection with this guarantee.

Mr. MURPHY said the only point on which exception could be taken to the clause was the departure from the principle of the Act of 1906 in regard to giving the people interested the right of veto.

HON. R. PHILP sympathised very much with the people who would not benefit by the railway though they might be included in the benefited area. In a big scheme like this some few persons were bound to suffer, but it would be unwise to risk the defeat of the scheme by taking a vote. They should let the Bill go through, and they could afterwards correct any injustice found to exist.

Mr. ALLEN contended that they had no right to take away the right of veto without also taking away the responsibility in regard to taxation.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: Clause 4, which has already been passed, provides for the taxation of people in the benefited area. Clause 5 deals solely with the question of taking away the right of veto, and I hope hon. members will keep to the question before the Committee.

The PREMIER said the clause was not worth five minutes' discussion. There was only one point to decide—whether they would give the people in the benefited area the right of veto. It had already been provided in clause 4 that they would have to pay the benefit.

Mr. RYLAND again protested against the imposition of a guarantee without any right of veto.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow any further discussion on the taxation question.

Mr. ALLEN moved the omission of the words "section four," in line 10, with the view of inserting "sections four and six." If this railway was a national work, as it had been described, the liability should be put on the whole State.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER supported the amendment. The question of constructing this railway was fairly popular in the more thickly populated centres, but it would not be so popular if the amendment were carried.

Mr. GUNN congratulated the hon. member for Bulloo on moving such a fair amendment.

Mr. HARDACRE pointed out that, in his opinion, the amendment went further than the hon. member for Bulloo intended, as it would remove all liability from people in the benefited area. What they really wanted to provide was that the people concerned should have the right of veto.

At 7.30 a.m.,

The ACTING CHAIRMAN said he would resume the chair at 9 o'clock.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN resumed the chair at the hour named.

Mr. ALLEN asked leave to withdraw the amendment, in view of the discussion that had taken place.

Mr. GUNN would like very much to vote for the amendment, and he was in hopes the hon. member would have divided the Committee on it. The railway was going to be built in the interests of the whole of Queensland and Australia, and it was not right that the pastoral lessees in those outside districts should have to bear the whole of the cost. It would be a very good idea if they could reduce the rate of interest, if not in that Bill, then in some other measure.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Question—That clause 5 stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 22.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Hodge
" Barnes, G. P.	" Hunter, D.
" Barnes, W. H.	" Kidston
" Brennan	" Mackintosh
" Bridges	" Paget
" Cottell	" Petrie
" Cribb	" Philip
" Denham	" Rankin
" Forsyth	" Somerset
" Grayson	" Stodart
" Gunn	" Tolmie
Tellers: Mr. Grayson and Mr. Rankin.	

NOES, 13.

Mr. Allen	Mr. Murphy
" Breslin	" O'Sullivan
" Collins	" Payne
" Hamilton	" Ryan
" Hunter, J. M.	" Ryland
" Lennon	" Winstanley
" Mullan	
Tellers: Mr. Collins and Mr. Murphy.	

PAIRS.

Ayes—Mr. Fox and Mr. Wienhoit.  
Noes—Mr. Blair and Mr. Lesina.

Resolved in the affirmative.

On clause 6—"Directions as to construction"—

Mr. COLLINS asked when the work was likely to commence. In a fortnight 12,000 or 14,000 men would be idle in the sugar industry, and work might be found for some of those men.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS said that a survey was already made from Blackall to Welford, a distance of 128 miles. They had a survey from Wall towards Eromanga, a distance of 90 miles; and there was a survey from Malbon to the Duchess, a distance of 42 miles, so that as soon as the working plans could be got ready it was the intention of the Government to start with the work. With regard to the 12,000 or 14,000 men who would soon be idle, they had fifteen or sixteen railways in hand, and those men could go to work on some of those lines while the plans of this railway were being prepared.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN pointed out that the Government had not got the money to start the railways, so what was the use of their telling hon. members that they would commence right away?

Mr. COLLINS: The Minister's reply was somewhat flippant. He was inclined to think there was no room at the present time for anything like 12,000 or 14,000 men.

The PREMIER was glad the matter had been raised, because hitherto he had been unable to understand why the Labour party were opposing the Bill. Was it because they believed that if they did not oppose the Bill Queensland would be swamped with unemployed?

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Notwithstanding that the railway was going to be an evil thing and a very unprofitable thing for Queensland, they wanted to accept the lesser of two evils, and, if there was going to be work, they wanted it performed under the best conditions. They did not want the workers of the country to be misled by the foolish statement of the Secretary for Railways that there was room for 14,000 men on railway construction. He did not believe there would be work for more than 200 or 300 for some considerable time.

Mr. MULLAN asked what necessity there was for the clause at all. It was only pad-

ding. It was only a petty party manoeuvre to lead the people to believe that the Government would proceed immediately with all four sections.

Mr. ALLEN objected to the clause going into the Bill. If the Bill were passed, the work must be continued thereafter, and, if in some future session Parliament refused to vote the money for the railway, the work would still proceed, unless they also repealed the Act. At the same time, the Minister would not be able to start at any one section unless he was in a position to start with all four sections simultaneously.

Mr. LENNON was sorry that he could not agree with hon. members on that side. He did not see that there was any objection to the clause at all. He based his belief on the fact that so recently as the previous day a gentleman had an interview with the Premier regarding the construction of a certain railway, and the Premier gave him the assurance that it would be started simultaneously at various points. That seemed to be fairly satisfactory. The Government seemed to be trying to please everybody; but that sort of thing was harmless. It pleased the Government, and it did not hurt the Opposition.

Mr. BRESLIN also approved of the clause, because it gave the Government a chance of starting the Western extension lines in various places before they finally decided upon the connecting links, so that the Government would still have a chance of draining all the Western country to its nearest port.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 7—"Part of Richmond to Cloncurry Railway made part of Section D"—put and passed.

On clause 8—"Power to entirely take over Hampden-Mount Elliott Railway"—

Mr. RYLAND asked if £3 15s., the amount of interest that was to be paid to the Hampden-Mount Elliott Company, was the amount agreed upon under the Act, or was it an additional amount?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No.

The PREMIER: We propose to pay them interest on their own money that has been in our hands.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER moved the omission of the following words:—

The said contract may contain such terms, conditions, and stipulations relating to the premises as may be mutually agreed upon by and between the company and the Commissioner and approved by the Governor in Council.

Those words seemed ambiguous, if not confusing. Without them there was ample specification as to the instructions given by Parliament to the Commissioner in regard to the agreement to be entered into with the company.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The company had power under its articles of association to enter into the agreement, but it was deemed advisable to embody the provision in the Bill. There were some minor points which had to be agreed upon. For instance, a question had cropped up with regard to sidings into the company's mines. There were other matters like that which it was quite impossible to set forth in the Bill.

Mr. LENNON asked if the Minister could give them some assurance. The clause looked

*Mr. Lennon.]*

like an afterthought, which had been introduced to provide for some future contingencies. Was there any other compact, or concession, to which the company would be entitled in the shape of reduced fares and freights?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No. They will be in exactly the same position as the general public. They receive no concessions whatever.

Mr. MURPHY: Subsection (2) of section 6 of the Hampden-Mount Elliott Railway Act provided that the Government were to allow the company 3 per cent. per annum on the unexpended balance. This clause provided that the Government were to pay the company 3½ per cent. He presumed the Government were paying the extra rate of interest because they wanted to take the line over.

The TREASURER: But they have made nothing out of it.

Mr. MURPHY: Had they not been carrying passengers and goods on the railway?

The PREMIER: For which they have been paying the Commissioner.

Mr. MULLAN asked whether the Government were paying the company 3½ per cent. or only 3 per cent.—that was, the difference between the rate payable under the Hampden-Mount Elliott Railway Act and the amount payable under the Bill on the unexpended balance?

The PREMIER: There had never been any unexpended balance. If the company deposited £93,000 with the Commissioner, and the Commissioner spent £90,000 on the line during the half year, there would be an unexpended balance of £3,000. While the money was in the Commissioner's hands, it ought to draw Savings Bank interest—that was, 3 per cent. The Government were proposing to pay the rate of interest which they would have to pay if they borrowed the money themselves—that was 3½ per cent. The company lost over the transaction, as they had to pay 4 per cent., and it cost them a good deal to raise the money.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER asked leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clauses 9 and 10 put and passed.

Schedule I.—“Map”—put and passed.

On Schedule II.—“Description of districts”—

Mr. COYNE would like to see an amendment inserted providing that subsection (3) of section 4 of the Act of 1906 would not apply to the schedule. That subsection gave the Commissioner power to alter the boundaries.

The PREMIER: It must necessarily be eighteen months or two years before any of the sections could be opened, and no betterment could accrue until then. If anybody complained about being treated unfairly in the meantime, he had no doubt the Commissioner would consider the matter. It was neither to the interests of the Commissioner nor of the Government to include anybody unfairly.

Mr. COYNE: The present areas were not fair, because they included some people who would not derive a ¼d. worth of benefit from the line. He wanted provision made so that the Commissioner should not have power to enlarge the area.

[Mr. Lennon.

The ACTING CHAIRMAN: The schedule only sets forth the boundaries of the betterment areas, and therefore is not the proper place to make provision to compel the Commissioner to do something or not to do something.

Mr. RYLAND: When they carried clause 5, they practically deprived the Commissioner of the power to alter the boundaries.

The PREMIER: No practical injustice is likely to be done.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: The Commissioner would have to work under the Bill, and he could not do anything that was not provided for in the Bill. He would be bound by the benefited areas set forth in the schedule.

Mr. NEVITT understood the Premier to say that they could not alter the boundaries of the benefited areas.

The PREMIER: The majority can do anything they like, but it would be most inexpedient to make any alteration.

Mr. NEVITT: As it was framed, it was very unjust. For instance, the country for 110 miles north-west from Cloncurry was included in the benefited area, and it was only 140 miles to Normanton.

Mr. HAMILTON: There were people who would use one section, but they would be included in the benefited area for another section altogether. People should be asked to guarantee the section which they used.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is a matter that can be very easily rectified. No injustice will be done.

Mr. COYNE asked if the Commissioner could enlarge a benefited area after the Bill was passed?

The PREMIER: He can neither enlarge nor reduce a benefited area.

Schedule put and passed.

The House resumed. The ACTING CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with an amendment; the report was adopted; and the third reading was made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS.

The PREMIER: I suggest that it would be for the convenience of hon. members if we proceeded now with the second reading of the North Coast Railway Bill, and then we shall not require to come back until to-morrow afternoon.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. LENNON: Considering we have been up all night, if we stopped now and returned at half-past 3 o'clock, we would not be sufficiently rested, and I therefore fall in with the suggestion.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: For the information of the House, I may say that the reporting staff are not in their places.

Mr. MURPHY: I think you, Sir, deserve to be thanked for calling attention to the fact that the *Hansard* staff have been working all night, and I think we might study their convenience as much as our own.

Mr. LENNON: The fact mentioned by you, Sir, has put an entirely different complexion upon the matter. If arrangements cannot be made to secure a report of the debate, it would be unfair to expect hon. members to speak, especially as the speech of the Secretary for Railways was fully

reported. If arrangements cannot be made, perhaps the Premier could go on with something else.

The PREMIER: I would not like to press the matter unduly, but I do not think the *Hansard* staff are any more tired than I am. I think that what I have suggested would be to the convenience and the better resting of the *Hansard* staff, as we should be able to finish the debate in an hour or two, because the principle of the Bill is just the same as that of the Bill which we have been discussing.

Mr. MURPHY: Well, I want to move an amendment.

The PREMIER: I would like to proceed unless the *Hansard* staff assure me that they are really unable to go on. It is for their convenience as well as for ours that we should go on. Of course, if hon. members assure me that they cannot finish the debate by lunch time, there is no use in going on.

HON. R. PHILP: I hope the House will go on. I have seen a stonewall last for a week and never adjourn. One all-night sitting will not hurt either the members of this House or of the *Hansard* staff.

