

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Council**

**THURSDAY, 15 DECEMBER 1910**

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## MEAT AND DAIRY PRODUCE ENCOURAGEMENT ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of the HON. A. H. BARLOW, the Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be returned to the Legislative Assembly, by message in the usual form.

## OFFICIAL INQUIRIES EVIDENCE BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of the HON. A. H. BARLOW, the Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Assembly for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

## NORTH COAST RAILWAY BILL.

SECOND READING.

HON. A. H. BARLOW said: This is not so ambitious a project as the one which the Council was good enough to pass last night. It provides for a connecting line of railway from Rockhampton to Cairns, and it takes in the following existing lines:—19½ miles of the Mackay Railway; 38 miles of the Proserpine Tramway; 45 miles of the Bowen Railway; 44 miles of the Ayr Tramway; 6 miles of the Great Northern Railway—because it junctions outside Townsville; and 37 miles of the Cairns-Mulgrave Tramway, making 189½ miles, and leaving 454 miles to be constructed—making a grand total of 643½ miles from Rockhampton to Mourilyan and Cairns. I hope the Council will excuse me for reading and commenting on the Commissioner's report, but I am sure it is much superior to anything I could produce—

Plans have not been completed for the whole 454 miles, but they are being prepared, and already there are sufficient to enable construction to be commenced almost immediately at Rockhampton, Mackay, Bobawaba (the present terminus of the Bowen line), and Townsville. The estimated cost (£2,320,000, exclusive of land resumptions) of the lines to be built must not be taken as exact, but it is fairly reliable, as more than the usual allowance has been made for contingencies where the country has not been thoroughly examined, and I am confident it will not be exceeded. I have not estimated the cost of the 189½ miles already existing, because 70½ of these (i.e., 19½ Mackay, 45 Bowen, 6 Great Northern) are already provided for, and the three tramways (in all 119 miles) proposed to be taken over have been built with money borrowed from the Treasury.

The Commissioner further says—

In addition to the cost of the railways, there must of course be an expenditure on rolling-stock, even after taking into account the fact that rolling-stock at Rockhampton, Mackay, Bowen, and Townsville can be utilised to better advantage than at present; and this I estimate at £182,500.

This continuous line will have the effect of enabling the rolling-stock to be used right away from Brisbane to Cairns. In point of fact, when this railway is completed, if anybody felt disposed to undergo such a martyrdom, he could get into a railway train at Cairns and stay in it until he arrived at Oodnadatta, in South Australia, with a small hiatus between Tweed Heads and Murwillumbah. The Commissioner further says—

It is difficult to arrive at any reliable estimate of revenue and expenditure. I have assumed that

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

THURSDAY, 15 DECEMBER, 1910.

The PRESIDENT (Hon. Sir Arthur Morgan) took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock.

## WOODFORD TO KILCOY RAILWAY.

PRESENTATION OF REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

HON. A. H. BARLOW presented the report of the Select Committee on this line, and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

## MARY VALLEY RAILWAY—KEEFTON TO IMBIL.

PRESENTATION OF REPORT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

HON. A. H. BARLOW presented the report of the Select Committee on this line, and moved that it be printed.

Question put and passed.

## SELECT COMMITTEE ON GAYNDAH TO MUNDUBBERA RAILWAY.

ATTENDANCE OF MEMBER OF LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

The PRESIDENT announced the receipt of a message from the Assembly granting permission to Mr. Charles Joseph Booker, member of the Legislative Assembly for the electoral district of Maryborough, to attend and give evidence before the Select Committee upon this railway, if he thought fit.

## MINES REGULATION BILL.

MESSAGE FROM ASSEMBLY.

The PRESIDENT announced the receipt of a message from the Assembly relative to the consideration by the Assembly of the Council's amendments in this Bill.

On the motion of HON. A. H. BARLOW, the message was ordered to be taken into consideration at a later hour of the sitting.

[*Mr. White.*

the service to start with will average two trains (one each way) per day throughout the whole length of the line, which will involve an—

expenditure of ... .. £67,138  
and interest on £2,320,000, at 3 per cent. 69,600

or a total of ... .. 136,738  
Revenue ... .. 120,000

leaving a loss to start with of ... .. £16,738;  
which will work out at one-third of a penny per acre on the lands within the benefited areas, or nine-tenths of a penny per £1 on the present valuation. I do not, however, anticipate any loss except at the beginning, as the linking up of the present lines must necessarily develop a traffic which at present cannot be estimated, and there is a gain in the conveyance of mails to be taken into account as well.

As illustrating the effect of linking up isolated lines, I have had a return prepared showing the combined capital cost of the Southern and Western, Maryborough, Mount Perry, and Central Railways, and the interest returned thereon in 1890, 1900, and 1910. The result is:—

	Capital Cost.	Interest Returned Per Cent.
1890—Four separate railways ... ..	£11,656,000	£1 10s. 9d.
1900—Linked up into two separate railways ... ..	£15,217,917	£2 13s. 4d.
1910—All four combined into one railway ... ..	£19,020,936	£4 1s. 3d.

I do not wish it to be inferred that this progressive result is due altogether to the linking up, because other conditions have contributed, but undoubtedly a great part of it is, as the chief passenger traffic between Brisbane, Maryborough, Bundaberg, Rockhampton, and all the Central Railway, previously carried by water, is now carried by railway, and we may reasonably look for the same experience between Rockhampton, Mackay, Townsville, Charters Towers, etc., etc.

For the purposes of the Act the land between Rockhampton and Cairns has been divided into five railway districts, or benefited areas, as delineated in the schedule; and each division will be responsible only for the loss on the railway within its district, that is to say—

*Area A* will be responsible for the loss, if any, on the railway from Rockhampton to St. Lawrence—

123 miles in length, estimated to cost £558,100.

*Area B*, from St. Lawrence to Midge Point, near Repulse Bay—

19½ miles already provided for, and  
122 miles to be constructed, estimated to cost £556,200

141½ miles

*Area C*, from Midge Point to the southern or right-hand bank of the Burdekin River—

83 miles already provided for, and  
30 miles to be constructed, estimated to cost £113,200

113 miles

*Area D*, from the southern bank of the Burdekin River to a point south of Cardwell, on the Hinchinbrook Passage—

50 miles already provided for, and  
91 miles to be constructed, estimated to cost £382,000

141 miles

*Area E*, from near Cardwell to Cairns—

37 miles already provided for, and  
88 miles to be constructed, estimated to cost £528,000

125 miles

The loss, if any, on the Mackay Railway, Bowen Railway, or Great Northern Railway will not be charged to the railway districts, but to the consoli-

1910—8 L

dated revenue, as at present. North and South Rockhampton (combined) and Townsville will each bear one-fifth part of the loss, if any, on the railways within the respective railway districts in which these municipalities are situated; and Mackay, Bowen, and Cairns one-tenth part of the loss, if any, on the railways within the respective railway districts in which they are situated.

In view of the small loss between the estimated revenue and expenditure (and which I am certain will be confined to the earlier stages), the great advantages to present settlers, the future benefit in the way of increased settlement, and the consequent development of the various ports along the coast, I strongly recommend the construction of this railway, which I am confident will within a very short period prove a valuable asset to the State. In addition to these advantages to the State, it is, to my mind, absolutely necessary to provide for the rapid mobilisation of the Australian Defence Force at any one of the ports on our Eastern coast.

Apart from other considerations that is a very important one. The amount to be borrowed for this line is not very excessive, although it is £2,000,000. But we have learnt to talk in millions lately. The joining up of this disconnected railway system will, in my humble opinion, prove a very valuable asset, and that is the opinion of the Railway Commissioner. There are several particulars which should be mentioned in connection with this matter. First, I will take the Ayr Tramway. The Commissioner has arranged, subject to the passing of this Bill, to buy from the Ayr Tramway Board 44 miles of rolling stock for £35,000. The first cost was £69,000. I think they owed the Treasury £69,300, so that it will be seen that we are giving them a premium of £15,700 on the purchasing price of the line. In 1909 the Ayr Tramway earned £11 8s. 10d. per cent. profit, which is, I suppose, more than any railway in Australia has earned. It was made up in this way: The revenue in 1909 was £14,656; and the expenditure was £5,731. Of this amount for expenditure £2,191 was paid to the Railway Commissioner, who ran the trains at so much per mile, employing his own staff and his own rolling-stock. The Ayr Tramway Board paid for the maintenance themselves, and this amounted to £3,540. Those are the two items which make up the £5,731 which I have quoted as expenditure, leaving a net revenue of, in round numbers, £9,000, which amounts to £11 7s. per cent. on the money borrowed for the construction of the line. The money borrowed was £68,000, and from earnings there was spent on the line £1,280, which makes the total capital invested £69,280. The basis upon which the line was run was that the Commissioner should provide the rolling-stock and staff, and charge the board so much per train-mile for the service rendered. The charge has varied from 2s. 6d. to 1s. 9d. per train-mile. At first the charge was 2s. 6d., then it was 2s., then 1s. 9d., then 1s. 10½d., then 2s., and now it is 2s. 3d. per train mile. The amount charged is subject to revision from year to year, and the Commissioner fixes what he considers is a reasonable charge. I suppose he reduced the amount to 1s. 9d. in order to encourage traffic on the line, and when he found that there was a big traffic he raised it to 2s. 3d. The tramway board maintain the line themselves. The line was built under the Local Authorities Act, and the board could have borrowed the money from the bank and have paid off the Government, using the profits for municipal purposes. The board is in a very strong position with regard to the tramway, and the Commissioner has

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made a bargain to pay them £85,000 for the line, which is equitable, considering the soundness of the line as a revenue-producing asset to the board. During the last six years the line has paid as under—

	£	s.	d.	per cent.
1904 ... ..	5	5	4	per cent.
1905 ... ..	5	18	10	„
1906 ... ..	8	1	8	„
1907 ... ..	10	16	2	„
1908 ... ..	12	3	1	„
1909 ... ..	11	8	10	„

I think those figures indicate very clearly that the Railway Department is justified in taking over this railway at the price quoted.

HON. W. H. CAMPBELL: It is a great bargain for the Government.

HON. A. H. BARLOW: It appears like it. With regard to the Proserpine Tramway, that line is 38 miles long. The sum of £94,000 was borrowed to construct the tramway, and £4,800 in addition had to be spent on it, making the total cost £98,800. I believe the Commissioner is of opinion that the line can be purchased at that figure. Then there are 37 miles of the Mulgrave Tramway, which cost £129,729, including rolling-stock. The Commissioner believes that the owners of the line will sell it at that price. It is earning £10,000 per annum, spending £5,000, and returning a profit of 4 per cent. Those are the terms regarding the proposed purchases. It has been stated that some local authorities are already in arrears with regard to payments due to the Treasury, and it has been asked how they are going to be dealt with should there be a deficiency of 3 per cent. on the working of the line for which they are responsible. Under the Railways Act the Commissioner has power, if the local authority does not levy a rate, to step in and levy it himself and appoint a receiver. With regard to their obligations to the Treasurer, I may say that there was a defect in the Act. The Treasurer could only ask for his money and hope that he would get it. Under the Local Authorities Act, section 41, the Treasurer is not in a position to step in and appoint a receiver, and does not stand in the same position as the Commissioner in respect to the obligations of local authorities to his department. The advantages of the line are the union of all these disconnected railway systems—a bit here, and a bit there. This will substitute a continuous railway from

Tweed Heads to Cairns, keeping [4 p.m.] in the main to the coast, barring a break at South Brisbane, which we can get over by going round by Corinda. The importance of this in the matter of defence must be obvious to all. It will permit of the collection of troops and munitions of war at any port in Queensland. I deprecate this alarmist business. I do not think we are going to have war to-day or to-morrow, but to be forewarned is to be forearmed, and with disconnected railways military operations cannot be carried on. Besides that the railway will afford a powerful competitor to water traffic. People, as a rule, unless cheapness very materially enters into the question, prefer railways, especially for short distances, on account of the handling of goods. While this is not as great a conception as the railway we passed last night, it is one which should commend itself to the attention of the House. The Bowen Railway is at present a disconnected thing. It ends at what used to be called Wangaratta, but is now called Bobawaba—I do

not know why. It ends at a peg. There is a hiatus between that and the Ayr Tramway. The Northern railways are disconnected, and this project will unite all the coastal railways in one railway system. Probably, we could grow just as good tropical products in North Queensland as in any other part of the world, if we had the labour that is necessary to cultivate and pick them. I refer to such products as coffee, cocoa, rubber, cotton, and spices. These things require cheap labour, and any system of cheap labour is impossible. However, a great deal may be done by family cultivation. A great deal has been done in sugar by family cultivation, and it may be done with these other things also. There are 4,700,000 cattle in Queensland, and of these 935,000 are in the districts that will be served by this line. Meat products are worth £1,191,000 a year. Banana cultivation will be an important thing. I am not a fruit expert, but I believe bananas are very much knocked about when shipped by water. I have seen them lying on the wharves piled up in heaps and decaying. If they were forwarded by train at freights that were not prohibitive, a very great impetus would be given to the banana trade.

HON. S. C. MCGHIE: It is the best paying crop in the State.

HON. A. H. BARLOW: It has pleased the Almighty to desolate Fiji to give us a start. I think this railway should serve the banana trade considerably. It is not merely a question of shipments to Sydney or Melbourne, but we consume great quantities ourselves. The exports from the Northern ports of the State amount to £4,100,000 per annum. The area of the railway districts is 11,000,000 acres. That is very different to the 120,000,000 acres we were talking about on the other railway; but most of these 11,000,000 acres are the cream of the coast lands of Australia. They are fit for closer settlement and for intense cultivation. In connection with the railways of Australia, excepting in the very favoured parts of Victoria and New South Wales, the railways have to bridge over unproductive areas in order to reach good country. There are barren spaces between Maryborough and Bundaberg. There are barren places between Dalby and Roma. It is necessary to bridge over these barren areas to get to the fertile lands beyond. The Bill provides that the local authorities of Rockhampton and Townsville shall guarantee one-fifth each of the guarantees for their respective areas, and that the local authorities of Mackay, Bowen, and Cairns shall guarantee one-tenth each of the guarantee required from their respective areas. The Rockhampton Town Council, the Livingstone Shire Council, and the Mackay Town Council have offered to contribute a share. Bowen and Cairns have already undertaken a share of the responsibility by building tramlines themselves. There is a good rainfall along the whole length of this line. There may be, perhaps, more rain than is wanted sometimes, but the water question does not present any serious difficulty. I am not a sugar expert, but I believe sugar sometimes suffers from drought, though I do not think it habitually suffers from drought. At any rate, I think there is a fair chance of a decent rainfall all the way. The mails will bring in about £13,000 per year. The cost of construction will be high in places on account of the rivers to be crossed and the

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tough country to be traversed. The average cost for the portion of the line which is to be built is £4,708 per mile. That is a very moderate price.

HON. B. FAHEY: Does that include bridges?

HON. A. H. BARLOW: Yes. Considering that you have to bridge the Burdekin, and that you must cross a number of other rivers, near their entrance into the sea, the cost is not excessive. I once walked across the Burdekin, and I don't want to do it again. The railway authorities state that the line will open up large areas of sugar lands. The Commonwealth output of sugar is 20,000 tons a year less than the consumption, so that amount has to be imported. I have often considered what will happen when our sugar production overtakes Commonwealth requirements, but we are comforted by experts in the sugar business with the idea that the demand will always be in advance of the probable increase. If there is over-production, to keep up prices you must resort to exportation, or else to the destruction of the surplus product.

HON. A. GIBSON: They can import sugar from Java and the Mauritius to-day at £1 per ton under the protection given to the growers.

HON. A. H. BARLOW: The moment production exceeds local consumption under any system of protection—I am speaking of any article which is a world-wide necessity—your protection ceases to operate.

HON. A. A. DAVEY: You can increase it, though.

HON. A. H. BARLOW: It is not in our power to do that. That is in the power of our lords and masters in Melbourne. The moment you exceed the home consumption by ever so little, that excess governs the price of the whole output.

HON. P. MURPHY: Increase the number of consumers.

HON. A. H. BARLOW: That is what we hope to do. I like to hear my hon. friend championing the cause of closer settlement and the settlement of the man who has a family and something to defend. On one occasion an experienced Sydney pressman said to me, "We must have a population anchored to their homes, anchored to their hearths, anchored to their families. No man will die for a boarding-house." There is a lot of wisdom in that. I like to hear the Hon. Mr. Murphy, in season and out of season, insisting on this family settlement and attaching people to the land. I hope that his words will have the weight that they deserve, and that something will be done. A proposal is on foot to erect a 15,000-ton mill at the Burdekin. That is a private undertaking. The Railway Department say that the line will also open a large area of country suitable for dairying. The output of the dairying industry has increased from £93,300 in 1891 to £1,700,000 in 1910. There is practically no limit to the demand for dairy products, and 23,000 persons are now occupied in the industry. I well recollect, when I was Secretary for Lands and Agriculture, the little travelling dairy: that had been established by Mr. Hume Black, my predecessor in office, to give instruction in dairying. From that little seed has grown up the great dairying industry of this State.

HON. A. A. DAVEY: The finest thing that was ever done for Queensland.

HON. A. H. BARLOW: It is the finest thing that was ever done. It is an industry that produces an article of export with a steady value in the world's markets, and it is one of the things that induce the family settlement of which we have been talking. The Secretary for Railways, in another place, gave a large number of tables. I do not know whether it is necessary for me to expatiate upon these tables here. Taken broadly the scheme is a very intelligible one. It is one that admits of no double interpretation. It is not liable, to any large extent, to be affected by drought, while it brings a number of disconnected railways into one focus, and enables them to be of some use to the State. I do not anticipate there will be much opposition to the measure. The generous manner in which the Council passed a very much larger measure, with perhaps not the same absolute assurance at the back of it that this scheme has, leads me to hope that the second reading will pass without any serious objection. I shall be prepared to answer any question, with the assistance of railway officials, and in the meantime I beg to move—That the Bill be now read a second time.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. G. W. GRAY: I do not think we can complain about the meagre information in connection with this Bill. I was satisfied with the information on the other railway proposal, and I certainly think we have very full information in connection with this scheme. The Minister has given us a good deal of statistics, and I think nearly every hon. member, if he does not know much about the Western districts, certainly knows a great deal about the coastal districts. A good many of us have played a very active part in connection with the settlement of that country. For the last twenty-eight years I have done my share towards opening up the tropical North. I have large interests at Cairns, the Johnstone River, and Mourilyan Harbour, and that has necessitated my travelling on the coast a good deal; and I claim, therefore, to have some knowledge of the coastline of Queensland. Perhaps hon. members do not know that the coastline of Australia represents more than one-third of the diameter of the globe. We have certainly two warships coming out, but how we are to defend this long coastline of ours is a problem which has not yet been solved. If we depend only on water defence we should require many warships to defend Queensland. Our coastline is the longest coastline of all the Australian States, including even Western Australia. The expense of linking-up the coast railways from Brisbane to Cairns is a matter which requires consideration, and that consideration has been given to the subject in the Bill now before the House. It is estimated that the cost of existing lines will be £2,300,000. Calculating the interest on that at 3 per cent., we shall have to pay about £67,000 per annum. This line will serve country with which we are intimately acquainted, and I hold that if we can run a railway from Brisbane to Cairns at the cost stated by the Commissioner, the sooner that work is accomplished the better it will be for the State. The Minister has given us some figures which show that there are certain factors in this case which will reduce the £67,000 interest payable on the cost of construction, and we have, in addition, a guarantee from the local authorities of 3 per cent., should there be a deficiency in the

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earnings of the railway. That is a most important matter, and it should be borne in mind in considering this railway policy.

HON. A. H. BARLOW: And a lot of the borrowed money will begin to pay something before it is all spent.

HON. G. W. GRAY: Yes; and in addition to that the tropical North will be opened up, so that we may anticipate a considerable traffic on the line from the sugar industry and the banana-growing industry. There are in the North nearly 300 miles of private railway built on the 2-feet gauge which will act as feeders to the main North Coast lines. I know that we had to build a railway 2-feet gauge, on the French system, in connection with our plantation. The system adopted was the light-line system of Decanville, whose works near Paris I have had the opportunity of visiting. This firm have built a number of railways on their system in Japan and other countries, and their installations form no mean factor in the development of the country. I mention the 2-feet gauge because there has been some question raised with regard to the 3-feet-6-inches gauge adopted in Queensland. I am pleased to observe that Mr. Thallon, after observation made during the course of all his travels, is more than ever satisfied that the 3-feet-6-inches gauge is the right gauge to adopt. It is the gauge which is adopted in other countries which are more thickly populated and which require means of transport for the products of their tea and sugar plantations. I think we have reason to congratulate ourselves that we did not adopt the wide gauge in the first instance, because, had we adopted the wide gauge, we should not have half the length of railways that we have to-day.

HON. A. H. BARLOW: And we should have had a greater expenditure for maintenance.

HON. G. W. GRAY: We are now very much in advance of New South Wales as far as our mileage of railways is concerned; and when people talk about our national debt, it is just as well to remember that the largest part of the money we have borrowed is invested in railways. These railways represent the largest mileage, on the basis of population or on the basis of territory, to be found in any country in the world. I think it redounds to the credit of our able statesmen in the past, who devoted the best part of their lives and means to the establishment of this State, that they did not adopt the wide gauge, and that in building the railways they did not build them for the purpose of benefiting their own freeholds but rather for the purpose of benefiting the public estate. When a number of leading pressmen visited Australia in connection with the inauguration of federation in 1900, I entertained representatives of the *London Times*, the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Standard*, the *Morning Post*, and the *Central News* at the Queensland Club. Those gentlemen discussed the question of our loan obligation, and said, "What a big public debt you have compared with your population." I pointed out how that money was invested, and placed our whole financial position before them, so that I was able to narrow down the £40,000,000 loan liability—it was then £36,000,000—to £3,000,000, and those gentlemen withdrew the statement they had made about our debt being so big compared with our population. They said that in the old country they usually look at

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a debt of a State on the basis of the population of that State, but that when they had looked at the asset we had in Queensland for the debt they withdrew their statement that ours was a big debt for our population. Sir Hugh Nelson, who was present at the luncheon, said he confirmed everything that I had put before the Press representatives. I gave the information in writing to them afterwards. I allude to this matter on the present occasion because some reference has been made to the renewal of debentures which are falling due, and I think this is an opportune time to make the statement I have given to the House. We have debentures which are paying 3½, 3¾, and 4 per cent., as against British consols which are paying 2½ per cent. Owing to the generosity of the British Government, both consols and our debentures are now available as investments for trust moneys in the old country, and I venture to say that when a person has trust money or any other money to invest, he will buy 3½, 3¾, or 4 per cent. in preference to a 2½ per cent. investment. Consols are now worth no more than £82 10s., whilst our debentures are at a premium, so that we need have no fear with regard to our financial position. What is the sum of £2,500,000 to provide for coastal defence? Why, you would pay that sum for one of the big warships which are now being constructed, and we shall certainly have to defend our coast later on. If we do not do it, the Commonwealth will do it for us, and we shall have to find the money. This proposal will play a very active part in defence by linking up our coastal lines. It will also be of material advantage to the State as a means of transport for mail service, and for the tropical products of the North. Perishable products are now sent by steamers, but it will be more advantageous to the producer if he can send them by rail, as the transport will be more expeditious, and his products will reach the market in a better condition; and I feel certain that such products will be carried by rail if the rates are reasonable. Tropical fruit is at a great discount just now. At one time the Johnstone River exported 30,000 bunches of bananas per week, and all those bananas went to the Southern States; but since the Federal Parliament has controlled these matters that export has fallen off very considerably. There are other ports besides the Johnstone River and Mourilyan ports from which bananas are exported. A considerable number are exported from Cairns, as well as from other places, and the export is a big thing. The bananas were formerly thrown on to the steamers in any fashion, but they are now lowered into the holds by large nets. Still they are knocked about to such an extent with the other cargo that their value is considerably decreased by the time they reach their destination. If this fruit can be sent by rail, and can be sent daily, it will arrive in a better condition in the market and will realise a higher price for the producer.

HON. A. H. BARLOW: They are shipped green, are they not?