At 10 o'clock,

The DEPUTY SPEAKER said: I shall resume the chair at a quarter past 10 o'clock.

The chair was resumed by the DEPUTY SPEAKER at the hour named.

#### NORTH COAST RAILWAY BILL.

##### SECOND READING—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. LENNON said: I would like to preface my remarks by referring to something the Premier said the other night on another question regarding myself. The hon. member used these words—

I would point out that practically all his objections—all his contentions—against the Great Western Railway will apply with equal force to the North Coast Railway.

Now, I resent that statement, and I shall endeavour to show where the two railways are not at all parallel. There is a great difference between them. I would like to remind hon. members of the great change that has taken place in the country traversed by the North Coast Railway between Brisbane and Rockhampton, due entirely to its construction. There has been a perfect transformation in the whole of that country.

Mr. MAY: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Carnarvon in order in sitting in this Chamber in his shirt sleeves?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is no Standing Order governing the attire of hon. members, but it is only considered decorous to come into the Chamber in the ordinary garb of men desirous of upholding the dignity of this Chamber.

Mr. MAY: Then we can strip afterwards, Sir? (The hon. member here removed his coat.)

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member for Flinders will not burlesque the proceedings in this House, and I ask him to resume his coat. (Whereupon Mr. May put on his coat, Mr. Gunn following his example.)

Mr. LENNON: I ask hon. members to remember, for example, what the district between Caboolture and Gympie was like before the construction of the North Coast Railway, and to think of what it is now. If that railway had not been constructed, where would

Nambour, Eumundi, Yandina, Cooran, Cooroy, Pomona, and all those flourishing settlements that dot that short stretch of 105 miles be? They would be non-existent. There is something that at once discounts the statement of the Premier that the two lines are on all-fours. That district affords us the best example of close settlement that we can offer in Queensland. Not only is the country closely settled, but it is also prosperously settled, which is a very important point. It would take probably fifty years before any 100 miles of the Great Western Railway will contain anything like one-tenth of the population to be found between here and Gympie. The district proposed to be traversed by this line is described by the Secretary for Railways as containing a great deal of very rich land. The hon. gentleman said—

This is a proposal for opening up country for dairying and agricultural pursuits. The construction of the railway provided for in this Bill will open up vast areas of rich and well-watered country, and bring that rich tract of country north of Rockhampton right up to Cairns in communication with Brisbane and the capitals of the Southern States. I have no hesitation in saying that in the area which will be served by this railway there are some millions of acres of the most fertile land in the world. Not only is the land exceptionally rich, but it has also the best rainfall in Australia. Those lands are awaiting the advent of the settler with his axe to fell the primeval scrub, for the man with tools for grubbing out the forest, and when that country is cleared it will be ready for the implements of cultivation.

No higher praise could be accorded to any stretch of country. Of course, I know that certain reservations have been made. The Minister made particular reference to the land between Rockhampton and St. Lawrence. No doubt the hon. gentleman spoke in the light of the report by Mr. Surveyor Cooke, and from some slight experience of the country, and no doubt he has been conferring with men who have been travelling through the country, so he was unable to describe that part of the country in anything like the same terms as he described other stretches of country. Whilst it is generally admitted that the country between Rockhampton and St. Lawrence is very poor—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not very poor.

The PREMIER: It is only admitted by those who do not know it.

Mr. LENNON: I do not think the Premier knows much about it.

The PREMIER: I know a good deal about it.

Mr. LENNON: I am glad to hear it; and no doubt the hon. gentleman will tell us all he knows about it later. I am not by any means speaking depreciatingly of that country when I say that it is generally admitted that it is poor country. That opinion is borne out by the report of Mr. Surveyor Cooke, as everyone who takes the trouble to read *Hansard* will discover. But we should remember that, although there may be some poor land along the present North Coast Railway, it is one of the most prosperous districts in Queensland. Those of us who know anything about land know that some of the land between Caboolture and Landsborough is very poor. We also know that there is a stretch of very poor land between Maryborough and Bundaberg, and some of the land north of Bundaberg cannot be called first-class. We also know that there is other poor land, apart from the land between Rockhampton and St. Lawrence—

Mr. GRANT: No, no!

[Mr. Lennon.]

Mr. LENNON: Well, I consider it poor. But there is not the slightest doubt that a population of 50,000 could be successfully and prosperously settled within a radius of 25 miles of Mackay. Then the country between Mackay and Proserpine is suitable for dairying, and patches of it are suitable for sugar-growing. The Proserpine district is known to be one of the very best sugar districts in the State. Then you have a stretch of poor country between Proserpine and the Don River at Bowen. Then you get on to particularly rich land between Bowen and the Burdekin River, and that is evidenced by the recent purchase of the Inkerman Estate by the Government. I commend the Government for making that purchase. My only regret is that it was not purchased when it was first offered to them at a lower price. But the fact that a man or a Government misses an opportunity of buying a desirable property, and postpones the consideration of the offer for a time, and then has to pay more money, does not discount the purchase, and therefore I commend the Government for making the purchase. The purchase of this very rich area of agricultural land secures what I may describe as a continuity of interests, so that you do not have farming lands too widely separated. Having in view the contiguity of the rich lands of the Lower Burdekin, it is very desirable that this splendid estate should be cut up into small areas and settled with cane-growers. We must also take into consideration the fact that the owners of the Pioneer Mill propose to spend £100,000 in erecting a 15,000-ton mill. You have a stretch of land densely settled with a prosperous population, which will ensure not only their own prosperity but the prosperity of this line. Going on, you have the prosperous city of Townsville, which has a large population. Then the land for 20 or 30 miles beyond Townsville is poor, but thence on to Babinda—with the exception of some 20 miles near Cardwell—practically right on to Cairns—is of the very highest quality, and compares favourably with any land in Australia. The only thing necessary in addition to the construction of this railway to ensure full prosperity is the establishment of central mills. I want the Government to understand that thoroughly. I believe that the Government have some idea that a certain responsibility rests with them in regard to central mills, and I trust that the matter will receive their serious attention later on. At this point I would like to say that we have had so many tergiversations on the part of the Premier in his treatment of the sugar industry generally—and more particularly in his dealings with applications for central mills in the Northern districts—that I suppose that is a reason why the Secretary for Railways endeavoured, as it were, in his speech to excuse his chief. The Secretary for Railways, when speaking of the sugar industry, said—

I think the future of the sugar industry as a protected industry is fairly safe. I should not like to say that it is very safe, because if protection is taken away by the Commonwealth Government it will not be possible for Queensland to compete with other sugar-growing countries of the world. That is a matter I do not desire to argue at the present moment. It will be possible to argue about that at some future time. I desire to put before hon. members the value of the great agricultural industry to this State, and how it is practically affected by the proposal before the House.

Of course, everybody knows that if the sugar industry is not protected it cannot be prosperous. But would the hon. gentleman and his chief allow themselves just for a moment to consider what would be the position of railway locomotives, mining machinery, vehicles, pianos, boots, if you like, and all

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the hundred and one things that are amply protected by the Federal tariff if the present duties were removed. What would become of all those industries? They would be immediately strangled. But nobody with any common sense imagines that the Federal Government has the slightest idea of strangling any of those industries; nor has it the slightest idea of doing anything to strangle or in any way hamper the great sugar industry of Queensland. Consequently, that statement of the Minister is merely put forward, I suppose, to cloak what I have described already as the tergiversations of the Premier in regard to applications for central mills in the North. I would like to point out another great difference between the North Coast Railway and the [10.30 a.m.] Great Western Railway. In connection with the latter we have nothing to guide us but the one small report of Mr. Amos. We have no report from the Commissioner, and we have no surveys. In connection with the North Coast Railway, out of a distance of some 600 miles, 189½ miles have already been constructed, and, what is of vital importance, they are among the most prosperous lines in the State. The local authorities that have been running the short line of 45 or 46 miles between Townsville and Ayr made a profit in 1909 exceeding 11 per cent. When in Townsville recently discussing the matter I gave it as my opinion that the earnings this year would exceed 13 per cent., and I am satisfied that that estimate will be fully realised. Does that not show a great difference from the Great Western Railway?

The PREMIER: Suppose you take the Bowen Railway. Does that show any better than the Great Western Railway is likely to show?

Mr. LENNON: When you run a line out from anywhere to nowhere and stop at an old black stump, as was done at Wangaratta, what can you expect? I do not desire to comment on that. I am trying to show that the Premier is not warranted in saying that the two projects are on all-fours. He was not justified in making those remarks, nor was he justified when, his own vocabulary failing, he used that of the Secretary for Lands, and described my arguments as "piffle"—whatever that means. (Laughter.) Taking the Proserpine line, we have not yet had an opportunity of deciding how prosperous or otherwise it may be, because there has been a great deal of bungling in the construction of the line; but it is very desirable that the line should be taken out of the hands of the bunglers and that it should be run by the Commissioner. When I was interrupted I was about to discuss the Mulgrave Tramway, which is so successfully managed by the local authorities at Cairns. The carriages may not be so comfortable as first-class carriages around the metropolis, but they provide all reasonable comforts, and the line is worked splendidly. I must admit that it is splendidly managed by Mr. O'Leary, and the local authorities show considerable business ability in their management of this very successful line. Although these connecting lines are described as tramways, they are to all intents and purposes like our own railways. They are built on the 3-foot-6-inches gauge, and the sleepers are up to the usual Government sleepers. Possibly in some cases the rails are not so heavy as on the Government lines, but all those things can be cured. Something like 30 per cent. of the

North Coast Railway has been already constructed; and in every way the project is entirely different to this wild-cat proposal from Tobermory to Camooowal. In spite of the contradiction of the Premier and his colleague, I repeat that the country between Rockhampton and St. Lawrence is poor; but even if it is not so poor as I believe it is, there is any amount of splendid country beyond. The wonderful fertility of the soil, the extent of good country, and the splendid rainfall ensure the success of the line. It might very well be pointed out, in connection with the inferior country, that it is not an uncommon thing to have to cross a tract of desert in order to reach an oasis beyond, and in the rich country around Mackay we have such an oasis. The Premier can endorse my statement that the district north of Townsville has never had any consideration from the Government in regard to railway communication, and it is entitled to that communication. The taunt was hurled at me the other night about this railway being on all-fours with the other one for the purpose of making people believe that I have an interest in this railway. I cheerfully admit at once that I have a very warm interest in it, as for 150 miles it will traverse my electorate; and nobody knows better than the Premier—unless it be the Secretary for Railways—that I have been working unceasingly for nearly two years in representing to the Government, per medium of chambers of commerce, railway leagues—which have been established at my instigation—and other public bodies, the great necessity which exists for a railway in that district. If the representatives of the Darling Downs, the representatives of the country along the *via recta*, and the representatives of all the farming districts in the South are justified in endeavouring to obtain railway communication—and they are frequently commended for their efforts in that direction—is it not perfectly legitimate for me, as a member of this House—apart altogether from the fact that temporarily I am leader of this party—to endeavour to get a railway for a district that calls for consideration and, by reason of its inherent merits, is entitled to consideration? I do not blink the fact that I am interested in the district—not by having property in it—but by the fact that I am its representative, and that it is my duty to see that the district shall at least get some measure of justice from this Parliament.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: This Queen-street Parliament.

Mr. LENNON: The Premier will probably tell us that we are getting this line from a Queen-street Parliament.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Where is there any evidence of Queen-street influence in the railways we have brought forward this session?

Mr. LENNON: I am surprised at the hon. gentleman making that interjection in the face of the fact that no sooner was the Great Western Railway scheme put forward than a deputation from the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce waited upon the Premier, congratulating him upon his statesmanlike proposals to open up the country, and all that sort of thing. The hon. gentleman's reply—which I think ought to be recorded—was that he had had the project on his mind for years, but that he did not like to bring it forward until Lord Chelmsford recommended him to do so. (Laughter.) That was the most staggering thing that I have read in connection with the matter. I am not saying this

in any way offensively; I merely make the statement as the matter was recorded in a public print.

The PREMIER: That was not what was recorded.