HON. G. W. GRAY: They are pulled green, and they are shipped green. Speaking from memory, the present freight from Cairns to Brisbane is 1s. 6d. a bunch, and each bunch contains about twelve dozen bananas. I believe that this should prove a valuable source of revenue to the railway. Then the construction of this railway will

lead to the establishment of manufactories for the preserving of tropical fruits. It will lead to the establishment of many other industries. Geraldton is located on a site very similar to Kangaroo Point. The river is navigable for a distance of 8 or 9 miles. The Colonial Sugar Refining Company are turning out 12,000 or 14,000 tons of sugar there annually, and the bananas are water-borne from farms above the town right to where the railway station will be. I understand it is intended to make a junction there with some of the municipal tramlines. These lines will all get a very large proportion of the goods that now come down by steamer, but there is room for both railway and steamers, because the products are all seasonable. For six months in the year sugar is being manufactured, and an accumulation is continually going on. It is the same with the fruits. You see mangoes, papaws, and all these rich tropical fruits, and no means of getting them to a market. I feel strongly any adverse comment in connection with the financial aspect, because I think it is a reflection upon ourselves. It makes it appear as if we fear to borrow £7,000,000 or £8,000,000 to carry out the lines proposed in the two Bills. Visitors have said that we are the richest State in the whole of Australia. So we are. We have the smallest debt of all. We want to accompany the development of the country by railways, by the introduction of people to settle on the railways, and to lend a hand in the development of the pastoral, agricultural, and dairying industries. The commencement of these railway works involves a big influx of navvies, and possibly it will have the effect of assisting to develop the mining industry also. Feeling so strongly as I do on this subject, I welcome the Bill most heartily, and I feel sure great results are going to follow from it. I have very much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

HON. A. H. PARNELL: I have much pleasure in congratulating the Government on the great railway scheme that they have put before this Chamber. It is one that will open up this great State, and it will be a paying concern almost from the jump. In connection with the line we passed yesterday the Hon. Mr. Gibson referred to the possibility of settling a large population on the Western lands. I do not think we are likely to see that. That country is likely to be taken up by grazing farmers and not by an agricultural population. But along this line from Rockhampton to Cairns we are opening up one of the most fertile regions that has ever been opened up by any railway. I know nearly every mile of the line as far as Townsville. In the early days I was working for a farmer on the Styx River, outside St. Lawrence. I believe a feature survey has been made from Rockhampton to St. Lawrence, and that the surveyor stated that that was barren country. I can assure hon. members that in many places between Rockhampton and St. Lawrence there are very fertile areas on several rivers. On the Styx River there are large seams of coal which could be worked profitably once this railway is constructed. After you leave St. Lawrence, the whole way along the coast, as far back as twenty years ago, the land was taken up and improvements were made, but the only means of sending crops away was by small boats which came to the various tidal creeks and took the produce

to Mackay. Those boats were very often swamped in crossing the bars, and the attempts to cultivate the land came to an end; but, if this line is constructed, these men will all come back to their farms. There is also a large area of land still in the hands of the Crown, and there is some good timber country. Between Rockhampton and Mackay there are something like 122 fresh-water creeks. They come down very suddenly, but they fall just as suddenly, and they are easy to cross. I may mention that a large amount of cedar is growing in this country, and a large amount has been cut. That is evidence that the land is good, because it requires good land to produce cedar. One advantage to be derived from the construction of this railway is that it will link up the coastal ends of all the Western lines. In connection with the Bill which was before the Council yesterday I would like to see a connection made between Longreach and Winton, because in time of drought, when you want to send away your stock, the trucks are booked for weeks ahead. If our different railway systems were connected you would be able to shift the rolling-stock from one line to another, and remove stock to any part of the State. The cost of the line under consideration is comparatively small, and the money borrowed will be well spent. From Rockhampton, right along the coast, where the land it not fit for agriculture it is suitable for dairying, and in nearly all cases it is being used for dairying at the present time. To cap this great scheme we want an immigration scheme to provide labour. All our industries are flourishing, but it is very difficult to get labour for them, especially for dairying. No man or woman who comes to this State will ever regret it. They cannot go wrong. I think a good deal of this State. Like many more, I have gradually worked my way up. I love my country, and I would like to see it go ahead, and will do all in my power to assist it. The more people we get here, the better the country will be, and I am certain that those who settle here will not regret it.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. C. S. MCGHIE: I have to congratulate the Government upon having brought forward this scheme. A coastal railway has appealed to me for the last twenty or thirty years. I have always held that the line should be carried beyond Rockhampton. Many hon. members will remember that when it was first proposed to construct the line between Brisbane and Gympie it was regarded as one of the wildest schemes ever submitted to Parliament. No one had the slightest conception that people would settle on the land between here and Gympie; but the Commissioner now tells us that we should duplicate the line as far as Gympie, and every day makes it more apparent that a double line must be built. Reference has been made to the meagre information that has been supplied. I think we have a good deal of information, because there is no part of Queensland better known than the coastal country. The disjointed pieces of line already constructed which will form a portion of this line have given us a considerable amount of information. There is one matter that the Hon. Mr. Barlow did not touch upon. He did not tell us the benefit that will be derived when all these various pieces of line are connected along the seaboard by being able to transfer rolling-stock

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from one part of the State to another. It would be a most valuable piece of information if he could inform us how much the Railway Department paid for freight on the carriage of rolling-stock between Brisbane and Rockhampton before the Southern and Central lines were connected, and how much has been paid by way of freight for the carriage of rolling-stock from Brisbane to Townsville and from Brisbane to Cairns. I think it would amount to an enormous sum. Some hon. members have spoken about the gauge of our railways. I have discussed that matter several times, and it becomes more and more apparent to me every day that Queensland has the proper gauge. I am glad to observe that Mr. Thallon has the courage to put his opinion on this subject in print, and that he is in favour of the gauge adopted in Queensland. With heavy rails, we can use as heavy rolling-stock on a 3-feet-6-inch gauge as we can use on a wider gauge, even on the 4-feet-8½-inch gauge that they have in New South Wales. The whole question of gauge was thoroughly discussed thirty years ago. In Great Britain the largest railways were formerly of a much wider gauge, but gradually they came down to 4-feet-8½-inches, which is now the uniform gauge in that country and many other countries. But, if we had adopted that gauge, we should never have had the lines constructed that we have at the present time. People from the old country talk about the smoothness of the travelling on the wider gauge, and attribute that smoothness to the width of the gauge. That is not the reason for it. In Great Britain they have neither the sharp curves nor the steep inclines that we have on our railways in Queensland. The sharpest curve on a 4-feet-8½-inch gauge is 10 chains, while we have 5-chain curves. The future generations of Queensland, when the State becomes rich, can lower the grades and reduce the curves if they choose. With regard to rolling-stock, I would ask whether any gentleman present is aware of the fact that our railway carriages are within 1 inch or 1½ inches of the width of the carriages on the 5-feet-3-inch gauge in Victoria? In Victoria they have difficulty in making their rolling-stock wider because at the present time where there are double lines it is necessary to barricade the windows on the side next the double line, lest a person putting his head out of the train should be struck by the train passing on the other line. Instead of the 70-lb. rails we should adopt 120-lb. rails, as they have done in America, and if we did that we could use much heavier rolling-stock than is in use at the present time. In my opinion the 3-feet-6-inch gauge is the best gauge for Australia, and I hope that the experts will soon decide what is to be the uniform gauge throughout the Commonwealth. People talk about the loads that are carried on a 4-feet-8½-inch gauge, but it must be remembered that the grades on those lines are not steep, and a large proportion of the grades on our lines are 1 in 50, which no engineer would have thought of adopting on a 4-feet-8½-inch gauge. An engineer in England would have stared at you if you had asked him to build a railway with a grade of 1 in 50. There are, of course, some narrow lines with grades of that steepness in the old country, but they are not used for general traffic. In the old days they did not think a railway could be constructed except on the level, but that was because they knew nothing of the laws of friction. As I have already

said, if we had heavier rails we could use heavier engines and rolling-stock, and carry as heavy loads in our wagons as are carried on wagons on a 4-feet-8½-inch or 5-feet-3-inch gauge. But, if in constructing carriages proper attention is paid to the centre of gravity we could still further widen the carriages used on Queensland railways. Knowing something about the country which this proposed North Coast line will travel, I congratulate the Government on their having brought forward the scheme introduced in this Bill, and I shall give it my hearty support.

HON. A. GIBSON: I have no hesitation whatever in recommending this railway to the House. Last night I had a fear that the particular railway we were then discussing for opening up the Western country would not result in establishing homes for the million. For the land which will be traversed by this railway there will be a great rush of intending settlers. The Minister, in the course of his remarks in moving the second reading of the Bill, stated that you would probably hear something from me about sugar. If I were selfish in this matter, I might not want this railway to be constructed. I can see that with the construction of this railway some 50,000 or 60,000 tons of sugar will be produced in the sugar-growing districts along the line, and I do not know whether we shall be able to consume that quantity or not. But when I consider the immigration scheme of the Government, and remember that we shall probably get a large addition to our population, I have no fear but that the sugar produced will find consumers. One of the great recommendations which this proposal presents is that the railway will enable people to settle on land which is not far from the sea and not far from a market. Not only will sugar be grown along the line, but dairying farms will be established. I think it was the Minister who told us the story about Mr. Hume Black establishing travelling dairies in Queensland many years ago. Oftentimes the gentlemen who initiate these schemes do not get the credit they deserve for their originality and enterprise. I say, all honour to Mr. Hume Black for having allowed money to be spent on travelling dairies, but I also say a greater honour is due to the Under Secretary, Mr. Peter McLean, for having suggested that great scheme. It was Mr. McLean with whom the idea originated, and Mr. Hume Black was not slow to take it up and give it practical effect. Dairying is now becoming a mighty factor in the production of wealth in this State. At the present time we get nearly £1,000,000 per annum from the dairying industry, and with the opening of this railway and the establishment of more dairying farms we shall soon see that amount increased to £2,000,000. Some eighteen years ago I was travelling up the coast, and I had a conversation with a gentleman associated with the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. He said to me, "You know that my father has only just started dairying on the Herbert River." "Started a dairy on the Herbert River?" I asked. He replied, "Yes." I said, "How are you going to get the milk and butter to market?" He replied, "You come along to my house on the Johnstone River and you will get some of the milk in your tea and a supply of good fresh butter." That was at the time that we were introducing the freezing system, when we preserved our milk by freezing it and our butter by putting it

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in cold stores. Fruit could be treated in the same way, so that there is a prospect of great developments in both the dairying and fruit-growing industry in the Northern part of Queensland after this railway is completed. In the country north of Atherton there is abundance of rain and plenty of sunshine, and growth is very rapid, so that I hope to see a large area of land devoted to fruit culture, and the fruit-preserving industry established in the district where the fruit is produced. We can hardly estimate what developments will follow the construction of this railway. One result of its construction will be that we shall people our coastline with a fine yeomanry that the State will be proud of in the days to come. There is abundance of water on the land and no need for irrigation, because of the splendid rainfall. Every provision is made by Nature to supply the wants of man. All we have to do is to make the best use of the provision Nature has placed at our disposal. If our young people find it too hot, or the climatic conditions not altogether agreeable, they can get into a train and go down to Cairns and spend some time on the high lands about there, where the temperature is as low as 60 degrees. In a ten-hours' journey they can get to the Barron Falls and to many other falls where the waters rush down the ranges on their way to the sea. I can see visions of the greatness of this great Northern territory when the railway which we are now asked to authorise is built and people are settled upon its rich lands. I think this is one of the finest schemes that has ever been submitted to Parliament. I have no fear whatever in advocating immigration to these

[5 p.m.] places. Immigrants will flock in thousands when this railway and all its branches are constructed. In the sugar districts there are numbers of 2-foot tramlines running 10, 15, and 20 miles inland, and they can carry people to the foot of the ranges, and then the people can climb to the top and get fresh air. I have no doubt that the people who settle there will have their motor-cars in the near future, when the success which is bound to attend their labours has arrived. I have no desire to waste time. I see the whole scheme before me like a Garden of Eden. I have been over most of the country, and I should have no hesitation in lecturing and advocating the settlement of our Northern territory. It is said that our eastern seaboard is not fit for white people to live in; but, when a man becomes successful, he can lead a very easy life there. During the summer months he can go to the top of the ranges, and recuperate his lost energy, and come down again revived and strengthened, and fit to carry on the great business of life. Without delaying the Council any longer, in the advocacy of this line, I desire to say that I have very great pleasure in recommending it to the notice of hon. members as one worthy of Queensland and of Queensland's future.

HON. A. A. DAVEY: I am delighted to hear the speech that has just fallen from the Hon. Mr. Gibson. I am also rather pleased that some hon. members are not present just now, as they seemed to be suffering from a kind of mental dyspepsia or mental disorder yesterday when I was giving expression to the enthusiasm with which I have been blessed, and which was expressed on the occasion in question because of my knowledge of the country. One hon. member seemed rather to ridicule the idea, and spoke

of being nauseated. I am very glad that the hon. member is not present, because I think he would have been suffering from a mental stomach disorder. I agree with what the Hon. Mr. Gibson has said. I am pleased with the Government for having introduced this, because it is really part and parcel of the great scheme with which we were dealing yesterday. I have had the privilege and pleasure of going up and down the coast for a considerable number of years, and this proposal has no more ardent friend than myself. I have been told by people who know nothing about it, but who have been up the coast once or twice, that the North is not the place for a white man to live. I think the climate of the whole of Queensland is fit for white people. I have always held that there is no place in Queensland where, with proper attention to the hours of work and temperance in the fulfilment of that work, a white man cannot work and thrive. Yesterday I expressed the opinion that we had suffered in the past from our disjointed railway systems. There can be no doubt whatever about the financial aspect of this coastal scheme. It will be bound to pay, because it will pass through country that is nearly all rich agricultural land. Of course there are patches that are not so good. Even in the fertile district of Mackay you can see magnificent land on one side of the road and small patches of inferior land on the other side; but there is sufficient good land through which this line will pass to ensure its success; and if you want any proof of it you have only to look at what has happened as the result of the construction of a line outside Cairns and of the line that has been built from Mackay. Both these lines have been of great assistance in developing the country. It is a grand scheme to take over the lines that have been built by the local authorities, and I hope the Government are going to acquire those lines on fair and equitable terms. When this railway is completed and our Western scheme is carried out, we shall have a reasonable chance of seeing what can be made of this country. I agree with the Hon. Mr. Gibson that what we want is population; but there is not the slightest use in introducing population unless we have something for them to do, and it should be a part of the duty of the Government in the future to see, not only that we have a large influx of people of the right sort but that these people shall be placed in circumstances which will enable them to prosper. I imagine there is no hon. member who will object to this railway. It will be the completion of a grand scheme of railway construction in this country, and I believe that all the optimistic views that have been given expression to by enthusiastic members will be realised. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

HON. W. H. CAMPBELL: The Minister in introducing this Bill drew attention to what the Commissioner said about the great saving to the department from being able to shift rolling-stock from one railway section to another. I would like to know if there are any figures in the department connected with that subject. It would be very interesting to have them, because I suppose at present all the rolling-stock used north of Rockhampton has to be taken by steamer from Brisbane; but when this line is completed the whole of that rolling-stock will pass over this railway, and it will be interesting to know what the department is likely to save

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in that direction. The hon. gentleman also mentioned that there would be a saving of £13,000 in the carriage of mails. I suppose he refers to the mails that go North from Brisbane and Rockhampton by steamer. I presume that when this line is completed all the mails will go direct to Cairns by rail, and that none will be carried by steamer from the North. According to the map that has been supplied to us, some large tracts of country have already been surveyed. The map does not say whether it is a feature survey, a trial survey, or a permanent survey, but I understand there has been a feature survey from Rockhampton to Broad-sound, and that the permanent survey has been made as far as Yaamba; but the Commissioner has information as to the quality of the country along the whole route. I do not know anything about the country. The Hon. Mr. Parnell has had a good many years' acquaintance with it, and he says—what other people seem to doubt—that there is good country nearly all the way. Of course there are barren places, but there are barren places here and there as far as Cairns, including the Barron Falls. (Laughter.) The hon. member says that north of Mackay there is good sugar land. I presume he refers to the country along the Macgregor Creek Tramway, as far as Mirani, and the country north from there to Mount Dalrymple and Mount Jukes. That land is being put under sugar, but there is no mill beyond the Mirani mill, and they are endeavouring to get another at Mount Jukes. At present the line goes a considerable distance north of Mackay, and there is only a small link between that and the Burdekin Railway. The line from Bowen to Bobawaba carries you nearly to the Burdekin River, where you get on to the Inkerman country, which was recently purchased by the Government. There are a great many people waiting for land to be thrown open, so that I presume the Commissioner will start at once to connect Bobawaba with Ayr, on the other side of the Burdekin. The Crown will get a much better price for that land when people know that this railway is to be constructed. From Townsville north along the shores of Halifax Bay to Cardwell a survey has been made for a great number of miles. I understand that the Commissioner has in his office a report on that country, and there is some good sugar land in it, while a great deal of it could be taken up for dairying. From Ingham to Geraldton there is a long stretch of country which is all available for sugar. I believe the Government have already promised some settlers in the country between Geraldton and Babinda Creek, the terminus of the Mulgrave tram-line, that they will extend the tramway to the Johnstone River. That country contains the pick of the sugar lands of Queensland. Around Mackay there is some land that is considered not rich enough for sugar, but undoubtedly it is splendid dairying land, and it only requires planting with paspalum, panicum, and some of those fodder grasses. Some of that land must be worth £9 or £10 per acre without having to resort to cultivation by the plough. Taking the whole country right through from Rockhampton to Cairns, there is land that will settle a large number of people and produce sugar, butter, fruits, coal, and cedar. In addition to that, a saving will be effected in the carriage of mails and rolling-stock from one railway system to another, and, altogether, I think

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the line will pay handsomely from the start. It may be rather rough on the larger towns like Rockhampton and Townsville that they should contribute to the payment of interest, but I do not think that they will have to put their hands in their pockets to pay anything.

The PRESIDENT: It is pleasing to perceive the cheerful note of optimism which has characterised the speeches that have been delivered in support of this Bill. That is a feeling which generally prevails on the eve of or during the progress of a boom, but things look very different in the morning. Hon. gentlemen are probably familiar with the famous saying of the late John Bright, "The angel of death has been abroad throughout the land; you may almost hear the beating of his wings." I feel very much inclined to suggest that a paraphrase of that sentence is not inappropriate to the present occasion, and to say that the demon of extravagance is abroad in the land, you can see his hoof prints on the legislation and administration of the hour, and hard upon his heels will go the footsteps of the tax-gatherer. I only wish to say a few words on this proposal—not on its general merits, because I believe there is a great deal more to be said in support of it than was to be said in support of the previous proposal. This railway, whether justified as a whole or not, is certainly justified as to a large part. It will have the effect of giving to districts suitable for agricultural development the means of communication, without which development is practically impossible. It will settle people on our coast lands, and enable them to become prosperous and happy; and to that extent it is justified. Whether it is wise to pass such a provision as is contained in one of the clauses of the Bill, which declares that this railway shall be started simultaneously at five different points, and be carried on continuously until it is completed, is quite another matter. A similar provision is contained in the Bill which was passed yesterday, and hon. gentlemen should consider what effect such a provision may have on the industries of the State. The provision in this Bill that the railway shall be started at five different points simultaneously, and carried on from these points until the line is completed, is an intimation that this Parliament is going to bind its successors. Whether the provision will be binding on our successors is another matter. There are five different camps provided for in this Bill, there are four different camps provided for in the Bill passed yesterday, and the other railway proposals which are before Parliament will probably require an additional five camps. These five, four, and five camps make a total of fourteen camps, and there are probably six camps already in existence in connection with railways which are in course of construction in different parts of the State. Thus we have a total of twenty camps of men for railway construction purposes. Whether Queensland can afford to draw so large a number of men from the prosecution of its industries on which our railways, as well as everything else, depend, is a matter which should be considered before we commit ourselves to such a proposition. There are two matters in connection with this scheme to which I propose to refer, and which, I think, ought to be brought before this Chamber, before Parliament, and before the country. One of them is the proposition

contained in this Bill to purchase the Ayr Tramway at a cost of £85,000. The Minister dwelt on this branch of the subject fairly fully in his opening remarks, and supplied a good deal of information which I think hon. members should have in their possession before agreeing to the provisions of this Bill. The hon. gentleman told the Council that the tramway was built at a cost of £79,000, that that money was borrowed from the Treasury, and that the interest and redemption payments made since the tramway was built have reduced the actual sum owing to the Government to £69,000. This amount the Ayr Tramway Board now owe the Treasury in respect of that enterprise, and yet Parliament is asked to give the Ayr Tramway Board £85,000 and so get secure possession of the tramway. I do not think it was ever contemplated when the Tramways Act was passed by Parliament that any private company, or any local authority, or any association of local authorities should be permitted to borrow money from the Treasury for the purpose of any enterprise which they might ultimately sell to the State at such an enhanced profit as is represented by this transaction. This board, I understand, consists of representatives of the city of Townsville, the Shire of Thuringowa, and the Shire of Ayr. They borrowed between £70,000 and £80,000 to build this tramway. They have paid interest and redemption yearly, they now owe the Government about £69,000, and they are going to sell the enterprise which they have established by means of a loan from the Treasury back to the State at a handsome profit of £16,000.

Hon. A. H. BARLOW: Suppose they had borrowed the money on debentures?

The PRESIDENT: That would have been a somewhat different situation from that which now arises. As I have said, I do not think it was ever contemplated when Parliament passed the Tramways Act that such a transaction as that should be possible, and I do not think that Parliament ought to recognise the right of a body such as the Ayr Tramway Board, which is a body representing local authorities—next to the Government a local authority is the most public of public bodies in this State—should be allowed to fleece the Treasury, for I consider it is nothing else but fleecing the Treasury of a handsome profit of that amount. What does it mean? It means that they will have a dividend of £16,000, which they are to get from the Treasury, and which will enable the Townsville City Council to improve their streets, the Thuringowa Shire Council to improve their roads, and the Ayr Shire Council to improve their roads. Brisbane, Rockhampton, Boulia, and other places will be called upon to pay their share of the £16,000 which will be at the disposal of those local authorities for local improvements. This matter is much more important than is represented by the £16,000 profit the State is going to pay to the Ayr Tramway Board, because there are quite a number of tramways in different parts of the State which have been built by councils or joint boards with money borrowed from the Treasury. There are the tramways in Cairns and in the Johnstone River districts, and in other parts of the State, and I have not the least doubt that if these other local authorities who have borrowed money from the Treasurer to build tramways learn that the Ayr Tramway Board have been so successful in dealing with the Treasurer, they too

will add to the price at which they will be willing to dispose of their enterprises should the State require them. We have been told that the Ayr Tramway has been worked at a handsome profit, and that 11 per cent. has been made during the last year or two. I should like to feel quite assured that the profit is as real as it is apparent. We know that the Railway Department has been working the traffic on that tramway for the board on very liberal terms. During one period the traffic was worked by the department at as low as 1s. 9d. per train mile, and the average cost per train mile on all railways in Queensland last year was 3s. 5½d. But the Ayr Tramway Board maintained the line, so that to that 1s. 9d. must be added the average cost for maintenance, which is 1s. 5d. per train mile on all railways in the Northern division. That would bring the charge up to something like a reasonable amount. When we talk about the purchase, we ought to have every assurance that the line has been maintained in the same high state of efficiency as State lines have been maintained, and on that point the Minister has been silent. This is really an important matter. I know that six years ago the Ayr Tramway Board were particularly anxious to hand over possession of their enterprise to the Government, for overtures were made to the Railway Department during the time that I held office as Minister for Railways, and, although I am not in a position to say positively, I believe the terms upon which they were prepared to hand it over were the mere cancellation of the amount owing to the Treasurer. That is the amount which I contend should be paid to the board when the Government want to acquire that railway for State purposes. I sincerely hope that the Minister and the Government will give serious attention to this matter, and in view of what has appeared in this Bill will take such steps as will prevent a recurrence of the same kind of thing hereafter, by amending the Tramways Act so as to provide that in future borrowing under that Act shall be subject to the condition that any tramway acquired by the State shall be acquired for the amount due by the local authority to the Treasury. (Hear, hear!) There is another important matter to which I should like to draw attention. This railway, like all other railways which are built now, is subject to a guarantee of 3 per cent. by the residents of the benefited districts, and in the railway districts through which this coastal line will pass—there are three or four of them—are a number of towns and shires which have already borrowed largely from the Treasury for municipal enterprises. I took the opportunity a year ago to invite the attention of the Council to a report published annually showing the amount owing by local authorities and other bodies throughout the State which have borrowed from the Treasury. It is a report in which I have always taken a very great deal of interest. It not only shows the amount which was borrowed by local bodies originally, but the amount of their [5.30 p.m.] debt and the amount of arrears in respect of interest and redemption due by the several debtor local authorities. This return is published in August of each year, and I think in February also. The return for this year shows that the aggregate arrears of interest and redemption by debtor local authorities are something like £206,000, upon a total indebtedness of rather more than £2,500,000. The

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point to which I wish to invite the attention of hon. members is that a number of the shires and municipalities that are going to guarantee the payment of 3 per cent. in respect of possible loss on particular sections of this North Coast Railway have already borrowed very largely for various enterprises from the Treasurer, and have signally failed to meet their interest and redemption charges in respect of those borrowings. We all know that, in our private capacity, if we went to a banker and borrowed money by way of overdraft, and were unable to meet the interest on that overdraft, if we went to ask him for an increased overdraft, we would probably be told—and told properly—that, since we could not pay the interest on the amount we had already borrowed, we were not entitled to a further advance. The obvious comment upon the position of some of these local authorities is that, since they are unable, or unwilling, to pay interest and redemption in respect of their past borrowings, and since the Government do not appear to be able to recover the amount due to the Treasury, the security that these shires and councils can offer for this possible additional obligation of 3 per cent. is not worth very much. Let me cite one or two cases of shires and councils that will come within the benefited area in one or other of these districts. Mackay is one of the towns that will be called upon to guarantee a certain proportion of a possible deficit. Well, the town of Mackay has borrowed very freely from the Treasury in the past, and its showing on the document before me is not such as to encourage a private financier to make further advances. On 30th June last the town of Mackay was in arrears for interest and redemption £2,340. It had also borrowed from the Meat and Dairy Board for the purpose of erecting meatworks; and, on 30th June last it owed fifteen half-yearly instalments of interest and redemption. It also borrowed for the purposes of a butter factory; and on 30th June last it owed seven half-yearly instalments of interest and redemption. The shire of Johnstone will also be included in one of the benefited areas. It has borrowed over £50,000 for the purposes of a tramway, and on 30th June last it was eighteen half-yearly payments of interest and redemption in arrears in respect of that loan. Its total arrears amounted to £18,463. Now, before you can expect the shire of Johnstone to contribute anything to this railway, it would surely be a proper thing to ask it to pay up this £18,463, which it owes in respect of its previous borrowings. There are quite a large number of other cases in this list, but I cited these few as rather shocking examples but more or less typical of quite a number. I have always regarded this matter as an exceedingly important one, because, if the Government—I speak of the Government in an impersonal sense, as hon. members quite understand—if the Government will not compel local authorities such as those I have instanced, and such as the others who make up the £206,000 of arrears, to live up to their obligations, on what ground of right or equity can they single out others and ask them to pay up?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PRESIDENT: We are encouraging ourselves to believe that we can go on with a more elaborate railway policy now and hereafter than was possible in the past, be-