Mr. LENNON: If the hon. gentleman refers to the *Courier* of four or five days ago, he will find those very words recorded there. He will find it stated that he said that he had had that railway in his mind for years—

The PREMIER: For ten years, I said.

Mr. LENNON: It may have been for ten years, but ten years is many years. They are not a few years in our short span. Had it not been for his friend—I did not use that word before, but I will use it now—had it not been for his friend, Lord Chelmsford, he would not have brought forward the proposal. I am very glad to see that the hon. gentleman and Lord Chelmsford have "buried the hatchet," and are going to be friends hereafter, and I hope their friendship will continue for many years. When the Minister for Railways was speaking on the subject of sugar production, in moving the second reading of this Bill, he was reminded, by way of interjection, that he had said that sugar could not be grown by white labour, and the hon. gentleman candidly admitted that he had believed that at one time, but now thought differently. The hon. gentleman went on to say—

At the present time, in the settled districts, sugar is king, but sugar cannot be king always, because when we have grown sufficient sugar for the consumption of Australia we have reached our economic limit. It is not possible for us under the present protective conditions to grow sugar for export in competition, say, with a place like Java, where first-class 94 per cent. net titre raw sugar can be grown, manufactured, and put on the boat at a cost of £7 a ton. It is not possible for us to do that under our present conditions.

Mr. LENNON: You do not wish it to be possible?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No; I do not wish it to be possible. That carries out my point.

I am glad we have that admission from the hon. gentleman, and I hope he will be so interested in endeavouring to make this great Northern Railway a success in every way possible, that he will urge his chief to put aside the indifference he has displayed for so many years in relation to the sugar industry. I hope that when we get the report from the Sugar Commission which is now prosecuting its labours in the North—and I suppose we must regard that as a competent commission—if they recommend that those districts be afforded every possible inducement for the establishment of central sugar-mills, the Government will act upon their recommendation. Up to the present the people in the North have only regarded the appointment of this commission as another shift to evade the question of establishing more central sugar-mills, but I discredit that view myself, and give the Premier credit for an honest attempt to deal with the question. I trust that he will give every consideration to our present situation with regard to that industry. Our sugar consumption must of necessity increase. This year, according to the showing of the Minister for Railways, there is likely to be a shortage of 20,000 tons of sugar for home consumption. I think that is an under-estimate. Last year we brought into Australia 99,000 tons of sugar. I do not know whether there was a surplus left over after those importations, but if there was, that may account for the difference between my estimate and that of the Minister for Railways. However, it is a well-ascertained fact that a very considerable shortage of sugar will have to be faced this year in

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Queensland. This important industry yields a value of nearly £2,500,000 annually to the State, and no one can possibly justify a continuance of the indifference that has been shown towards it by the Government during the last three years, particularly in view of the fact that this North Coast Railway is to be constructed for the purpose of tapping a district that is eminently suited for growing sugar-cane. There are other tropical products that we are likely to grow as successfully as sugar, as, for instance, arrow-root. The Government would be quite justified in coming along with a proposal to erect four or five central sugar-mills between Mackay and Cairns, and even if they started those mills next year—taking into account the time which it takes before a mill works up to its full capacity—I venture to assert that in five years from now they would not overtake the consumption of sugar in Australia. There has been a large accession of population during the past few years, and it is reasonable to predict that during the next five years there will be a larger volume of immigration, so that the home consumption of sugar will be largely augmented. In Victoria they are setting about the growing of beetroot sugar, and in Western Australia they are talking about looking for sugar-growing country in order to enter into competition with Queensland; and I say that competition is practically invited by the present Government. People may think that my views on this proposed railway are coloured to some extent by the fact that I represent a district which is going to be benefited by the line. But, after a residence of twenty-seven years in Townsville, and having some knowledge of two-thirds of the country which the proposed railway will traverse—I have travelled from Cairns to Bowen three or four times, I have been round about Mackay a bit, and in Rockhampton several times; the only country I know very little about is that between Proserpine and Mackay and that between Mackay and Rockhampton—and, speaking as a man who has a very good knowledge of the land which will be served by this railway, I claim that if the Government considered the matter for the next six months they could not find a line of railway that is calculated to yield a better profit to the State than this particular railway. I would ask hon. members to remember that in the case of the railway we have just passed, the Commissioner for Railways admits that it will be worked at a loss. I imagine that he would make the probable loss as low as he reasonably could, and that he would be guided by the same principle in estimating the earnings of this North Coast Railway. Well, in the case of the Great Western Railway, he estimates the loss at £82,000 odd annually, and he estimates the loss on this railway at £16,000 annually.

The TREASURER: Look at the difference in the mileage.

Mr. LENNON: There is certainly a difference in the mileage, but the Western country will not increase in anything like the extent that the coast country will increase in prosperity. There is nothing to be gained by depreciating the other proposal, which is now passed. We have said some things which we honestly believed against that railway, and I do not propose to refer to it any further now; but I am convinced that I am just as much justified in speaking in praise of this line as I was in condemning the

[*Mr. Lennon.*]

other railway. No member on this side of the House has any objection to our main trunk lines going west. The only objection they have is to running a railway along the western boundary of the State. Another thing I would ask hon. members to consider is, that not only is the country which will be traversed by the North Coast Railway very fertile, but it really contains the beauty spots of Australia. Not only have we Mourilyan Harbour and the Barron Falls, but close to those falls we have beauty spots like Lake Eacham and Lake Barrine. There are beautiful falls at the head of the Herbert River, and we have also the Tully Falls, with a sheer drop of 900 feet. When this railway is constructed and those districts are opened up, they will be among the greatest tourist resorts of Australia. With the attractive features of the falls and those two lakes, those districts will be a paradise to visitors if the Government do their duty towards that part of the State—it will not then languish as the Cinderella of the constituencies of Queensland, but will blossom like the rose.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I cannot hope to rival the eloquent appeal the deputy leader of the Opposition has made to the House in support of this Bill. His speech reminds me of what is said in a certain book that the hon. member wants to exclude from our public schools—that “where the treasure is there will the heart be also.” (Laughter.) But if I cannot rival the hon. member’s eloquence, I shall try to rival him in the brevity with which I address the House, because it is evident that when the hon. member takes up my work and my place, I can afford to sit back and smile. (Laughter.) I compliment the hon. member on the fact that he shows himself much abler in supporting a Bill than in opposing a Bill.

Mr. LENNON: If I am strong, I am merciful.

The PREMIER: What I have said is a compliment, because it shows how fitted the hon. member is to adorn this bench. I admit that between this line and the line we have just dealt with there is this great difference, that the character of the country through which the two lines will pass is entirely different. This North Coast Railway is a better railway for the promotion of farming settlement than the Great Western Railway. Without much disparagement to the Western country, it may be said that it is not comparable in some respects with the rich tropical alluvial flats from Cairns to Ingham, at Ayr and in the Mackay district. The land between Rockhampton and Mackay may not be so fertile as the rich lands further north, but it is probably better suited for dairy farming than those rich lands.

Mr. LENNON: You said that some of it would not carry one bullock to the acre.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Lay down paspalum, and it will be good dairying country.

The PREMIER: Although settlement has been slow in that district, already people are beginning to form farming settlements 20 miles away from Rockhampton, on very rich, well-watered scrub country. We also expect the opening up of certain mining lands by this line, which will go a long way towards making the first section of this railway payable from the start; so that it must not be imagined that it will be a mistake to build even that first section of the railway, which by comparison may be reckoned the poorer portion of the line. But, while it is

true that this land is better for close farming settlement than the Western country, it is also true that the building of this railway will be much more expensive than the building of the Western Railway, just because of the nature of the country to be traversed. The Government, however, make no secret of their idea that the two lines constitute one great proposal, and are essential factors in the rapid development of Queensland both East and West. But, apart from what I may call differences in detail, the broad principle upon which hon. members opposite have been attacking the Government is that no plans and books of reference have been laid on the table of the House.

Mr. HARDACRE: We have more information about this railway.

The PREMIER: You have no more information about this line than you had about the Great Western Railway. As a matter of fact you have less information about this line than you had about the other. You have a large mileage in this railway, just as you had in the other; you have the prospect of a large loan in connection with this line, just as you had in the other, and you have all the exceptional features in this proposal that hon. members made such an outcry about in connection with the other railway. But it is not for me to dilate on these things unduly. If the deputy leader of the Opposition is satisfied, I am satisfied. I am delighted to see the hon. member—what does the Book say?—clothed and in his right mind—(laughter)—and supporting what I am honestly persuaded is an excellent proposal. He is satisfied, I am satisfied, and we are all satisfied; therefore, let us pass the second reading.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MURPHY: In dealing with this Bill, I contend that we are entitled to see the plans and book of reference and get all the information that is to be obtained. [11 a.m.] Here is a proposal to spend £2,320,000, exclusive of what it will cost for land resumptions, to increase the value of freehold properties along the route.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No. The line will serve 11,000,000 acres, of which 2,000,000 are freehold.

Mr. MURPHY: I have already said that I intend to oppose the proposal that will be made for a big loan, and therefore I must vote against quite a number of these railways. Those who vote for the railways must agree to the loan, and I am not prepared to do that. The deputy leader of the Labour party made a very good speech on behalf of his electorate. No doubt in the North there is some very good land, and this railway will promote settlement. The section of the line in the electorate of the deputy leader of the Labour party will settle more people than will be settled by the whole of the line in the West.

Mr. LENNON: This is a non-party question.

Mr. MURPHY: If the railway were going into my electorate, I would be able to give equally good reasons why it should be passed. I intend to move an amendment similar to that which the deputy leader of the Labour party proposed in connection with the Great Western line. If it was desirable that we should have the plans and book of reference in connection with that line, it is equally desirable that members should have similar information in connection with this line.

The PREMIER: If you were anxious for the Bill, you would not move the amendment.

Mr. MURPHY: Precisely so, and it is

because the Premier is anxious to get another railway from Rockhampton that he is so anxious to get the Bill through. We all realise that the construction of railways in agricultural districts will promote settlement, but we could promote settlement in the neighbourhood of Townsville or Bowen without going to the expenditure of £2,500,000. There is no necessity to build a railway from Rockhampton to Cairns to promote that settlement. I move the omission of all the words after the word "That," with the view of inserting in their place the words "the consideration of the second reading of the Bill be postponed till a report shall have been presented to Parliament from a competent commission appointed to consider and report on the engineering, pastoral, agricultural, mining, commercial, and financial aspects of the railway proposal contained in this Bill." I think that is an amendment which will commend itself to those who are in search of more information.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*): I have a great deal of sympathy with the amendment. There was a great desire on the part of several hon. members for information and for having the plans and specifications in connection with the Great Western Railway, which is to go over country where you can take a railway almost anywhere. In the case of that railway there is not the necessity for plans and specifications like there is in connection with railways along the coast, where there are many engineering difficulties to contend with. If it was necessary to have plans and specifications for a railway in our Western interior, it is doubly necessary in the case of a coast line that the proposal should be postponed with the view of getting more information and having plans prepared. There is no hurry for a coast line; there is no drought like we have in the interior making it necessary to have facilities for removing stock. In the last drought, but for the railways which were built at that time we would have had hardly any sheep left in Queensland. This proposal works in with the Great Western scheme, and I intend to give it my support, although I greatly sympathise with the amendment.