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cause we are going to collect 3 per cent. from the districts in which railways are built. If the thing is to be a real guarantee—an effective, enforceable guarantee—surely we should take the earliest possible steps to make debtor local authorities understand that, when they borrow, they must pay.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PRESIDENT: I have always argued for that, and I argue it very strongly now, because, if you allow the Johnstone Shire, and if you allow Mackay, or if you allow Warwick, to continue in a state of arrears in respect of borrowing under the Local Works Loans Act, or under the Tramways Act, are you not offering a continuous inducement to people to put their hands to guarantees for railways, and then say, "They did not make these others pay; they will not make us pay; and we will not pay"? and by and by their 3 per cent. guarantee will simply have to be torn up, and in a few years the whole scheme will collapse like a house of cards, and, instead of the local authorities paying 3 per cent. in respect of these railway borrowings, the State will have to pay 4 per cent. That is one serious aspect of this question that arises, and I think it is a most pertinent matter to put before the Council when this Bill is under consideration.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PRESIDENT: I have done it before. I do it now, not with the object of delaying or defeating this measure, but because it is a matter upon which members of the Council, as one branch of the Legislature, ought to bring such pressure to bear upon the authorities as to compel them to take such legislative remedial measures, and such administrative remedial measures, as will put a stop to a condition of things that is a menace to the policy we initiated a few years ago requiring a guarantee in respect of railway construction. These are the two points on which I wished to speak to the Council, and I judge them of sufficient importance to justify me in intervening in this debate for the purpose of stating them—as I think I have—clearly.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. B. FAHEY: When one hears the President addressing this House, he cannot but feel regret that the hon. gentleman has withdrawn from active politics. He is a very forceful, eloquent, and incisive speaker, and to neither of the two eloquent and intelligent speeches that he has addressed to us on the subject of this railway scheme has a word of reply been vouchsafed. I well remember the warning he gave twelve months ago in connection with the borrowing of shires and their liabilities. Evidently a vote in another place has a great deal more influence upon the Government than anything that this House may do or say. The town of Mackay, which is so largely indebted to the Government, has two representatives in the Ministerial side of the House—one of them a Minister of the Crown. That may account for the "milk in the cocoanut" in the matter of Mackay; but there is another point. When certain shires and councils throughout the State that meet their liabilities see that other local authorities are almost encouraged not to meet theirs to the Treasury, as the President has suggested, confusion and chaos will result. I know the country through which this railway will pass from one end to the other, and I really believe that after the first few years there will be

very little necessity for appealing to the local authorities for the payment of any portion of the 3 per cent. guaranteed. But that has nothing at all to do with the principle which the President has brought before the Council. One hon. member said that he saw a rich Northern portion of this country which this railway will traverse some eighteen years ago. I saw the country from one end to the other thirty-nine years ago. I have seen all the country from Cardwell to Cairns, and right up to Cape York, when there was not a white man north of Cardwell in 1872, and I know the country from Rockhampton to St. Lawrence very well. Every acre of it is fairly good, and most of it is very good dairying and agricultural land. I believe Marlborough Station and the country round it is one of the finest places for cattle raising and fattening in Queensland. There is a lot of land there that is fit for high cultivation as well as for dairying. You go further on to Toowoomba, and you get good fattening and agricultural country there. You will also get very good agricultural land on Saltbush, Banksia, and Torilla. I do not know how long the leases of those stations have still to run, but they contain very valuable agricultural and dairying land. From St. Lawrence to Mackay every acre is fit for dairying, and no better-watered country is to be found in Queensland. Hon. members know very well the character of the country at Mackay. Between Mackay and Bowen are sugar lands that are being utilised at Proserpine, and almost all the country between there and Bowen is fit for dairying. Between Bowen and Townsville there is the Burdekin Delta, where is to be found some of the richest land in Queensland. The bridging of the Burdekin will be the biggest and most expensive item in the whole of this line. It will necessarily be a very expensive work, because in time of flood the river overflows its banks to a very great extent. Then you have Jarvisfield, Woodstock, and Inkerman—all valuable lands for agriculture and dairying. There is fairly good dairying country nearer Townsville. From Townsville to the Herbert River towards Ingham is the poorest land in the whole distance between Rockhampton and Cairns. I do not think that much of that land is fit for even dairying purposes; there may be some which is fit for that purpose, but there is not a great deal. On the Herbert River you have as good sugar land as you have anywhere in Queensland. I was the first freeholder on that river, having gone there in 1868, and bought land there in 1869. From the Herbert River to Cardwell the country is rough and mountainous; it contains a good deal of scrub land, and I dare say a good deal of agricultural land. In many places between Cardwell and Cairns the country is nothing but impenetrable scrub. For a distance of 96 or 100 miles along the coast, and for a depth of 36 miles inland, there are some of the richest lands to be found on the earth, but there are very few people there at present. There are also valuable timbers worth hundreds of thousands of pounds in that part of the country, but they are at present inaccessible; and there are vast areas of scrub land equally as rich as portions of the famous Atherton Scrub. The soil has been enriched by the alternating growth and decay of vegetation, stimulated by a rainfall of from 8 to 14 feet annually, since the days of Adam. The only regret I have in connection with this Bill is that the

Government had not the courage to extend the railway to the Mossman and the Daintree, where some of the finest lands in the State are to be found, and where there are also valuable timbers, but I presume that in the course of time we shall have the railway projected into that part of the country. Hon. members who have spoken of the probable traffic that we will have on this railway have forgotten the most profitable factor in our railway mileage, and that is the passenger traffic. From the beginning of October until the beginning of March hundreds and sometimes thousands of people leave the North and go down South to either Sydney, Melbourne, or Hobart, and I believe the passenger traffic on this coast railway will be the most profitable passenger traffic that we have on any railway in Queensland.

Hon. F. I. POWER: Will the railway beat the steamers?

Hon. B. FAHEY: It will completely. There are also many delicate and delicious fruits which cannot now be taken to the Southern markets, as the time of transit by steamer is too long, and because of the rough treatment they are subjected to in loading and unloading. For instance, mangoes grow most successfully in the North, but they cannot be sent down to Sydney, Melbourne, or Hobart in a good condition, on account of the length of time occupied in transit, but if there is a good railway service this fruit, which is of a most delicious kind, can be sent by rail direct to the Southern States. In this way we shall be able to establish a fruit trade for the North with our neighbours in the South. Bananas also suffer in flavour through having to be cut green in order to stand the long voyage, but if a rapid means of transit is provided, as it will be by this railway, bananas need not be cut until they become yellow on the plant, and then they can be sent to the Southern markets in excellent condition, and they will no doubt realise satisfactory prices to the grower and retailer, so that there is likely to be a considerable development in that industry. The line may not pay very profitably at first, but I believe that ultimately it will be found that no railway in the whole of Australia will pay better than this North Coast Railway in fruit and passenger freights and fares alone. It will also open up a large extent of country and induce a great deal more close settlement than any other railway built in any other part of Queensland. It will also do a great deal towards obviating the cry for separation, which would soon become a live subject in the North and Centre. With regard to the financial aspect of the question, I may say that I know this State from one end to the other, and I know that in comparison with New Zealand, or with New South Wales, or with Victoria, even if we doubled the debt which we now have, still, if we increased our population, the assets of Queensland would be double what the assets are in these other States as compared with their liabilities. We are no doubt borrowing very largely. But this is a gigantic project that will—I will not say immortalise the Government—but will reflect lasting credit on their administration. The Hon. Mr. Barlow has had the highest honour conferred upon him that he has ever earned as a Minister—in having the distinction of introducing this Bill to the Council, and the Bill which he introduced the other day for the building of the Great Western Railway—it is a higher Ministerial distinction than

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any other hon. member of this House holding a portfolio has been associated with. This Bill is a commercial venture. The Bill passed yesterday is a measure of a statesman. The Bill of yesterday contains the grand idea of making available 120,000,000 acres of land, some of which is very rich. My attention has been called to the time, and I shall just conclude by saying that I have very much pleasure in giving this Bill my assistance and support.

HON. A. NORTON: I do not wish to speak very fully upon this subject. At the same time, I wish to refer to some matters in connection with it, as to which I think it is desirable that those who have studied them should place their views before the Council. After hearing the address which we have had from the Hon. the President, one feels that it is well to pause and think seriously on the subject which he has brought under our notice. The matter is one of very great and serious importance. It is one which has been put before us on previous occasions. It is one with regard to which every hon. member who is sensible to his duties to this House should give very serious attention. I am in agreement with the argument of the President with regard to those local bodies that have borrowed money from the Government in order to carry out certain works, and thus made themselves responsible for the payment of interest and redemption on loans, but have not carried out the conditions under which the money was advanced. That is one of the most important of all considerations in connection with advances made by the State to local authorities. At different times this failure to meet obligations to the Treasury has manifested itself in different forms, and there has been the greatest difficulty in getting interest and redemption paid upon money advanced for public works. Trouble in connection with this matter has arisen through hon. members of the Government who have been in power at the time not having the support of members of Parliament when they proposed to insist upon local authorities meeting their obligations to the Treasurer in respect of loans. Many cases might be quoted in which that has been done. There have also been instances in which contracts have been let to carry out certain work in connection with railways, such as the building of rolling-stock, or the making of iron piles for bridges, and when the contractor has found that he could not complete his contract in the time agreed upon, he has gone to the Minister and has got an extension of time for three months or six months as the case may be. Contractors at that time were willing to take contracts with the knowledge that they would not be forced to carry out their contracts within the stipulated time, and they took them in order to fill up their time, when they were short of other work. Attempts were made to prevent an extension of time to contractors in such cases, and a good deal of feeling was shown against those who endeavoured to put an end to the practice. I do not think it was stopped altogether, but the thing was considerably mitigated. The same kind of thing has taken place in connection with the loan obligations of local authorities to the Government. If the Government endeavoured to force the payment of interest and redemption on the money advanced, there was considerable soreness felt about the matter. Why should local bodies, or any other body, be allowed to run in arrears with their payments year after year? I do not suppose the accumulation of

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arrears which has taken place would have been allowed to continue if the supporters of the Government in Parliament had not used their influence in favour of granting time to the local authorities. What the President has said with regard to this matter is absolutely correct. It is absolutely wrong on the part of those who are responsible for the condition of things which prevails that they do not insist upon local authorities honouring their obligations, and making their payments regularly. When the present Premier, the Hon. William Kidston, insisted upon forcing them to pay up, there was a great deal of ill-feeling. When he made these local authorities pay up what had been advanced—I do not say in that case they did all that they were expected to do. I have a recollection that he advanced money to some who were in debt; but when he did that, I believe he forced them to pay back those debts from the advances which were made. This state of things went on until it came to an end somewhat abruptly. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman struck a snag—perhaps it was nothing but a Reid shaken by the wind—but I believe the system of enforcing payment was modified about that time, and it has not been enforced since. If it could be done again, I do not hesitate to say that the present Premier is the man who can do it. The matters to which I have referred ought to be a warning to all those who incur obligations and who do not carry them out at the time they agree to do so. But, in any great undertaking like this, are we to suppose that they will always be allowed to dribble on? Will there be no man who will put down his foot and say, "You shall do it"? Or will anyone say that one body shall be exempt while others are paying up? That will be a most unfair thing. However, looking at the great number of bodies who did not pay up at that time, even if they had to be forgiven those debts, does it follow that they will not carry out the obligations to which they are committed under this Bill, if it becomes law? I do not think it does, because in ordinary business matters and dealings with banks, men may go on getting deeper and deeper into debt, but they are allowed to carry on until the proper time comes, when the first step is taken towards relieving their position. We know what occurred during the recent drought. There were hundreds of men driven almost to the insolvency court, and these men have paid off the whole or a large portion of their obligations. Is it a reason to justify us in refusing to go on with this scheme, that in a few instances a few thousand pounds have not been paid up by local bodies that we have not forced? Does it follow that we should not make arrangements for the benefit of the whole of the State, when the arrangement for the benefit of a few isolated places has been allowed to lapse? Is it a good thing for the State that these railways should be built? I think it is, and because I think it is I intend to support it. The matter was brought before me many years ago, when I was younger—and when I was going to set the Thames on fire, though I did not do it. I used to try and induce the members of another place to vote money for the construction of a railway line from Gladstone to Rockhampton, and at last I succeeded in inducing them to vote the money for the continuation of the line from Bundaberg to Gladstone. But my efforts in regard to Rockhampton and Gladstone were met in

this way by Sir Thomas McLlwraith: "This thing is going on; you cannot persuade us to cut the line into bits, and build a bit here and a bit there. We will go on from Bundaberg to Gladstone, from Gladstone to Rockhampton, and from Rockhampton we will go along the Northern coast." The continuation of this line which is now proposed, from Rockhampton to Townsville and further on, was in the mind of Sir Thomas McLlwraith at that time. If I could have used a little more judgment when advocating this thing, I might have been more successful. There are ample grounds for giving our support to the construction of this line. It is a part of a great railway proposition; it is not a thing dealing with shreds and patches, but it lays down a definite system. Brisbane is connected with the line in the West which we had to deal with a day or two ago, and Rockhampton will be connected with Cairns by the proposal which is before us. What is the reason for this? I am not going to talk in a pessimistic style, nor am I going to talk about the Garden of Eden—I have never found one yet, and I do not think I shall. There is a garden of beauty in the North which ought to be preserved. The beauty places of the North ought to be kept for the benefit of the people of this State, and to induce people from the South to come up in hundreds to see it, by making reserves in the right places, and voting money for its preservation. The land is being all taken up. The most beautiful spots which could be found have been selected. The same thing has been done in the neighbourhood of Killarney. I visited a fall there which is a geological wonder; but that and a number of other places had been selected years ago. The result is that anybody can destroy the beauty of the place in a few hours. Then there is a lovely spot in the Tambourine Mountains, photographs of which I saw some years ago. I spoke to a photographer employed by the Government only a few weeks ago, and he said it was destroyed. All the palms and beautiful trees which grew around the falls are broken up. Are we to go on with that kind of thing? We are not only losing the most lovely places we had, but the beautiful timbers which abound in vast numbers in the North. Thousands of our cedar-trees have been destroyed; they have been cut down and allowed to rot in places from which they could not be taken. All about Cairns hundreds of logs were cut, and have been lying there ever since. If you go to a furniture shop in Brisbane for furniture, and suggest cedar, they do not advise you to have cedar, as it is far too dear. They say they make silky oak now, as the cedar has been used up; and silky oak will be used up too if we don't take care. In these vast forests in the North hundreds of trees have been absolutely sacrificed. Some

[7.30 p.m.] of the members of the Scottish Agricultural Commission said it was a great shame to see the beautiful timber which had been cut being burnt off.

Hon. W. H. CAMPBELL: They don't burn the cedar; they cut that off and take it away.

Hon. A. NORTON: It rots away, and a great deal of it floats down creeks into the sea. However, there is the fact—that cedar is so reduced in quantity that, if you go to a cabinet-maker's establishment, he will say, "I cannot make you cedar furniture without charging a very high price, because cedar

is so dear. We use silky oak instead; and I have to take silky-oak furniture instead of the cedar that I wanted. But besides cedar, silky oak, and pine, there are any quantity of trees up there, which Mr. Bailey, the Government Botanist, will give you the names of if you require them. We have for years been destroying valuable timber, and we know the same thing is going on now. Is it ever to stop? If we are going to construct this line up the coast, we ought to reserve the timber, at any rate, in many of these places, so that in the course of a few years it will help largely to pay the interest on the sum expended in the construction of this railway. I have been over a good deal of the country between this and Cardwell, and I have seen some very good agricultural land, but I have also seen a great deal that is not worth picking up for agriculture. I have seen tens of thousands of acres that nobody would think of putting a plough into. At Mackay they cultivate the hills. The best soil is there, and they use that land for sugar.

Hon. W. H. CAMPBELL: They do not cultivate them now.

Hon. A. NORTON: There is a lot of rubbishy land on the flats at Mackay. Every acre of it wants manuring largely to get a crop of sugar from it. You find tea-tree swamps in those flats, and we all know what that means. The land near those swamps is not the best land for agriculture. At the same time, there are large areas of very valuable land near Mackay, and most of it is being used. It is the same at Cairns. People have an idea that any land that is not fit for cultivation is fit for dairying. I tried dairying at one time. I built a house and yards, and I gave a man the dairy on shares. There were no agricultural flats near that could be cultivated, and the result was that after a time I had to wind the affair up at a loss of £100, which I could ill afford. That is what will happen to a great many men if they start dairying on these ridges. The grass on them is not good milk-producing grass. Of course, it can be improved. A great deal of this land which is still uncleared is fit for dairying, and there is no reason why it should not be largely developed; but what I look for chiefly in connection with the country is cattle raising. Cattle can be raised and fattened on it, and large numbers of stock could be brought to the meatworks by train. Of course, wool-growing will be carried on in the Western country and the wool may come to Brisbane, to Rockhampton, or to Townsville. We know the difficulty we had a few years ago in persuading wool-buyers to come to Brisbane, but now almost every pastoral agency company in Australia has built, or is building, large stores in Brisbane, and they are doing so because they know that in time the chief place for wool sales and the sale of station produce generally will not be Sydney or Melbourne, but it will be Brisbane. The line can be utilised in time of war for taking men to the Southern States from Queensland if we have no other way of bringing them. It may not be possible to convey them by water, because there may be enemies' ships hanging around the coast; but the construction of this line will enable large bodies to be moved from one end of Australia to another. Surely that is an important consideration. We have little bits of railway line constructed here and there.

*Hon. A. Norton.]*

I remember that when the line to Emu Park was first proposed in the Assembly, the then member for Rockhampton argued that Emu Park would be used as a seaside resort for the people of Rockhampton and the people inland, and that the land which could be sold would be sufficient to pay for the whole cost of the railway. It never did pay for it, and it never will pay for it. That railway has never given a decent return. There is another little line at Mackay, another at Bowen, and another at Cooktown. As to the prospects of the line paying interest, there is no line of any length that has been constructed in this part of Australia that has not paid after a few years, but none of them paid from the outset, and we cannot expect that they should. We have been told by one optimistic member that this line will pay from the start, but we cannot expect that. I opposed both the Bowen and the Cooktown lines, and the results show that I was justified in my opposition. Very little information was supplied by the Government of the day regarding some of the proposals contained in the £10,000,000 loan. A large sum of money was voted for the construction of a line from Bowen to the coalfield, and at the time there was a report in the Railway Office from Mr. Jack stating that the deposits of coal had taken fire many years before, and that the great bulk of the coal had been destroyed, yet there was a vote of £200,000 passed to connect Bowen with the ashes of a coalfield. I believe they have found some coal since that has not been consumed by fire. I advocate the construction of this line because I believe, notwithstanding what has taken place with regard to the non-payment of interest by local authorities, that that can be prevented. I advocate the line because I believe it will help to bring the products of the North to the South. I support it because I believe it will afford the best means of conveying troops from one part of Australia to another in the event of an attack by any alien power. I advocate it, moreover, because I believe it will increase the value of land in many cases tenfold, and that it will increase it in all cases. With regard to the proposal to buy certain tramways, the price paid should be the value of those lines to the railway system of the country when purchased. We have experts who are capable of deciding what the value of these lines will be. We have trusted those men in the past, and I think we can trust them in the future. I also support the line because it will enable rolling-stock which is now more or less useless to be released, and to be taken to places where it can be used to better advantage. I hope that when the President calls for the "Contents" and the "Not-Contents" there will not be one "Not-Content."

HON. A. J. CARTER: I have not spoken hitherto on either of these railways, because I am so heartily in accord with both of them that it is quite unnecessary for me to reiterate what I have previously said on many public occasions. The Great Western Railway particularly affects a certain portion of the population, and as it was very ably supported by those who are more particularly interested in it, I did not speak upon it, although I was prepared to vote in favour of it. This coastal line is more peculiarly a national undertaking, because it affects the very well-being of the nation. The line will give us railway connection, not only from Brisbane but from the Southern States, right

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through to the far North in case of war. Without this means of communication we might not be able to provide our own people in the North with food in the event of a sudden outbreak of war; but, when the North Coast Railway is constructed, we shall be able to carry foodstuffs to the North, if we can carry nothing else. This railway will not only carry the produce of the far North, but it will carry a considerable passenger traffic, which is the most profitable kind of traffic we have on any of our railways. It will carry the passenger traffic from the North right to the South of Queensland, and enable the travelling public to make the whole journey to the Southern States by rail. For that reason, this railway is a better speculation from a financial point of view than the Great Western Railway. With regard to the Great Western Railway, we have to regard that from a national point of view, and to remember that it was owing to the non-existence of such a railway that we lost 14,000,000 sheep and 3,000,000 or 4,000,000 cattle during the great drought. The capital value represented by the stock then lost would easily cover the cost of extending a railway to any part of Australia. But I wish just now to speak more particularly on this coastal railway. Fortunately for us, at a time when we were not able to undertake the building of certain intermediate railways, the people themselves, with that independence which always characterises the pioneer, obtained from Parliament permission to build those railways. The very fact that they obtained that permission and built the railways showed that they were satisfied that the lines would pay ultimately, and the fact that they were willing to undertake the responsibility of constructing the lines should have been sufficient to convince the Government that it would be a good thing for the State to build the lines, since they must inevitably form part of the pathway to the North. The Government now realise the value of those railways from this point of view, and therefore propose to purchase certain lines built by local authorities. This railway scheme does not really require any argument to support it. Its advantages are obvious. The Government now recognise that it is desirable that they should acquire lines built by the people themselves, so that the nation may get the full benefit of them, not only because this North Coast Railway will open up certain lands which will bring very considerable profit to the State, but also because it is of national importance in view of the trouble which I fear is looming in the near future, when it will enable us to feed our Northern people and conduct them to places of safety. I know I am a little Cassandra-like in speaking in this way, but I feel very strongly that in a very short time Australia will be put to the greatest straits to protect itself. It is no good pooling the matter. I feel that the Commonwealth Government have some knowledge that we do not possess in this matter, or they would not have dealt with the subject in the strenuous manner they did in the Defence Act, which makes military service compulsory on all citizens, except those who are grey-haired. Personally, I think that the danger of invasion is a real one, and that is why I am prepared to support this railway on national grounds. I am also prepared to support it because I believe it will be a thoroughly paying project, and because I believe it will add very much

to the comfort, convenience, and safety of the travelling public. Indeed, it appears to me that this line has everything in its favour. At one time there was a proposal made to link up the towns at a greater distance from the coast, but I think the scheme propounded by the Government is a very much broader and more common-sense scheme. I have always advocated that the connection should be made nearer the coast, for the reasons I have already given in support of this project. A scheme of this kind has been supported by the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce for a long time, and I have been consistent and persistent in my advocacy of it, so that it was quite unnecessary for me to have said anything on the present occasion. Still, for the sake of emphasising my position in the matter, I felt that it was fitting that I should say a few words on the subject, and intimate that the scheme has my hearty approval on economic and national grounds.

HON. F. I. POWER: I should like to place on record my hearty approval of this particular line. I am not prepared to say that, in my judgment, it is going to do anything like the good the Great Western Railway will do. At the same time, I think it will open up a great deal of country; and I do not believe that any man in this Chamber who has given any thought to the matter has any doubt that it will be a success, if not at once, in the near future. I was pleased to hear the President's speech, and I think he deserves the thanks of the House for having called attention to certain questions which arise in connection with this Bill. With regard to the purchase of the Ayr Tramway, I do not think the Government have any right to expect that the tramway should be handed over to them for the balance of the loan that is due to the Treasury. It might have been a wise thing to have enacted that at the time the Act was passed, but, unless the Government have the right under a statute to take over the tramway on such terms, I do not think they have any legal or moral right to insist on such a condition. It appears to me that the loan for this tramway is not in any different position from a loan for waterworks or any other public work. It may be that the tramway board have opened up the district by means of the tramway, and in that way benefited from their enterprise, so that the line is now more valuable than when it was built; but I think they are entitled, like any other body or individual, to the increased value of their property. Another matter the President brought under our notice is the position of public bodies which have obtained loans from the Government and have failed to meet their interest and redemption payments. I do not think there is any serious danger from that source. Although, at first blush, it might appear that the Government—not this Government, but past Governments—have not done their duty in forcing municipal bodies to pay up interest and redemption, still it must be remembered that there are two sides to the question. I know of one shire council which had not been very long in existence when a flood came and caused £3,000 worth of damage to bridges, apart from the damage done to roads and culverts. It is only natural that, when a local authority meets with adversity of that sort, which may cause it to fall into arrears with its payments of

interest and redemption, the whole circumstances should be taken into consideration by the Government. I am not advocating that they should be allowed to get into arrears extensively. At the same time, I would point out that the Government have a mortgage, which is a first charge on the income of local authorities, so that there is not the slightest chance of their suffering any loss in connection with advances made from the public funds. I could give you another instance in connection with the Noosa Shire Council. That council had no rates, and was not formed more than a fortnight, when a flood carried away a bridge which cost them nearly £600. It is only natural that a local authority so circumstanced should get into arrears, but, as I have already pointed out, the Government have good security for their money. If the assets of local authorities were less than their loan obligations, the position would be serious; but I do not think that is the case with any local authority in Queensland. Therefore, I do not think there is any serious difficulty to be apprehended from that. There is a much more serious difficulty which this railway may have to encounter, and that is

[8 p.m.] the rivalry of the sea. But there are other hon. members who know a great deal more about that than I do. The Hon. Mr. Fahey has all his life been connected with the coast and with shipping, as well as other hon. members, and they evidently do not fear anything of that sort. Therefore, it is not fair for one who knows less than they do to suggest that. I think that we are to be congratulated that this railway has been brought forward, and I believe that any pessimistic views which have been entertained will be dispelled in time.