Mr. GRANT (*Rockhampton*): The Labour party held a meeting in Rockhampton last Saturday night, inviting three Labour members to talk against the railway proposals of the Government, not on broad national grounds, but because of the great injury they would do to Rockhampton. Now we are told that these railways are to be built for the benefit of Rockhampton, and I hope my electors will carefully consider that, and bear it in mind at the next election. I am not going to delay the House in speaking at length on this question, because it seems to me that universal approbation is given to the proposal except by the hon. member for Croydon and the hon. member for Carnarvon. Whatever can be said against the Great Western Railway proposal in regard to want of information and plans not being prepared, can with equal justice be said against this proposal. There are no plans, and we are leaving it to the Commissioner to build the line in the best manner he can. Some hon. members desire information as to the country between Rockhampton and Mackay. My friend, the hon. member for Normanby, can give better information than I can with regard to the country in that part of Queensland, but I may say that there is very little better land in the State than some of the country this

Mr. Grant.]

line will go through. There is the Barmoya Scrub, with thousands of acres of Government land, not far from Yaamba. At present there are about forty or fifty German families settled there; but they have had a pretty hard fight, because most of them are artisans from Berlin. Further on, beyond Yaamba, there is magnificent agricultural land on Marlborough Station, on Balmoral, on Waverley, and on Studeley. You could not get better agricultural land in Queensland; it is well-watered, and is ideal dairying country. There is no pine timber, but there is magnificent hardwood, for which there is a ready market in Rockhampton, and which would give the railway a fair amount of traffic. There is also a belt of mineral country which a number of parties have been prospecting. There is a company in which I am interested myself, and we think we have got a good thing. The construction of this line will assist in developing our mineral wealth. When there is through railway communication with Townsville and Cairns, there will be a big traffic on the line, because a number of people much prefer to travel by train rather than by steamer, especially in the stormy months of the year. Then there is the carriage of mails to be considered. The Federal Government are paying a considerable amount of money for the carriage of mails by steamer.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: £18,000 a year.

Mr. GRANT: That will be saved to the Federal Government; and the Railway Department will get an increased subsidy, which will go some way towards paying for the railway. One very material difference between this proposal and the Great Western Railway proposal is that the towns, which legitimately ought to pay their betterment, are to be asked to pay in this case. Rockhampton and Townsville are paying one-fifth of the betterment; and Rockhampton, Townsville, and Brisbane should have been asked to pay some betterment in connection with the Great Western Railway. It will probably be a little while before the line will be fully paying, though I think it will not be very long. There is a lot of Government land available for settlement; there are good rivers; there is a bountiful rainfall, and there is good soil. I think that right from Gladstone to Cooktown could be very well settled upon, and where one family can be settled out West, we can settle 100 on the coast lands. I hope there will not be much opposition to this railway, which is one that members need not hesitate to support.

Mr. HARDACRE: There is no opposition.

Mr. GRANT: I am glad to hear it, and I will not delay the House by saying anything further.

Mr. MULCAHY: I must say at the outset that the way these lines are brought down without information is most objectionable. When it is proposed to spend millions of the taxpayers' money, we should have everything placed clearly before us, but the Government have determined to keep all information away from the representatives of the people.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I do not think you are stating what is correct.

Mr. MULCAHY: As long as they have a majority they can do that. Though I take strong exception to the manner in which the Government have brought forward their

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railway proposals, I am not going to vote against the construction of this line. I have always been an advocate of getting our coastal lines pushed on, because our coast lands are capable of carrying a great population. The rainfall is one factor, the soil is another; and the construction of this railway will open up a great deal of country on which tens of thousands of people can settle and make a living. When we were advocating the construction of the North Coast line to Gympie, it was said that it would not pay for grease for the wheels; but that line is paying £5 16s. per cent. from Northgate Junction to Gympie. Judging by the information given by members representing the Western districts, the expenditure on the Great Western Railway scheme will be waste for many years. I fully recognise the value of the Western country; but the money could be spent to much better advantage than by making that cross section, at all events. The construction of this coastal line will increase settlement, and will bring our Northern towns into communication with Brisbane and the Southern States. With railway facilities between Rockhampton and Cairns, a great many more people will come here by rail. I do not intend to take up much time in discussing this question. I recognise that it is a non-party question; and the attitude of members on this side shows me that we do not treat it as a party question. I hope the line will be gone on with as soon as possible, and that later on branch lines will be constructed, giving further facilities for settlement on our coast lands. I have very great pleasure in supporting the Bill, believing that it is in the best interests of the State.

Mr. FOX (*Normanby*): I intend to support the Government in connection with this railway proposal. I have an intimate knowledge of the route between Rockhampton and Mackay, extending back to the year 1868; and I can confirm the statement that from Rockhampton to Yaamba the railway will pass through a large extent of dairying and agricultural country. It touches Yaamba on the Fitzroy, and naturally there will be good country in that locality. Then it passes on to Marlborough. Between Marlborough and Yaamba, to the north of the line, there are Tilpal and Torilla, where there is some of the finest country to be found in any part of Queensland, and also at Marlborough. In fact, last year I was up there I saw bullocks from Tilpal equal to anything I saw in Sydney. From Rockhampton to Yaamba there is some very good country. Then again it passes from Yaamba to Marlborough, and that is very fine dairying country. On Toowoomba lucerne and maize has been grown. It is fairly level on to Broadsound. You pass near some very fine plains which are splendid for dairying. From there the range comes in still closer, and for about 40 miles up the coast it comes in very near and the country is very broken. It is not very good country there because the range is very rough, with pockets of good agricultural country. Passing on from there to Scrubby and Marion creeks, 40 miles, you get some of the finest sugar land that can be found, and from that on to Mackay there are also some of the finest agricultural settlements to be found in Queensland in connection with the Plane Creek Central Mill. As well as passing through fine country and dairying country, it also passes through some mineral country. Including some carbo-

niferous country, on the River Starcke and Broadsound, land has been opened, and there is some fine land to be found in connection with the rivers. Taking the district altogether, and considering that dairying has, on the average, been so successfully carried out, I am quite confident that it will be found that this will be one of the finest dairying districts in Queensland. In fact, they are sending down cream by coach for 80 miles along the route of this proposed line to Rockhampton. I am of opinion that this railway will certainly pay. There is no doubt that unless low-level bridges are made it will be somewhat expensive, but, notwithstanding that, if the people are willing to take the responsibility the Government are quite justified in building the railway. It will serve the great purpose of connecting the various ports of the State. I think the Government are quite justified in building this railway. I have no personal interest in the matter. I heartily support the Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: In connection with the remarks of the hon. member for Croydon and of the hon. member for Gympie as to lack of information, I have given quite a mass of information.

Mr. MULLAN: Very old stuff.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: All I can say is that when the mineral return is brought up to 30th September, 1910, I think that is not very old stuff. With respect to the sugar industry, I brought the return up to the end of the present crushing season, which will be in about a fortnight's time. With respect to the butter industry, I also brought it up almost to the present moment.

Mr. MULLAN: The report was eleven years old.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I am speaking about the returns connected with the various industries. The hon. member says that the report—I presume he means Mr. Cooke's report—is eleven years old. Of the 643½ miles in this projected railway from Rockhampton to Cairns, there are no fewer than 189½ miles of the line built and in running order. We have a further 183 miles surveyed, leaving 271 miles that have not yet been surveyed, but of that 270 miles I presented Mr. Cooke's report to the House from Plane Creek to Rockhampton, a further distance of 200 miles, so that I really cannot follow hon. members when they say they have not sufficient information respecting this projected railway.

Mr. HARDACRE: There is some dispute as to which is the best route, especially for Rockhampton.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There always will be disputes about the route, no matter what railway it is. The hon. member is taking about 20 miles out of 683 miles.

Mr. HARDACRE: That is worth getting information on.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It has been decided that it is better in the interests of those concerned to start the railway from Rockhampton, and go through to the north side of the river to Yaamba. I thought it was advisable before the debate went any further, that I should give these figures respecting the number of miles that are built and opened, and the number of miles that have been surveyed, and I have the plans actually ready for 145 miles of this particular railway.

Mr. COLLINS: I am not rising to oppose the Bill at this stage, but to support the amendment of the hon. member for Croydon. Having supported a similar amendment in connection with the Great Western Railway, seeking for more information, I am going to support this amendment, which is moved for the same purpose. This involves an expenditure of £2,320,000, and it involves the State in a loan policy. This is exclusive of the resumption of land, which may run into a fairly large amount, the value of some of our coastal lands being very high. The distance is 454 miles. I am one of those who believe that the railway will be the means of settling hundreds and thousands of people. The Minister made reference to the fact that we had millions of acres that belong to the State. I hope the Minister for Lands will see that those millions of acres are not given out in large holdings, but in small holdings, so that the land can be put to its best use.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is no doubt about that.

Mr. COLLINS: Another reason why I am supporting the amendment is that I represent a district that has a syndicate railway, and I would like to know from the Minister whether it is the intention of the Government to take over the Etheridge Railway, in the same way as they are taking over the Hampden Railway.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No; not under this scheme.

Mr. COLLINS: Not under this scheme; but is it the intention of the Government?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not at present.

Mr. COLLINS: I am sorry for that, because the people I represent are penalised to the extent of 50 per cent. in connection with freights over those you are going to charge on this particular railway. I have travelled over most of the country from Mackay to Cairns, and quite agree with the remarks of some hon. members that some of the land is poor land, but it is compensated for by the good land. Even if the land between Rockhampton and Mackay is poor, I think the Mackay district alone is capable of supporting from 100,000 to 150,000 people in the future, and that is compensation for the poor land between Rockhampton and Mackay. I will support the amendment of the hon. member for Croydon, believing that it is in the best interests of the State that we should get all the information we possibly can in connection with these railways, and considering that it involves the expenditure of such a large amount of money.

Mr. CORSER: I should like the Minister to give an assurance that by passing this railway it will not in the slightest degree affect the construction of lines into other agricultural districts.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have said so several times. This is a railway into agricultural districts.

Mr. CORSER: I recognise that the mail system of the Commonwealth from South to North, and to a large extent the passenger traffic, will pass on this line, and that moved me to ask the Secretary for Railways certain questions the other day. I recognise that if this line is to be carried on effectively, it is necessary to prevent any chance of the cessation of the traffic, in view of what happened

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in 1893, for a period of ten months. The Minister did not give me the answers to the questions I asked, and I hope he will do so.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I gave them as well as I could.

Mr. CORSER: One of the questions I asked was as to the cost of restoring the Antigua Bridge. I got an answer that it was £14,720, and yet we are told by the report of the Commissioner that part of the cost was £16,000, and I have yet to learn that the part can be greater than the whole. I would like the answer to that question in connection with this scheme, because I want to know the cost of the restoration of the only bridge that you have by which you can carry the enormous traffic that you intend to do by this North Coast line. I asked a question with reference to saving a distance on that route of some 7 miles, and yet the Minister gives me another answer with reference to Croydon Junction, which I did not take up at all.

Mr. HAMILTON: I rise to a point of order. Has a bridge over the Mary River anything to do with the railway north of Rockhampton? The hon. member is getting something in about this bridge in a speech dealing with the North Coast extension.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The point raised by the hon. member is a correct one. I have allowed the hon. member for Maryborough to pursue the question further than I intended to do. I ask him not to debate it further. To touch upon it generally would be in order, but not to debate it in detail.

Mr. CORSER: All I want to get in is this: It is a continuation of one system. If you turn to the North Coast line, page 45 in the Railway Time Table, you will find the distance from Owanyilla to Maryborough given as 18 miles, not 15 miles.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I cannot allow the hon. member to proceed with that. I think the House has been very generous with him.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MULLAN: Deal with the Bill.

Mr. CORSER: I consider it is dealing with the Bill. (Laughter.) I was recognising that it was part of one system—that if one portion is swept away, and no provision is made for the connection, it is an injury to the whole system. However, I shall not persist in asking these questions any more here, but shall take another method of doing so. I am certainly in favour of any line that will give facilities to get from one end of the State to the other, as long as the interest will be borne by those who are going to benefit by it, as proposed in this Bill. I think the scheme is a good one for that reason, and I shall oppose the amendment of the hon. member for Croydon.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: I rise to support the amendment, because there is the same evil in connection with this railway as there was in connection with the Great Western Railway.

The PREMIER: You have been perfectly impartial. (Laughter.)

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: I have been impartial in connection with both railway proposals. I think the Premier did not expect this opposition from this side of the House, because the deputy leader of the Opposition had expressed himself favourable to this railway.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The opposition is not violent.

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Mr. J. M. HUNTER: It might be more violent than the Minister anticipates—he might have another all-night sitting.

Mr. MACKINTOSH: We are ready for it. (Laughter.)

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: What we consider wrong in the other case, is equally wrong in this case. Whether the deputy leader of the Opposition is in favour of it or not, it makes no difference to the principle involved. The Chief Secretary thought the thing was going to go through quietly, without opposition at all. The two proposals, he stated, were similar. I quite admit that in some degree they are similar. The similarity in the first place is that no plans, sections, or books of reference have been submitted to this House for consideration. Then they are similar in the respect that the right of veto is taken away from those who are in the benefited area, and a railway is forced upon them whether they want it or not, and they are compelled to make good any deficit which may occur. The first difference between these two lines is that there is a prospect of one being a paying line at some future time, while there is not much prospect of that in the case of the other. There is also a prospect of having settlement along this line. On the second reading of the Great Western Railway Bill, I stated that half the amount of money spent on our coastal districts would settle twenty times the number of people that it would in the Western districts. I believe that is as true of the Northern coast as of our Southern coast; and I have no hesitation in saying that if these railways were submitted to this House in proper form, my support would have been given to them. I believe if we have a large population on our coast it will be a good thing from a defence point of view, and troops could be shifted easily from point to point of the railway. In that respect the two proposals are different, and the difference is all in favour of the coastal line. I object to these lines being brought down in this hurried way, when proper information might have been supplied and proper notice given for their introduction next session. The House might then have got full information, and members could have given an intelligent vote which they could have justified to their electors. It is a very serious matter when representatives are called upon to vote for a proposal involving the expenditure of £10,000,000 for works they are absolutely ignorant of, except for the knowledge they have gained personally on the matter. An opportunity should have been given to members to travel over these districts to find out for themselves.

Mr. BOOKER: Some of you have.

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: It is no use the hon. member for Maryborough saying that since these Bills were tabled he has travelled these routes to gain the information which he needs in order to give an intelligent vote on this question. It would not be possible for anybody to do it.

The PREMIER: Don't you intend to give an intelligent vote?

Mr. J. M. HUNTER: My intelligence will be displayed in this way: I am going to vote against it because there has not been sufficient information supplied to members. I defy any member to give sufficient justification for his vote on either of these proposals. It is quite impossible for any mem-

ber sitting behind the Government to justify his vote by his own experience and knowledge, or even on the information supplied to the Chamber. I intend to oppose the passage of the Bill for the reasons I have stated.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Rockhampton North*): It has been interesting to listen to the discussion on this railway scheme, and it shows that hon. members opposite are not altogether unreasonable. It also shows that while the division on the Great Western Railway was taken as a party vote, on this occasion it is treated as a non-party vote. I do not wish to take up the time of the House on this question, although the railway starts in my electorate and goes through the entire length of it. I may say that but for the keen agitation which has been going on for some years in Rockhampton and North Rockhampton this Bill might not have been before the House to-day. The North Rockhampton and Livingstone Shire Councils sent in to the Government their guarantee some time ago. They are willing to guarantee any loss that might accrue on what was originally termed the first of the North Coast Railway section, but there has been a considerable difference made since. How it will affect them now I am not prepared to say. I do not think it is exactly fair that North Rockhampton should be placed alongside of Rockhampton to bear that portion of the

one-fifth of the guarantee. I will [12 noon.] give you the valuations of both places to show how it will pan out. The valuation for the town of Rockhampton is £871,957 and for North Rockhampton £119,514. That is to say that Rockhampton is only 7.3 times more than North Rockhampton. It is also to say that for every £70 that is required to be paid towards the guarantee North Rockhampton has got to pay £10 and Rockhampton £60. That is all very well for Rockhampton. Rockhampton is a large city and some parts of it are wealthy in large businesses and so far as population is concerned. There are also large hotels and large shops in Rockhampton, whereas in North Rockhampton there is not a single large hotel, and there is not a single place of business more than a little shop; and there is not what you might term a wealthy man in the whole town. They are all working men, and to call on them to bear one-seventh of the cost is too much altogether.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is only one-seventh of the one-fifth.

Mr. BRENNAN: Yes; one-seventh of the one-fifth, but it might go up to a big amount. This one-seventh might run into £500 or even to £1,000. At all events, I do not think that that is entirely fair to North Rockhampton, seeing that the people there are poor in comparison with Rockhampton. I was surprised at the remarks made in this House regarding the poverty of the land from North Rockhampton to Broadsound. That is not true.

Mr. MANN: Do you question Mr. Amos's report?

Mr. BRENNAN: Yes, I do. I question it very much. Take the first 10 miles of that line from North Rockhampton. There are a considerable number of settlers along that 10 miles, and there are a number of small dairy farms which have from ten to twenty cows milking. Then from the Ten-mile Creek right up to Yaamba, I under-

stand, that the line will go right along the main road to Yaamba, and that there will be nothing to pay in the way of compensation. From the Ten-mile Creek there are scrubs right along the road to Yaamba. There are 48,200 acres altogether of these scrub lands, and you heard the hon. member for Normanby describe what these lands are like. Of that scrub land there are 26,830 acres selected, and the balance of 21,370 acres is available for selection. I am informed that of these scrub lands there are 2,940 acres cleared, and another 2,000 acres under crops. The adult population occupying those lands totals 420 altogether, and they occupy 27,592 acres in their selections. So that right from the start of the railway there will be a large area under crops, and that will mean 2,500 tons of freight for the railway, and, at the present time, on every selection the clearing of the land and putting it under crops is being added to in area. There will also be the cream from twenty-five dairies along the route of the railway, and there are a good number of people employed at each of the dairies. There is also a large quantity of hardwood timber along that route, so that the railway will be able to get sleepers for the line right along through my electorate. I will not go beyond my electorate. It goes as far as Yaamba, which is the boundary, and I am entirely ignorant of the nature of the country beyond that point. At the present time, limestone and ironstone is taken from this portion of the route to Mount Chalmers. There are about 30 tons a week carted by drays and wagons to Mount Chalmers, and, when this railway is opened, there is no saying what quantity will be taken there. Then we have got the various caves in that locality, and those caves contain quantities of fertiliser which are said to be inexhaustible, and contain a very high percentage of the chemicals necessary for fertilisers.

Mr. NEVITT: You must have a good asset there if there is an inexhaustible supply.

Mr. BRENNAN: Over that first section there should be no deficit at all, and the guarantors would not be required to pay anything. I quite agree with what the hon. member for Normanby says with regard to the remaining portion of this first section. Whatever opinions may be held by hon. members of either party, I feel confident that that first section will pay from the jump.

Mr. NEVITT: I will not delay the House very long. I simply wish to say that I have the same objection with regard to this railway that I had with regard to the Great Western Railway. I do not object to the general principle of the Bill; I only object because we are not in possession of sufficient evidence on which to give an opinion. The only evidence we have got that we can place any reliance on at all we are told by the hon. member for Rockhampton North that it is not true. The hon. member for Rockhampton North is conversant with the country, and he says that the report of the Government officer is not true. What further evidence can we get that this proposal should be postponed than that? It should be postponed until we have got further and better evidence. The hon. member for Rockhampton North also said that the benefited area was not a fair and proper one, and was not distributed properly. The

*Mr. Nevitt.]*

hon. member complains that North Rockhampton will be called upon to pay more than a fair share on this line. When you have the member for the district through which the railway passes speaking on those lines, it shows that we want more information. I have a fair general knowledge of the country north of Bowen, but I have no knowledge of that from Rockhampton to Bowen, and I think I am justified in asking for fuller information in this matter. I paid great attention to what the hon. member for Normanby, Mr. Fox, said, but it was merely an *ex parte* statement. He spoke from an interested point of view, because the railway will run through his electorate. I do not for one moment say that the hon. member would say anything that was not right, or that he would attempt to mislead the House, but his statement was merely an *ex parte* statement just the same. This proposal is not on all-fours with this railway, because the Western country has greater claims than this country has got. They have already got a steamer service up North. (Hear, hear!) What may be said of the railway is that it is to all intents and purposes merely a passenger and mail service. There will be practically no goods carried over the railway worth speaking of, because it is well known that water carriage can beat the railway on every occasion. Possibly there is one little bright star on the horizon. Possibly it may be the means of enabling the Government to do something with the repurchased Seaforth Estate. I do not know if the railway will go near to it or not, but it may be the means of getting rid of it. The Premier said that some of this land through which the line would traverse would carry a bullock to the acre. I am sure that my hon. friend, Mr. Booker, would like to get hold of some land that would carry a bullock to the acre. The hon. member for Burke asked the Minister if it was the intention of the Government to take over the Etheridge Railway. If it is desirable for the Government to take over the Mount Elliott Railway, it is also desirable to take over the Etheridge Railway, although I admit that the Etheridge Railway is not a portion of the system which has been put forward by the Government on this occasion. But there is just as much need for the Government to take over the Etheridge Railway as there is to take over the Mount Elliott Railway. By so doing the Government would relieve a good number of people who are now being penalised to the extent of 50 per cent. over the prices charged on the Government railways, and that would be the means of settling a large number of miners along that route; they would be able to get their commodities cheaper, and they could get their ores taken along to the smelters at a cheaper rate. It would be just as good an investment as taking over the Mount Elliott Railway.

Mr. GRAYSON (*Cunningham*): I listened to the speech of the deputy leader of the Opposition in reference to this line. That hon. gentleman knows the country probably as well as any hon. member in this House, and whatever doubts or fears I may have had about supporting this line, after listening to the speech of the deputy leader of the Opposition, I have made up my mind to support this proposal. (Hear, hear!) The deputy leader of the Opposition, when speaking, said he had as much right to refer to the wants and requirements of his electorate as members sitting on the Government side of the House. I am quite prepared to admit that, and I hope that the same privilege will be ex-

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tended to members sitting on this side when we bring forward grievances in connection with our electorates in a similar way. This railway scheme which the Government has brought forward is undoubtedly one of the greatest schemes ever laid before an Australian Parliament, and it is to be hoped that it will realise the expectations, not only of the Premier, but of the other members of the Cabinet. I supported the Western extension because I believe that the producers in the Western country are deserving of recognition in the way of railway communication. While supporting the Great Western extension and the coastal railway, I hope that these two railway schemes will not overshadow the lines required to be constructed in the farming electorates.

Mr. MANN: Where will you get the surveyors?

Mr. GRAYSON: I am afraid that this great scheme will to some extent overshadow the small lines in agricultural districts, but we have got the Premier's word that nothing of the kind will take place. We should continue the policy of constructing railway lines in the settled districts, where it is necessary to do so. The present Government has constructed more lines in farming electorates than any other Government in power in Queensland, and I hope they will continue the same policy. I firmly believe in the construction of the Great Western line, and also in the construction of this coastal railway, because they will be of great benefit to the producers in the coastal districts and on the Darling Downs by opening up markets for our surplus products. We remember the drought in 1902, when the pastoralists were paying exorbitant prices for maize; but when these lines are constructed the pastoralists will be able to get their produce at a much lower price than they paid at that time. In fact, they had to import a lot of it from the Argentine. The construction of these two lines will be of great benefit to the people in the West and to the producers in all parts of the State. I should like to say a word about a line that has been promised for the past twenty-six years, that is the *via recta*. That line was passed twenty-six years ago and £750,000 was appropriated for it.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member will not refer to that question, as it is not now before the House.

Mr. GRAYSON: Other members have been allowed to get in a little about their own electorates. However, I do not intend to enlarge on it beyond saying that the producers on the Darling Downs have been placed at a great disadvantage by being deprived of their market for the last forty years.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member will not refer further to that subject. He must see that if he continues in that strain I shall have to allow other hon. members the same privilege. (Hear, hear!) A brief reference is all that is allowable, and the hon. member must not dilate on it.

Mr. GRAYSON: I just want to point out that the farmers at Killarney have to send their produce by rail 196 miles to Brisbane, although they are only 80 miles distant from Brisbane in a straight line, and it is the same with the settlers around Maryvale. There are 25,000 inhabitants in the south-eastern portion of the Darling Downs who have been placed at a disadvantage through the non-building of the *via recta* for the last forty years.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I cannot allow the hon. member to proceed in that way. If he does not obey my ruling, I must call upon him to resume his seat.