HON. A. H. BARLOW: If no hon. member desires to speak, I will briefly reply. I would like to say that I listened with great attention to Sir Arthur Morgan, both from his inherent ability and from the fact that he was my old chief. There is no reason on earth why he, as Lieutenant-Governor or as President of this House, if he has anything to say to the public, should not say it.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. A. H. BARLOW: Here is a memorandum initiated by the Treasurer himself, in which he states—

Under section 13 of Railways Act of 1906 the Commissioner may levy and collect a rate of the required amount, if the local authority refuses or neglects to levy its portion, and has for that purpose all the powers of a local authority.

As to existing arrears, there has hitherto been a defect in the powers of the Government to collect arrears from defaulting local authorities, but this is remedied in the Local Authorities Act Amendment Bill (section 41) by the power to appoint a receiver, and it is the intention of the Government to act on that power as soon as the Bill becomes law. This, with the Commissioner's powers under section 13 as above, will give full authority.

I recommend local authorities to post that up in their offices. In regard to the Ayr Tramway, there are some few additional facts. The fear was expressed by the President that the permanent way was not in a proper state. I have a report from the board which says—

The Ayr Tramway has been maintained in good running order. It has been examined from time to time by the Commissioner's own engineers, and the Commissioner has always satisfied himself that the line was kept in a safe condition. The board has renewed sleepers where necessary, and the

*Hon. A. H. Barlow.]*

Commissioner is satisfied that renewals have not been neglected on account of the prospect of selling the line to the Government.

It is true that some six years ago the board offered the line to the Government if relieved of their liability, but the Government of the day did not think it advisable to accept the offer, and it lapsed. The line is now in a very different position, however, as then it was earning £5 5s. 4d. per cent., and now it is earning over 11 per cent.

It is not as though the Ayr Tramway Board were going to put this solatium in their pockets. It is going to the three municipalities that form the joint board, and I think it would be rather hard to appropriate this tramway, and say, "We will wipe off your debts, and take your tramway in default." With regard to paying any claims of this kind, I am informed that the Mulgrave Tramway has offered their concern to the Government for £85,000, which is about the cost price. While the note of caution that the President has sounded is all right, I do not think we need be afraid. I would not advocate it if I was afraid. At the same time, I repeat that the hon. gentleman has a perfect right if he has got anything to say to the public to say it. The position he occupies should not in any way hamper him from bearing testimony in regard to any such matter.

Question—That the Bill be now read a second time—put and passed.

#### COMMITTEE.

(*Hon. P. MacPherson in the chair.*)

Clauses 1 to 9, inclusive, put and passed.

On clause 10—"Provisions as to construction"—

HON. W. H. CAMPBELL: On the second reading he had drawn attention to this clause. He mentioned that it contemplated to start work from the different extensions at once, and the President, in his remarks, said that would be almost impossible, because there would be five plants required on this line, four for the railways which were coming forward, and one for the Great Western Railway. He noticed on looking through this clause again that it provided that the construction should be commenced "as nearly as may be simultaneously." That would give latitude to the Commissioner, who would not be compelled to start simultaneously at every point.

Clause 11, and schedule, put and passed.

The House resumed. The ACTING CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment, and the report was adopted.

#### THIRD READING.

The Bill was read a third time, and ordered to be returned to the Legislative Assembly, by message in the usual form.

### BLACKBUTT TO YARRAMAN RAILWAY.

#### PLANS RECEIVED FROM THE ASSEMBLY.

The PRESIDENT announced the receipt of a message from the Assembly, forwarding plans, section, and book of reference of the above railway to the Legislative Council for their approval.

#### APPOINTMENT OF SELECT COMMITTEE.

HON. A. H. BARLOW: I ask leave to move, without notice—

1. That the plan, section, and book of reference of the proposed railway extension from Blackbutt

[*Hon. A. H. Barlow.*

to Yarraman, in length 14 miles 62 chains, as received by message from the Legislative Assembly this day, be referred to a Select Committee.

2. That such committee have power to send for persons and papers, and leave to sit during any adjournment of the Council, and that it consist of the following members:—Mr. Clewett, Mr. Fahey, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Stevens, Mr. O'Sullivan, and the mover.

The object in having two Ministers is in case one is unable to attend.

The PRESIDENT: Is it the pleasure of the Council that the motion be submitted without notice?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question put and passed.

### RIGHTS IN WATER AND WATER CONSERVATION AND UTILIZATION BILL.

#### RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—CONSIDERATION OF POSTPONED CLAUSES.

On clause 4—"Interpretation"—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said that the Hon. Mr. Thynne had an amendment to move to eliminate the definition of "bank of a watercourse," but that definition was necessary in consequence of subsequent provisions in the Bill.

HON. A. NORTON understood that the Hon. Mr. Thynne's objection was to exclude from the definition lands that were under water sometimes for weeks at a time after a flood. The existence of such flooded lands induced people to take up the land, because it provided feed for their stock when the grass on the rest of the country had perished.

HON. A. J. CARTER: The same condition applied in the case that the Hon. Mr. Norton spoke of as applied in the part of England from which the Hon. Mr. Davey came. There were flooded paddocks in that country every winter, but the lands so flooded would never be defined as the banks of a watercourse. The definition was perfectly clear.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There was another amendment standing in the name of the Hon. Mr. Thynne, and, as the hon. member did not seem to have requested anybody to move it in his absence, he (Mr. O'Sullivan) would move it himself, but with the addition of the words "not being artesian," so that it should not include water from an artesian well. He moved the insertion of the following definition, to follow the definition of "stock":—

"Spring"—Any spring of water, not being artesian, naturally rising to and flowing over the surface of the land.

Amendment agreed to.

HON. A. NORTON said that the definition of "watercourse" read—

A river, stream, or creek in which water flows in a natural channel, whether perennially or intermittently.

The word "intermittently" would include flood waters, and he thought the definition would be improved if they added the words "but does not include country that is flooded by overflow in time of flood."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That amendment is not necessary, as the Bill does not refer to flood waters.

HON. F. I. POWER: On behalf of the Hon. Mr. Brown, he moved the omission of the words "whether perennially or intermittently," with the view of inserting the words, "for not less than fourteen consecutive days during each year." After discussing the matter with the Hon. Mr. Brown, he perceived that it was a difficult matter to deal with, as there were many creeks which only ran in time of flood.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The amendment will cut out 90 per cent. of the creeks of Queensland.

HON. F. I. POWER: It would cut out some big rivers too. Under clause 54 a man was liable to a penalty and even to imprisonment if he permitted certain things to get into a watercourse, and it was necessary to draw a distinction between a creek and a gully. There were plenty of dry gullies that were impassable for hours after a thunderstorm, and if a man deposited something in one of them he might be sent to goal, because it might prevent the creek from running at some time later. With regard to the amendment, there would be a difficulty in deciding whether the water flowed for fourteen days consecutively during each year, because it would necessitate some person watching to ascertain whether the water did flow consecutively for that number of days. He would prefer to make the amendment read, "in which water continues to flow," if it would be acceptable to the Attorney-General.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL would be only too glad to accept the amendment, if he thought it would improve the Bill, but he did not think it would be any improvement. The definition of a watercourse which was given in the Bill was the very best the draftsman, with the assistance of the Minister [8.50 p.m.] in another place, could devise, and he believed that, if they departed from that definition, they would get into difficulties. If the amendment was adopted, it would be necessary for someone to watch a watercourse for fourteen days or longer to see whether water flowed through it for not less than fourteen consecutive days in each year, and that would be ridiculous.

HON. W. H. CAMPBELL: If a grazing farmer or selector wished to build a dam or tank, he would build it in a watercourse, probably a watercourse in which water did not flow perennially; and if the clause were passed without the amendment he might be prevented from doing that. How were they going to settle the Western country if they prevented settlers making dams or tanks in watercourses which only contained water after rain?

HON. A. NORTON: In many watercourses the water sank below the level of the bed of the watercourse in dry seasons, and the only way in which water could be got there was by sinking a trough in the sand below the water level, but if this clause was passed even that means of obtaining water might be denied the settler.

HON. A. A. DAVEY thought the definition was very clear and quite satisfactory—certainly clearer than it would be with the amendment.

HON. F. I. POWER: The amendment was proposed in order to make clear the difference between a watercourse in which water flowed intermittently, and which in dry weather might be crossed dryshod, and a watercourse in which water flowed in ordinary seasons.

No sane man would call a watercourse a creek if water flowed into it only intermittently.

HON. W. H. CAMPBELL: Out in the Western country there were many creeks which were quite dry in dry weather, and in those people made tanks or dams which were supplied with water during flood time. A man must have some sort of place like that in which to make a dam, and if he were debarred from obtaining a supply of water it would be a great hardship to the selector.

HON. A. NORTON: Water from the country between two spurs ran down a gully, which might be termed its natural course, and under the definition in the Bill that would be a watercourse, though it did not hold the water for any length of time.

HON. B. FAHEY: If the Government were going to have the control of all water, they should not have their power restricted in the manner proposed in the amendment. Their object would be to conserve water and prevent waste, and they are not likely to interfere with a man who was endeavouring to conserve water in the way described by the Attorney-General.

HON. A. NORTON: The Government were not likely to interfere with men conserving water in that way, but the officers they employed might do so without the Government being aware of the circumstances or knowing whether such interference was justified or not.

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

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 20—"Power to levy rates"—

HON. C. F. NIELSON moved that the following proviso be added to the clause:—

Provided that in case of lands which have been supplied with water for irrigation prior to the passing of this Act such lands shall not, so long as the private irrigation works are maintained in effective operation by the owner thereof, be included in an irrigation area for the purpose of rating, except by the consent of the owners of such lands.

Under the existing Irrigation Act of 1891, of which this Bill was largely a reprint, lands which were irrigated from private irrigation works were not liable to be rated by the water authority for the district, even though the land was included in the water area. This Bill omitted that provision, and made provision for issuing licenses to persons for ten—and with the amendment of the Council for twenty—one—years to use water for irrigation purposes; but at the same time made such person liable to pay the water rate. He thought it was unfair that a person who had obtained a license, and had expended a considerable amount of money in establishing irrigation works, should be compelled to pay a water rate for water which he did not use and did not require, and that was his reason for proposing the amendment.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said this was a clause which he could not accept. The man who objected to taxation under this clause was in the same position as the man who objected to pay water rates to the water authority because he had a tank on his own property. The clause as drawn, apart from that radical defect, had also this defect: It did not say anything about the value of the irrigation works. A man might have a windmill which cost him £50, and might be supplying a property which cost £1,000, and that expenditure of £50 on some tin-pot irrigation

*Hon. T. O'Sullivan.]*

works might exonerate him from the payment of a tax to the water authority, while all the other people around might have to pay the tax. It was a most unfair amendment, and he could not accept it.

HON. A. GIBSON did not agree with the Attorney-General on this matter. A man might have to spend £1,000 on an irrigation plant, and be utilising water which was formerly running away to the sea, when nobody else would do it, and he did not see why a man should be forced to pay for it. He thought the amendment was a very fair one.

HON. C. F. NIELSON pointed out that they had passed a clause allowing private works to exist, and the Bill provided for other licenses. Under the present Irrigation Act the Governor in Council had power to grant licenses to persons to take water out of streams.

HON. C. S. MCGHIE: The water does not belong to him—the Government claim the water.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: That was not the point of the discussion. The point was this: The Government under the present clause, by granting licenses to persons, induced those persons to spend money in the erection of irrigation works. The second point was that the House passed a clause the other night, empowering the Government or the irrigation board to resume these works at any time they liked. The third point was that, having induced the people to spend money, and having provided that the irrigation board could resume all these plants, until they were resumed it was a fair thing that the land which these plants were serving should not be rated. Let the Governor in Council resume the plants first.

HON. B. FAHEY: They are using the public property all the time, and you want them to use it without paying for it.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: Surely the hon. member did not need much convincing on this? All the public property which was being used was the water. The rate which a water authority put on was not to get paid for the water at all; it was to be paid for the plant and machinery which was necessary for handling the water. There was nothing added on for the value of the water.

HON. W. H. CAMPBELL: Suppose a man wants to put an irrigation plant on the other side of the river, under the Bill he has to pay rates.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: To the water board.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: He would not have to pay if this amendment was passed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Of course he has.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: It was no good to induce anyone to spend money in the erection of a plant, and then come along and rate him. They should resume their plants before they compelled them to pay the general fee.

HON. B. FAHEY: Does the hon. member, in his amendment, refer to a person who has a watering plant now without a license?

HON. C. F. NIELSON: The other night they licensed everybody who had an existing plant for twenty-one years, or until it was resumed. So long as that clause stood they ought to follow it; but if that clause was not accepted this could go out too. To leave the clause they passed the other night without this would be inconsistent. Under the law

[*Hon. T. O'Sullivan.*]

passed twenty-one years ago, they induced certain persons to spend money, and thereby assured them that so long as they kept their works effectively operated they would not be rated under a public scheme. He wanted that right maintained, and especially schemes under the inducement which the Act provided, and he thought it was perfectly fair.

HON. W. H. CAMPBELL: The House had adopted the principle that the Crown should hold all the water in the State, whether it was in a dam, artesian well, or sub-artesian well, as well as in rivers. They were placed under the water board, which had power to rate the land which was using that water. If a man had a pumping plant already, and was using that water, why should he not pay?