Mr. GRAYSON: I do not wish to transgress the rules of the House. I think the Government are to be commended for going in for such a vigorous railway policy. There is only one thing in connection with the building of these lines, and that is where are the Government going to procure the necessary labour to do the work. I noticed in the *Courier* this morning that in the Herbert electorate, the constituency of the deputy leader of the Opposition, there is a scarcity of labour. There is a scarcity of labour in all the farming districts of Queensland. I hope when these railway proposals are passed by both Houses that the Government will take measures with a view to encouraging the right class of labour to come out here.

Mr. FERRICKS: I am going to vote against the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Croydon, and I intend to support the construction of this railway. In saying that I think I am acting justifiably and consistently, notwithstanding the fact that when a similar amendment was proposed in the case of the Great Western Railway I voted for it. There is not the same occasion for the amendment here, as the House is well supplied with information on this line. So far as I am concerned, and so far as the members representing Northern constituencies are concerned, we are satisfied that the Government is making no mistake in constructing this line, because the line is going through agricultural districts. The line will run through good agricultural land that is suitable for close settlement. Members representing the districts through which this line will pass are enthusiastically in favour of it. That was not the case with the Western extension, as the members of those electorates were the strongest in their condemnation of the railway. So far as the commercial, mining, and agricultural aspects of this line are concerned, everyone is satisfied with it, but that was not so in the case of the Western Railway. For the edification of those who sneeringly refer to members on this side opposing this amendment and supporting the same amendment in the Western extension, I may say that it is not because it goes through my electorate alone that I support it. I express pleasure at the contemplated extension of the Bowen Railway. I may say when I was asked by the Bowen Chamber of Commerce to join with the gentlemen high in the commercial world in Brisbane and wait on the Minister urging the extension of the Bowen Railway, I refused to do that, because the line would go through private land known as Inkerman Estate. The situation is now altered, as Inkerman has been repurchased by the Government. Although I would sooner that that land had been made available by the operation of Mr. Fisher's land tax, I accept the next best thing, which is the Government repurchasing it. When that railway is extended from Bowen, it will bring about a lot of settlement in that locality. Another thing to attract settlement will be the establishment of a sugar-mill there. The settlers hope that the Government will establish a central mill there, because the people do not want a privately-owned mill. As it is part of the Government policy to buy Inkerman Estate and extend the Bowen Railway, they

should go one step further and establish a central mill there. Before I came to the House I advocated this North Coast Railway extension, and I was in communication with Mr. Broome, the secretary of the league in Rockhampton, in getting support for it elsewhere. I am glad that the Government are going to take over the Bowen to Proserpine Tramway. The bumbles who had control of the construction of that railway were entrusted with £80,000 to carry out that work, whereas they should never have been trusted with 80,000 yen. The Government will now have to pay £100,000 to take it over. The Government will also take over the Ayr Tramway, which is really a railway, and that will be of great benefit to the settlers in the Burdekin district. The Ayr Tramway has been paying 11 to 13 per cent., and the Proserpine Railway, under proper control, will also be able to pay interest over and above working expenses. There is some magnificent agricultural land on these two routes, and there will be room for thousands of people there. For every one person that will settle on the Western extension, the settlement on this extension from Bowen to Ayr will be 200 or 300 times greater.

Mr. D. HUNTER: What about the Bowen Chamber of Commerce?

Mr. FERRICKS: When I came down here the desires of the people of Bowen and Ayr with regard to the extension of the railway were diametrically opposed; and hon. members can understand my position. At the [12.30 p.m.] same time it was quite above-board, quite consistent, and quite justifiable. I advised the people of Bowen that, so far as I could ascertain, the Reid River connection was as dead as a door-nail, and had been for several years. I have been a consistent advocate of an extension of the Bowen Railway somewhere. The *via recta*, if I may so call it, will come some time, and then the trade of the Western district will come to Bowen, to which it belongs. I advised the Bowen Chamber of Commerce to advocate taking the railway somewhere. Personally I am not enamoured of the route selected by the Government. I think the better route would be to go by the Rocks and connect with Ayr. It would traverse a splendid district, and it is a pity the connection was not made long ago, as it would have been, if the opposing parties had not pulled against each other with such vim. When I came down here I expressed the opinion in this House, and to the Secretary for Railways personally, that so far as I was concerned, I would throw the responsibility of extending the railway on the Government. If the Government desire to take it *vid* Jarvisfield they must take the responsibility. I am not capable of speaking from the engineering aspect of the question except as a layman, but I can speak from other aspects, and I say that, even if we had all the reports in the world in favour of a particular extension of the Bowen Railway, we would have to accept the dictum of the experts of the Railway Department, although they might not be so capable of judging the relative merits of the different routes as we who are conversant with the country. My reason for opposing the passage of the last proposal which was before this Chamber was because, in my opinion, it is a Brisbane line. This railway is a Queensland railway, which will open up a greater extent of rich country, and will settle a lot of people. It is a national work. I shall support every proposal to build railways into agricultural districts. I do not care whether they are in the North or in the South; and it is a great pity that the hon. the senior member for

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Maryborough and other hon. members opposite, did not show greater concern for the interests of the agricultural industry when the Great Western Railway Bill was before the House. If the hon. the senior member for Maryborough had made his request, when that Bill was before the House, for an assurance from the Secretary for Railways that the interests of the agricultural industry would not be stagnated, I think the request would have been very pertinent and timely. It is not so pertinent on the second reading of this Bill, because this railway will go through agricultural districts.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have given that assurance several times already.

Mr. FERRICKS: I am referring to the request made by the hon. the senior member for Maryborough a few minutes ago.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The Secretary for Railways was not in the Chamber at that time.

Mr. FERRICKS: I contend there is no analogy between the two proposals. This railway is a national work; it will settle people on the land—

Mr. COTTELL: And it goes through your electorate.

Mr. FERRICKS: Let me repeat, for the hon. member's sake, that I was requested by the Bowen Chamber of Commerce to go to the Premier and ask for an extension of the Bowen Railway through private property, and I refused, although it was against my interests to do so. From a defence point of view, this railway is more valuable than the Great Western Railway. It will settle 200 or 300 people for every one that the other line will settle. The necessity of that line for defence purposes will be entirely wiped out by the construction of a Federal transcontinental railway, which must come eventually. I recognise that the request of hon. members on this side for a postponement of the Bill until further information is supplied is quite justifiable, and I take no exception to their attitude, because they have not got the information which is in the possession of hon. members representing this part of the country. We have been over the country; we have lived in it; and it is only natural that men representing far Western constituencies should not know as much about the country as hon. members representing the districts through which the railway will pass. The construction of the railway must result in benefit to the people of Queensland and to the good government of Australia; and for that reason I shall support the second reading and vote against the amendment.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mackay*): If ever a railway deserved the general approval of the House, it is this one, if only for the fact that it is going through such a large area of Crown land. Out of 11,000,000 acres in the benefited areas there are only 2,000,000 acres alienated, leaving a balance of 9,000,000 acres still in the hands of the Crown, and some of that land is the best we have in Queensland. Many of us are personally acquainted with the land along the route. I know the country for 90 miles on either side of Mackay, and for the whole of these 180 miles the land is first-class. Of course there are small gaps on the watersheds between the creeks, and so on; but the greater part of it is first-class agricultural land which will in time be very closely settled. The amendment should be opposed if only on the ground that, if it is carried, and the whole of the route is required to be surveyed, the portion that is still unsurveyed—although small in comparison with the whole length of the line—has sufficient mileage to absorb all our surveyors for some considerable time to come. That would

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mean that the building of the line would be put back for three or four years, and, under present circumstances, I do not think that is desirable. The argument has been advanced in favour of the amendment that there is not the same need for this line that there is for the construction of a Great Western Railway as a means of combating drought. While that is true, there is an even greater danger to be faced than that of drought. There is the danger of a foreign invasion, and it seems to me that from that point of view there is not a moment to spare in beginning the settlement of our coastal lands.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I can hardly hear the hon. member speak. There is so much conversation going on that I can hear more of that conversation than I can of the hon. member's speech.

Mr. SWAYNE: I do not think that in the present position of Australia we can afford to lose any time in building this railway, so that we may push forward the settlement of our coastal areas with all possible speed. The land through which the line will pass is capable of carrying a big population. As to the lack of information with regard to the route, the line has been vouched for by hon. members on both sides of the House. The deputy leader of the Opposition answered for the portion of the line in his electorate, the hon. member for Rockhampton for the portion in his electorate, and the hon. member for Normanby for the portion in his electorate, and the hon. member for Bowen for his. The only exception taken by the hon. member for Rockhampton North to the matter was to the character given to the lands in his district in the report submitted to the House. In view of these facts, I think we should come to a vote as soon as possible. I could speak at some length as to the high character of the lands to be opened up in my district, but I do not propose to do so as we have sat all night and I do not think it desirable to keep members sitting here some hours longer. I shall, therefore, set a good example, and resume my seat, trusting that a vote will be taken.

Mr. HAMILTON: I shall not speak at any length, but I do not want to give a silent vote on this question. I am going to vote for the amendment, because I do not think it is a good thing to encourage the bringing down of a railway proposal involving an expenditure of over £2,000,000 on the meagre information that has been supplied to the House in connection with this railway. I know the country north of Mackay pretty well, and I think that the building of a railway there is fairly well justified. I believe the country there is the richest portion of Queensland. I listened with great attention to the hon. member for Normanby, because I think he is the only man in the House who has a thorough knowledge of the country between Rockhampton and Mackay, but all I could gather from his speech was that it was very good dairying land. There are about 11,000,000 acres of land alienated along that part of the railway.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Oh, no; 11,000,000 acres altogether, of which 2,000,000 are alienated.

Mr. HAMILTON: It has been pointed out that the coast range comes down near the water between Rockhampton and Mackay, and that it is only here and there in that district that there is good dairying land. The hon. member for Normanby stated that good fat cattle had been raised on that land. I have seen numbers of the finest fat cattle in Australia come from the far West, away down south of Birdsville. Those

cattle took the prize at the Adelaide Show. But I do not regard the turning of good fat cattle off land as any criterion of the carrying capacity of country for dairying purposes. I put the statement of the hon. member for Normanby above any official report we have from Mr. Cooke in regard to the value of the country I am referring to, as the hon. member for Normanby is an authority on the subject. The hon. member for Normanby told us that about 18 or 20 miles outside Rockhampton there is some very fair scrub land, but that the rest is only pretty fair dairying land. I believe, from what I can learn from the speeches of hon. members who have addressed the House, that the best of the land between Rockhampton and Cairns has been alienated—that about 11,000,000 acres are alienated at the present time.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No; 11,000,000 acres between Rockhampton and Cairns.

Mr. HAMILTON: Well, as far as I can learn, the best of the land between Rockhampton and Mackay is alienated—and alienated in pretty large areas. That is a bad thing. I believe the good land is limited to the country between Mackay and Cairns. We have been furnished with very little information with regard to either of these railways, and I am going to vote for the amendment because of the meagre information which has been supplied, just as I voted against the railway proposed to be made into my own district for the same reason. I am not against the building of a railway in the North, as I believe the North is entitled to a railway, and that a line in that part of the State will make more land available for settlement—especially north of Townsville—than any other line we could construct. But apparently this railway is going to start at Rockhampton, and I do not think that is good policy. I think the other portions of the line should be built first. A railway through the country between Rockhampton and Mackay will not settle many people, and the only justification for it is that it will establish the connecting link between the southern and northern coast railways. Even when this line and the other lines are built, there will still be portions of far Western Queensland over 600 miles away from the proposed railways. To make the scheme complete, and give railway communication throughout Queensland, we should link up the Central and Northern railways somewhere about Longreach and Winton. I do not care what particular places are chosen for the connecting link, and would be prepared to abide by the decision of the experts in the matter, but certainly such a connection is necessary in order to complete our railway system.

Mr. WHITE (*Musgrave*): I should not have spoken at all on this matter had not the member for Maranoa said that no member on this side of the House could justify his voting for this railway, without plans and specifications being laid on the table. I have seen plans and specifications of other railways lying on the table of the House for a fortnight, and have noticed that only the members interested in a particular railway and the district which it traversed, have taken the trouble to look at the plans. It must also be remembered that when plans and specifications of railways were tabled originally, we were building railways by contract, and those plans and specifications were furnished in order to give members a fair idea of the probable cost of construction. As a matter of fact, now railways are being constructed by day labour, it would be of great advantage to leave the work in the hands of the experts, who would be able to deviate here and there, and thus lessen the cost of construction. I intend to vote against the amendment for the reasons I have stated.

Mr. MANN: There is no doubt that this railway is more justifiable than the Great Western Railway; at the same time, this House would be lacking in its duty in passing such a gigantic scheme without the fullest information. The adoption of these schemes must prevent other necessary work being undertaken by the Government. On the 11th August I asked the Minister for Railways—

1. How many surveyors are in the employ of the Railway Department?
2. Where and how are they employed at present?
3. Has the Railway Department sufficient surveyors to do all the survey work required by the Railway Department?
4. If not, what steps, if any, is he taking to get more surveyors?

And the Secretary for Railways replied—

1. Fifteen.
2. (a) Three on the working surveys of lines passed by Parliament last year, viz.:—Oakey to Cooyar, Cordalba to Dallarnil, and Mount Morgan to Dawson Valley.
- (b) Ten on trial surveys, employed in the following districts, viz.:—Southern Burnett, Southern Border, Dalby, Taroom, Mary Valley, Upper Burnett, Townsville, and Mackay.
- (c) Two on examinations of the country between the south-western portion of the State and the Gulf of Carpentaria.
3. No.
4. More railway surveyors are not available.

Here is a gigantic scheme of railway construction, and where are the surveyors? There are requests from every coast district for agricultural lines, and I am waiting till the Minister has more time at his disposal, to present to him a petition for a line in my district. There is a request for an extension of the Tolga-Johnstone line, but there are no surveyors available. The hon. member for Normanby says a good deal of the country between Rockhampton and Mackay is good dairying country. I can take anyone to country on the coast that looks so well when there is rain that one could not wish for better country; but from the end of August until the rain comes, about the new year, it would take a square mile to feed a bandicoot. If the Government want to develop our agricultural resources they will build lines in agricultural districts to promote settlement, and make the railways as much as possible paying concerns. In 1906, when the present Secretary for Lands was introducing the Railways Bill, he claimed that our railways left us in debt to the extent of £6,250,000; and every mile of railway that does not pay goes to increase that debt. I do not say that something has not come back in the shape of increased value of the land, but that does not always go into the pockets of the Government. I received a request from the Cairns Chamber of Commerce to ask for a flying survey from Ingham to Cairns; but I said that a much more urgent work was an extension of the Tolga-Johnstone line to Milla Milla; and the Cairns Chamber of Commerce are willing to forego what they asked for in order that development may take place in the Cairns back country, where railway extension will settle people on the land and do good. I may say that this Bill is badly drafted, and it appears to have been hurriedly prepared. When speaking the other night, the Minister said that Cairns should pay one-tenth of the loss on Section E. The town of Cairns and shire of Cairns have practically developed all their territory; and the Cairns Shire Council offered to extend the railway right up to their boundary, but they were blocked by the Government. By extending the line about 8 miles more it will come into the town of Cairns. The trade to the south of that should go to its

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own port—namely, Mourilyan Harbour. After the people of Cairns and the Cairns district have done so much for themselves, I fail to see why they should be saddled with any loss on the line further south, which will be of no benefit to them. We have given the settlers a good service, and paid the men better wages than the Government, and carried freight cheaper than the Government, yet we will have to guarantee any loss on the other sections.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not on the other sections.

Mr. MANN: On section E we have built 37 miles, and another 8 miles will bring the line into Cairns; and I fail to see why the town and the shire of Cairns should be burdened with the debt on sections that will give them no benefit.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What about the through traffic?

Mr. MANN: The Minister spoke in grandiloquent tones about the train-loads of tobacco that would go over the line. He must have had in his mind's eye the toy trains one sees in the shop-windows at Christmas time, because one could carry all the tobacco grown at Kamerunga in a 70-lb. sugar-bag. Does the hon. gentleman think sugar will be sent over the line to Rockhampton, or to Brisbane? I can tell him it will be sent by boat. The Government talk of building some more central mills; and we want railways to take the come to those mills.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think the hon. member must admit that I have allowed him to go into detail to a rather generous extent. I must now remind him that the question before the House is one of principle, and members should not go into details.

Mr. MANN: I agree that we should not go into details if possible. I will merely point out that the greatest necessity we have at the present time is a more efficient coastal service by boat, and better harbours; and if the Government are going to borrow £8,000,000 or £9,000,000 for railways there will be no money for other necessary reproductive works. It has been argued that this railway will be very useful for defence purposes, but I do not think that members really believe that for one moment, for this reason, that a coastal line running so near the coast is too open to an enemy.

[1 p.m.] For example, if there was a very costly bridge built over a river, there would be nothing to prevent a Japanese cruiser coming and landing a party and destroying the bridge, and cutting off North Queensland from the South. A line for defence purposes should be further in. If the Government appointed a Commission to consider this, they would find that a line could be run from Evelyn right down through that country in behind the range, which would be safe from an enemy, and junctioning with the Townsville line, and from there on from Hughenden to Winton. That would be the best defence line we could get. This coastal line is one that will never, to my mind, be of much service for defence purposes, as it will be too easily cut off in many points. I asked a question in regard to what the Government intended to do about taking over the tramway in Cairns, and I have not yet got satisfactory replies to that and various other questions, but I notice that there is a proposal in the Bill to start this line at Cairns if the Mulgrave Tramway is not taken over. That is a threat to the people of Cairns that if they do not allow the tramway to be taken over the Government will build a line from Cairns in opposition to the present Cairns Tramway. To use the homely Scotch phrase, "They can save their breath to

cool their porridge," because if they build a line from Cairns they will not get any traffic over it, as the ratepayers control the traffic, and if the Government build a line they could not afford to enter into competition with the Cairns Tramway. I do not think for one moment that the Government intend to start this line from Cairns. They could not afford to build 40 miles of railway through private property. The amount they would have to pay for resumption alone would run into hundreds and thousands of pounds. We should refuse to sell to the Government at anything less than a fair price. All that land is worth £40 an acre. If the Government try to run another line through there, I will guarantee that every acre of land they resume would cost £20 an acre.

Hon. R. PHILP: The Cairns ratepayers will have to pay 3 per cent. on it.

Mr. MANN: We are going to object. Even the hon. member for Townsville himself admits that it would be a foolish scheme to penalise the people of Cairns with a railway that brings them no benefit.

Hon. R. PHILP: It will benefit Cairns; the railway will make Cairns.

Mr. MANN: I do not think it will help the town of Cairns in the least.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! This is all detail.

Mr. MANN: I quite understand it is all detail, but it is very necessary detail before we pass this Bill.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member must know that it is out of order to discuss all these details. Some amount of latitude may be allowed in replying to other speakers, but he must not go beyond the scope allowed to any other hon. member.

Mr. MANN: I am not seeking to go beyond the remarks made by any other speaker. One hon. member spoke about the via recta.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must now keep to the principle of the Bill.

Mr. MANN: I will deal with the Bill on broad lines. Before passing this Bill, we want the fullest possible information to see if we are justified in spending this enormous sum of money, and whether it will produce such an amount of settlement as to warrant the expenditure. I have no information in regard to that. I will admit that we are justified in building a section from Mackay south; we are justified in building a section from Bobawaba to the banks of the Burdekin River. I quite admit that we want some better facilities in the Herbert electorate to bring their traffic down to the coast, but I do not think for one moment that we want to build any great amount of railway between Rockhampton and Mackay. I think 30 or 40 miles extension south from Mackay would meet the case for very many years to come. This Bill proposes also to open up some country in my district, and that country, as I said before, the shire council are quite able and willing to open up, if they get permission from the Government. They will do it more expeditiously and cheaply than what the Government can do, because they have good men who understand the country and that class of work. I oppose this Bill, because it must seriously affect railway construction in every agricultural district in Queensland. We cannot shut our eyes to that fact. I think that the borrowing of a sum amounting to £8,000,000 of money is hastening the time, which will inevitably come, when Queensland cannot borrow money for constructing any more railways. We have seen that happen before,

[Mr. Mann.]

and we shall see it happen again. We have £15,000,000 of loan money falling due within a few years, and if we borrow this money, and it does not return interest and redemption, we will be unable to borrow any more money. I am opposed to this gigantic railway scheme, because it means that we will have to import labour to build it. There is not sufficient labour now in Queensland to build these railways. I maintain that to build these railways in the period of seven years, we must import at least from 3,000 to 4,000 navvies. The navvies we get from the old country are agricultural labourers. I was there myself, and know what I am speaking about. At least 75 per cent. of the navvies working on the Cairns Railway were agricultural labourers from Ireland, Scotland, and North of England. At present private enterprise is busy all over Queensland, and there is plenty of employment. Here is a Government stepping in with a big programme of work, and trying to make the scarcity of labour in Queensland much more acute. They want to raise a big cry for immigration. They will bring out 4,000 or 5,000 navvies. We will suppose there are 2,000 in Queensland at the present time. That will mean that 7,000 navvies will be thrown out of work the moment our big railway boom has burst. On a previous occasion I saw men going from Cairns to Croydon, and travelling all over the North, and they could not find any work to do. I saw fine strong able-bodied navvies working in Mackay for 15s. a week and their food, for ten hours a day, and at the end of the week they were dismissed, because the employers always reckoned on getting the best work out of them during the first week. I have seen many instances of that kind—I have seen that happen before, and it is going to happen again. I admit that we have had six or seven very good years. Queensland is prosperous, but it is not going to remain so for all time, and this big gigantic bubble is going to land Queensland where she was very near before—in insolvency. There is no doubt about that, and I would warn the Government, before going on with this gigantic scheme, to pause and consider, and if there is any money to spend—if we can borrow any money at all—spend that money wisely and well in building railways in districts where we know they will pay. I can mention several districts in need of railways myself, and I dare say the hon. member for Maryborough can mention several districts in the Burnett, and the member for Cunningham this morning mentioned several railways which were wanted in his own district; and I am quite sure, if you went round to the members of this House and asked them privately, that every member has a railway in his pocket. I have two or three myself, and every one I have, I can assure you, would be good payable railways, and for those reasons I am going to vote against this proposal.

Mr. HAMILTON: I have one that the Premier has in his pocket.

Mr. MANN: For that reason I am going to vote for the amendment. I trust that it will be carried, and that we will have much more information about this route before we are asked to vote for the railway.

HON. R. PHILP: I am going to vote against the amendment, and I hope it won't be carried. I think myself all members of the House consider this is a very desirable railway to be built—that it is a very good thing to connect Rockhampton with Cairns and Brisbane with Cairns. It is going through a great deal of good agricultural land. I have seen a good deal of it myself, and I can say the land between Rockhampton and Cairns is much better than the land between Brisbane

and Rockhampton. That line is paying very well, and if that line pays, why should not a line from Rockhampton to Cairns pay well too? It is not an experiment. The local bodies in those districts have built three lines, and those lines are paying, and at least two of them are paying handsomely. The line from Ayr to Townsville, I think, paid 12 per cent. this year. No one should hesitate about building lines of that sort, and, besides, I think the country between Cairns and the Tully and Cardwell is some of the finest agricultural land in Queensland, none of which would be opened up without a railway. Besides, we know that lines going through big populations pay best. We have big populations in Mount Morgan, at Rockhampton, and also in Mackay, Townsville, Charters Towers, and a good population in Cairns. Those people will travel on the line. I do not for a moment think we will get goods from Cairns to Brisbane by the railway, but I am satisfied there will be a big passenger traffic from Cairns to Brisbane. Besides, a large sum of money will be saved by carrying mails by rail. At the present time the Federal Government pay for us between £20,000 and £30,000 a year to subsidise steamers from Gladstone to Townsville, and also from Townsville to Cairns, and we will save that for ourselves. That will pay a good percentage on the cost of the whole railway. Then again, we have just passed a line through the western part of Queensland, and it was quite justifiable, but I say this line is even more justifiable. It will go through a thicker populated country and will be the means of settling an enormous number of our people on the best agricultural lands we have in Queensland. No doubt we want more sugar-mills, and why should we not have more sugar-mills? But these mills could not be erected unless we have railways to and from those districts. It is not an experiment. It is a line that has proved in two different places to pay very handsomely, and also we have the testimony of half a dozen members of this House who know the land thoroughly. I do not pretend to know the whole of it, but I dare say I know as much as any individual member of this House. I have travelled over a good deal of it, and I know that, especially between the Herbert and Cairns, you have the best rainfall in Queensland. You have also some of the best scrub lands, and you can settle 100,000 people on that land in time to come. I think we would be wanting in our duty if we did not pass this railway from Rockhampton to Cairns. I hope that we will not have an all-night sitting over this, but that the good sense of the Chamber will come to a decision very shortly and pass this railway. In Committee, I dare say we can discuss details, but, briefly, I say it is one of the best propositions ever put before this Chamber. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. FOLEY: It is not my intention to keep the House very long over this. I do not intend to support the amendment, for reasons which I will endeavour to show in as few words as possible. The reason why the amendment was moved was because it was decided on the first reading of the Bill that unless more information was supplied by the Minister, this party could not see its way clear to support the proposition. Since then we have had presented to us by the Minister two reports from engineer Wm. D. Cooke, railway surveyor, and his report goes to show that between Plane Creek and St. Lawrence—which his first report deals with—there are several areas of good agricultural land, which he says would settle a good population if railway communication could be accomplished. He says—

*Mr. Foley.]*

There is a large area of good agricultural land on Kelvin Grove now lying idle, which would be immediately taken up and cultivated if the Coastal Railway was once established.

It is really lamentable to see deserted, on nearly all the selections (which were once nice homes), houses, outhouses, yards, fences, gardens, &c., now in ruins, either burnt or blown down.

There was to have been a sugar-mill on Kelvin Grove some years ago, hence the expenditure and loss.

If there is sufficient agricultural land on Kelvin Grove to maintain a sugar-mill, that in itself is enough to warrant the building of a railway, because it will create a good deal of trade for the railway to carry the sugar to the nearest port. I know that in Townsville we reap a great amount of benefit from the sugar that is carried over the Ayr Tramway, and that tramway, which is about 48 miles in length, has paid a very handsome profit since the sugar has been carried over it; and if that is true of Townsville, there is no reason why it should not be true of this section between Plane Creek and St. Lawrence. The construction of the railway, we find from Mr. Cooke's report, will be very light. The earthworks are not so heavy as has been made out by the hon. member for Carnarvon in speaking against the construction of this railway. The hon. member tried to make out that there were large mountainous ranges to go over and very big rivers to cross along this coastal railway, and that more information should be supplied before the House passed the railway. Mr. Cooke, in his report, says—

As far as the earthworks are concerned, the work will be light, viz., five rock cuttings, averaging, say, 12 chains long and 12 feet deep, on top at the following mileages—viz., at the commencement, 21 miles 50 chains, 33 miles 60 chains, 41 miles 40 chains, 77 miles 60 chains, and 79 miles 20 chains.

He also makes reference to the fact that there is sufficient timber in the neighbourhood for the bridgework, and says—

The bridges will be a heavy item—viz., eighty-seven different watercourses to cross, which will require 7,070 feet of bridging, details of which are shown on separate sheets.

Bridge timber, girders, and headstocks in any quantity of either blue gum, bloodwood, or Moreton Bay ash. The latter timber is very good in this district, when the diameter of the tree is 18 inches and over and the log sapped. Piles of narrow-leaf ironbark can be got here and there along the route, but principally on the ranges, but good sticks are not plentiful, but still they are to be found in the district.

That is quite different to the report which Mr. Amos made in connection with the Western extension, in which he said—

*Timber.*—There is a little gum timber in the creeks from Boulia onward, which may be useful for certain railway purposes; but, in preparing an estimate of cost of the line, I think it can safely be assumed that, except for fencing and firewood, no timber exists between Hungerford and Camooweal, and that supplies will have to be obtained from districts nearer the coast.

Then later on, in reference to the same matter, Mr. Amos said—

*Cost of the Line.*—In estimating what it will cost to build the railway, there are so many things to be taken into consideration with which I am not very familiar just now—such, for instance, as to the cost of procuring and delivering on the ground sleepers and bridge timber—that I think a more reliable estimate may be prepared by officers of the department who are conversant with present supplies and prices.

I mention this to show that along the route from Rockhampton northwards there is any amount of timber to be obtained for bridgework. There will be no trouble either in obtaining sufficient ballast, which was not the case in the Western extension. That shows that the cost of construction will

[Mr. Foley.

not be so great on the coast as in the case of the Western extension. A portion of the scheme is the construction of the line from Townsville to Cairns. That portion from Townsville to Ingham passes through good land, and it will be the means of settling a large population along that route. There is also some good land between Townsville and Ayr, and also between Mackay and Pr serpine, and it will be the means of settling a lot of people there. For these reasons I cannot possibly support the amendment. I think that sufficient information has been supplied in this case to warrant the Government going on with the work.

Mr. HARDACRE: I am going to be brief. I am going to support the amendment. One reason I have for that is that there is a rival route to this North Coast Railway, namely—that from Blair Athol to Charters Towers, and we should get more information about the proposal before we actually go on with the construction of this line. For that and other reasons I support the amendment.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: So far as my knowledge goes we are witnessing a great diversity of opinion on the part of members opposite which we have never witnessed before.

Mr. FERRICKS: It shows that we are treating it as a non-party question.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I congratulate the members of the Opposition on the position—

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! That is not the question before the House. I ask the hon. member to keep to the question, which is the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: One pleasing aspect about this Bill is that it has met with the almost universal approval of members of this House. (Hear, hear!) And even those who have approached the matter from other issues agree that these two railway questions are the two greatest that have ever been placed before the House. I would have preferred even a more complete measure than we have got here. Great as it is it might have been greater, and it might have included a greater number of people, as it should have done. It does not meet the needs of the people in the south-eastern portion of the Darling Downs. I hope the House will take the earliest opportunity of including in its railway policy the construction of the *via recta*. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. PAYNE: I rise for the purpose of supporting the amendment. I cannot speak of this route from personal knowledge, but to be consistent I must oppose it until we have the plans and specifications and book of reference, as we asked for in the case of the Western railway. I have it on reliable authority that this line will run through some of the most useless land in the State. If it is necessary to have this information in the case of the Western line, it is necessary to have it in the case of a line that will support nothing, and that goes through land that is useless for agriculture or grazing or anything else. For these reasons I will support the amendment moved by the hon. member for Croydon.

Mr. CRAWFORD (*Fiteroy*): I intend to support the Bill because I believe that the proposal is a good one. I am anxious that this line shall be constructed, so that it will help to prolong the life of Mount Morgan. I know that in Mackay there exists great mineral resources, and it will mean that these ores will be brought to Mount Morgan and converted into gold and copper and other articles of commerce. For this reason I shall support the Bill and vote against the amendment.

Mr. MAY: I intend to support the amendment. I think we should wait until the plans

are tabled, and there should be some slight delay in this proposal as well as the Western scheme. I think we should get more information about the monorail before we go in for such a grandiloquent scheme as this. The monorail has been tried in Germany and England on a small scale, and the British Government intend to give it a further trial in India to see whether it will act in a practical manner or not.

When the use of the monorail system has become an accomplished fact, no doubt we can build railways for about one-fourth the present cost of

construction. I believe it is a good [1.30 p.m.] thing to build this line, but there are other districts which are as much entitled to railway construction as any of these coastal districts. During the last day and a-half all sorts of demands have been made for promises of railway connections between the Northern and Central railway systems. No connection has yet been made between those two systems. Promises have been made that surveyors will be sent out, but I do not believe they are on the ground yet. I therefore hold that we should delay the passing of this measure until we have some assurance that some connection will be made between the Northern and Central Railways. I have advocated such a connection between Hughenden and Barcardine, and that is quite as necessary as a connection between Mackay and Rockhampton. I wish to emphasise the fact that we in my part of the country have been most unmercifully neglected in the matter of railway construction. I have had a large amount of correspondence from that part of the country asking for the connection to which I have alluded. Yet it is thrust to one side, and we are asked to push on with this North Coast extension. I do not think that a fair thing. We have heard the advocates of this line urge its construction for strategical reasons; but, if the connection I suggest were made, and the line was extended from Cloncurry, whether it goes by Suleiman's Creek or Rochedale, or whether it goes by Mount Cuthbert away to Burketown, we would have an open line of communication with the North. There is not one word said about the line I advocate, but these two grand schemes are submitted to us. They look very nice on paper, but that is no reason why the wishes of the settlers in the best part of Queensland should be ignored. I would like to see the passage of this Bill delayed, as I should like to see some of the plans, and to see whether there is any prospect of getting the monorail system introduced, as it would be so much cheaper than the present system.

Question—That the words proposed to be omitted (*Mr. Murphy's amendment*) stand part of the question—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 41.

Mr. Allan	Mr. Hawthorn
" Appel	" Hodge
" Barnes, G. P.	" Hunter, D.
" Barnes, W. H.	" Kidston
" Booker	" Lennon
" Bouchard	" Mackintosh
" Brennan	" Maughan
" Breslin	" Morgan
" Bridges	" Mulcahy
" Corser	" Paget
" Cottell	" Petrie
" Crawford	" Philp
" Cribb	" Roberts
" Denham	" Ryan
" Ferricks	" Somerset
" Foley	" Stodart
" Forrest	" Swayne
" Forsyth	" Thorn
" Fox	" Tolmie
" Grant	" White
" Grayson	

Tellers: Mr. Forsyth. Mr. Ryan.

NOES, 18.

Mr. Allen	Mr. May
" Collins	" Mullan
" Coyne	" Murphy
" Gunn	" McLachlan
" Hamilton	" Nevitt
" Hardacre	" O'Sullivan
" Hunter, J. M.	" Payne
" Land	" Ryland
" Mann	" Winstanley

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

PAIR.

Aye—Mr. Wienholt. No—Mr. Lesina.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 44.

Mr. Allan	Mr. Hawthorn
" Appel	" Hodge
" Barnes, G. P.	" Hunter, D.
" Barnes, W. H.	" Kidston
" Booker	" Lennon
" Bouchard	" Mackintosh
" Brennan	" Maughan
" Breslin	" Morgan
" Bridges	" Mulcahy
" Corser	" Nevitt
" Cottell	" Paget
" Crawford	" Petrie
" Cribb	" Philp
" Denham	" Roberts
" Ferricks	" Ryan
" Foley	" Ryland
" Forrest	" Somerset
" Forsyth	" Stodart
" Fox	" Swayne
" Grant	" Thorn
" Grayson	" Tolmie
" Gunn	" White

Tellers: Mr. Bouchard and Mr. Breslin.

NOES, 15.

Mr. Allen	Mr. May
" Collins	" Mullan
" Coyne	" Murphy
" Hamilton	" McLachlan
" Hardacre	" O'Sullivan
" Hunter, J. M.	" Payne
" Land	" Ryland
" Mann	" Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Payne and Mr. Winstanley.

PAIR.

Aye—Mr. Wienholt. No—Mr. Lesina.

Resolved in the affirmative.

The committal of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

#### SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I move that the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Thursday.

Question put and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I move that the House do now adjourn. The first business to-morrow, after the third reading of the Great Western Railway Bill, will be the consideration of the North Coast Railway Bill in Committee, and then we might give some time to the consideration of the Council's amendments in the Mines Regulation Bill.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twelve minutes to 2 o'clock p.m.

Hon. W. Kidston.]