HON. C. F. NIELSON: Because the other people are getting the use of his plant.

HON. W. H. CAMPBELL: The hon. member might as well say that he had a right to the artesian water. The Government were claiming the water.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: They do not claim the water; they only claim the control of the water.

HON. W. H. CAMPBELL: If a man was growing sugar-cane or maize, and wanted to develop the returns from his crop, he put his irrigation plant down. If by putting an irrigation plant down he could get 20 tons of sugar to the acre, instead of 10 tons, he was doing the public a benefit. It was just the same in all other cases of irrigation. The water belonged to the whole of the public, and, therefore, he should pay the rates on the land the same as other people.

HON. F. I. POWER could not quite understand the attitude of the Hon. Mr. Campbell. Supposing a man spent £50,000 in erecting an irrigation plant, that plant might be of enormous value to the State in providing labour and adding to

[9 p.m.] production. If a water authority borrowed money, the land within the water area would be rated. The amendment would protect the man who had erected his own plant; and he ought to be protected, because he would not want to use any of the water provided by the works of the water authority. It was not the water that the rate was levied to pay for, but the irrigation works for which money had been borrowed.

HON. P. MURPHY said that he had seen large irrigation works in California, and they were in precisely the same position as the Brisbane Waterworks. In Brisbane a man might have a tank in his backyard, and that was the equivalent of the private irrigation plant; but the possession of that tank did not prevent the water board from levying a rate upon his land. Whether he used the water or not, he had to pay a rate. The irrigation authorities in California carried their pipes to the boundary of a man's land, and he had to put in the pipes and drains himself, just as a man in Brisbane had to put the water pipes into his house. If a man had a private plant, it would still be useful to him.

HON. A. GIBSON thought the Hon. Mr. Murphy was wrong. His firm had spent £25,000 in putting in a plant to raise 450,000 gallons of water per hour from a shaft sunk in the bed of the Burnett River to a height of 150 feet. They had done that for their own advantage, but they had also

done it for the national advantage. Probably he would not have been there that evening if Mr. Mead, Mr. Henderson, and other gentlemen who understood something about water had not had a look at that and other schemes in the State. After having gone to such an expense, it would be very hard if his firm were compelled to pay someone else for putting a plant somewhere near their plant. Until a water authority was constituted for the Burnett River, his firm should not be interfered with.

HON. W. H. CAMPBELL: You will not be interfered with for twenty-one years.

HON. A. GIBSON: There was nothing about twenty-one years in the Bill. The only provision in the Bill that dealt with the matter provided that he must apply for a license within twelve months, whereas the owners of artesian bores were protected for ten years.

HON. B. FAHEY: An amendment has been passed increasing the time you will be protected against interference by the Government from ten to twenty-one years.

HON. A. GIBSON: He had not been present when the Bill was last under consideration, and he did not know that any such amendment had been made.

HON. P. MURPHY: You will get more than the value out of your plant in twenty-one years.

HON. B. FAHEY: It was very strange how circumstances altered cases. A few weeks back they had had the strongest debate that had ever taken place in that Chamber on a matter of equity. A certain section of the community educated their children religiously—

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think the hon. member is in order in referring to a previous debate.

HON. B. FAHEY: He was only referring to it to draw a parallel in answer to the Hon. Mr. Gibson's plea for consideration on the ground of equity. Certain other sections of the community compelled by an Act of Parliament those who educated at their own cost their own children to help to pay for the education of the children of other sections of the community too. The hon. member supported that law, and yet he was now complaining that he had erected an irrigation plant on the banks of the Burnett River, and Parliament was authorising his neighbours to combine to erect another plant in the public interest and to make the hon. member contribute towards the cost of it. Was that not the identical principle which the hon. member had advocated so strongly himself in connection with the Bill to which he had referred? He had some sympathy with the hon. member's position, and he would be inclined to support him but for the fact that the Bill was intended to apply to Queensland, and not the Burnett River only. He knew a case in which a man was pumping water out of a watercourse which was supplied with water from a bore, and that man was utilising that water without paying anything for it. If a water board were constituted in that district, under this amendment that man would escape. The water in the Burnett River was as much the property of the Government as the water from that bore. He had no doubt the hon. member's personal interests were influencing him, but the principle

might operate very viciously in other instances throughout the State if the amendment should be accepted by the House.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: With regard to the argument that every landholder in a city had to pay the rate levied to meet the cost of water supply, he would point out that when a water authority constructed a reservoir, and reticulated the streets with mains, every allotment which those mains passed was enhanced in value, and it was therefore a proper thing that the owner should pay rates.

HON. P. MURPHY: But there may be no enhancement in value.

HON. C. F. NIELSON: If the allotment was worth anything at all there would be more inducement to build a house on it, and, if there was a house on it already, the insurance premium on that house would drop 25 per cent. or more. The fact that a man had a tank in his backyard did not affect the question, because that tank might be required in any case. All he proposed by the amendment was that when a person received a license from the Minister, and erected irrigation works for the irrigation of his own land, and maintained those works "in effective operation," he should be exempt from the water rate, and he considered that that was a very reasonable proposition. The amendment he submitted was taken word for word from the Irrigation Act of 1891, and he saw no reason for omitting it from the present Bill.

HON. A. A. DAVEY had every sympathy with the amendment. The object of the Bill, as he understood it, was to provide for the conservation of water by placing all water under the control of the Government, whose duty it would be to see that water was effectively used, and not wasted. He did not see why a man who had made provision for irrigating his own land, with the sanction of the Minister, should be compelled to assist in paying for the cost of supplying water to other people's land. It appeared to him that such a rate would be as inequitable as the present system of levying water rates on floor measurements which prevailed in Brisbane, and he would vote for the amendment.

HON. A. H. BARLOW: While he certainly sympathised with any one who had erected large irrigation works, he could not disguise from himself that in this matter they must be governed by principle. He had an unfenced allotment in Toowong, the water main passed that allotment, and he was charged water rates on the land, not because he wanted the water in case of fire or because of the fact that the main passing the land enhanced its value, but because it was considered that every bit of land in the area should contribute towards the expense of putting down the mains. The same principle was applicable to the case under consideration.

HON. B. FAHEY pointed out that not only had people in cities and towns to pay water rates, whether they used the water or not, but they had also to pay a sanitary rate, even though they kept their own premises perfectly clean. Anyone erecting an irrigation plant did so purely in his own interest, and he would probably reap good [9.30 p.m.] profitable interest on his outlay, so that the fact that he had irrigation works of his own was no reason for exempting him from the general water rate payable in his district.

*Hon. B. Fahey.]*

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

## CONTENTS, 7.

Hon. A. A. Davey	Hon. A. Norton
„ A. Gibson	„ F. I. Power
„ C. F. Marks	„ W. F. Taylor
„ C. F. Nielson	

Teller: Hon. C. F. Marks.

## NOT-CONTENTS, 7.

Hon. A. H. Barlow	Hon. C. S. McGhie
„ W. H. Campbell	„ P. Murphy
„ A. J. Carter	„ T. O'sullivan
„ B. Fahey	

Teller: Hon. B. Fahey.

The CHAIRMAN: The voting being equal, I vote with the "Contents." The question is resolved in the affirmative.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

On clause 34—"Wells commenced before commencement of Act"—

HON. F. I. POWER had an amendment to move, on behalf of the Hon. Mr. Brown, which he thought should receive favourable consideration. It seemed to him a very reasonable amendment. Subclause (3) read—

This section shall not apply to any artesian well the construction whereof was commenced prior to the first day of October, one thousand nine hundred and ten.

He proposed the insertion, after "commenced," of the words "or contract for the construction whereof was entered into."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said the only objection he could see to this was that it would open the door to people who wanted to get the benefit of this clause saying that the contract had been entered into; whereas, if it was necessary to get the benefit after the well should have been actually commenced, they knew exactly where they were. He thought the amendment would not be prudent, and he would prefer to keep the clause as it was.

Amendment negatived.

On clause 40—"Waste of water of artesian wells"—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL had an amendment, which was somewhat after the effect to which the Hon. Mr. Plant had given notice. He moved the insertion, after "Act," on line 36, of "or the construction whereof was commenced prior to the first day of October, one thousand nine hundred and ten."

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

On clause 54—"Pollution of water in water-courses and lakes"—

HON. F. I. POWER: He sincerely trusted that in the important amendment he had to move in this clause he should have the support of the Council. There were many goldfields in Queensland, and Gympie in particular. They had a large creek running into the river, and also several small creeks running into the Mary River. On one creek there were four mills discharging their sludge—their sludge went into the watercourse itself. Lower down there was one of the biggest mills in the whole of Australia, with altogether 230 head of stampers, which were depositing their tailings on the low-lying ground, and these tailings and the sludge attached to them got away to the river in flood time, in spite of every attempt being

[*Hon. F. I. Power.*

made to keep them there. If proceedings were taken under that clause, every mill on Gympie would be closed, and many thousands of people were dependent upon those mills. He supposed every hon. member except himself had received a circular letter regarding the deposits of sludge in the river at Gympie, but it was remarkable that, although that sort of thing had been going on for forty years, nobody had ever attempted to initiate proceedings on the ground of damage sustained by riparian owners or anybody else. An alderman in Maryborough stated that he knew of 15 acres that were absolutely destroyed by sand, but when he (Mr. Power) wrote to him on the subject the reply he got was that the alderman in question had found that there was not a word of truth in the allegation. Members of shire councils between Gympie and Maryborough had positively declined to furnish particulars of cases in which damage had been done. The municipal council of Gympie had had the matter brought before it on several occasions, but had declined to interfere, as it would mean the shutting up of a big industry.

HON. A. J. CARTER: Where does the stuff go to?

HON. F. I. POWER: Most of it went out to sea. Another charge that was made was that some cattle were poisoned by cyanide in the water; but no sane man would keep an employee who allowed enough cyanide to escape to poison a mosquito. He lived nearer the river than the people who were grumbling, and he was in a position to say that there was no justification for the statements that were made in the circular referred to. He did not know who was responsible for the extraordinary production, but it contained a number of statements that were absurd, and it failed to prove any case of injury. The law, as laid down in the Mining Act of 1898, should not be interfered with, and under that Act a millowner could not be penalised unless injury was proved.

HON. W. F. TAYLOR: If the stream is not polluted, no injury can be done.

HON. F. I. POWER: It might cause an obstruction in the stream without doing an injury, but this clause rendered a man liable to a fine and to imprisonment if the stream were merely obstructed. He moved the insertion, after the word "same," in line 57, of the words—

Nothing in this Act shall apply to any goldfield or mineral field unless the warden sitting as a warden's court shall decide that the person so conveying such sludge, mud, earth, gravel, or other matter likely to so pollute, obstruct, or interfere with the same is causing danger, injury, obstruction, or inconvenience to any highway or to any public or private interest.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The object of clause 54 was to preserve watercourses from obstruction or pollution. The Hon. Mr. Power had referred to certain rights granted under the Mining Act, but the amendment went rather too far, because it did not impose any restriction upon a person putting anything he liked into a watercourse until somebody went to the warden and proved damage. He had consulted the Parliamentary Draftsman, who had drafted an amendment which might meet the hon. member's wishes. The amendment read—

Provided that in any goldfield or mineral field the warden sitting in the warden's court may grant a permit for the deposit of sludge, tailings, or

other mining débris in such channels or water-courses as will, in his opinion, be the most convenient place for the disposal of the same.

HON. F. I. POWER was sorry to say the amendment did not meet the case. It was practically the same as the clause in the Bill. If the warden would not grant a permit, the works would have to be shut down. If the Attorney-General would not accept the amendment he had proposed, he would withdraw it, and move it in another form.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

HON. F. I. POWER moved the addition of the following amendment to the clause:—

The provisions of this section shall not apply to any watercourses within the boundary of any goldfield nor affect any of the provisions of the Mining Act of 1898, or regulations thereunder, or any future Acts relating to goldfields.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

The Council resumed; and the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with amendments.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, the Bill was recommitted for the purpose of reconsidering clauses 5 and 6, new clause 10, clause 10 (now 11), and clause 12.

#### RECOMMITTAL.

On clause 5—"Natural water vests in the Crown"—

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Certain amendments had been made in this clause which took away from the Crown the control of subterranean water supply, and prevented the Crown from going on to river beds for the purpose of erecting weirs, [10 p.m.] dams, or other waterworks. It was undesirable that those provisions should be retained, and he proposed to omit them, and restore the clause to its original form. He moved that the following words, which had been omitted from the clause by the Committee, be reinserted:—

And it is hereby declared that where a watercourse, which is generally adopted as forming a boundary of parcels of land, intersects at any place a parcel of land alienated by the Crown, whether before or after the commencement of this Act, the bed and banks of such watercourse within such last-mentioned parcel of land shall be deemed to have remained the property of the Crown and not to have passed with the land so alienated.

Amendment agreed to.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Another amendment made to the clause was the addition of the following proviso:—

Provided that this Act shall not apply to the water flowing from any spring until it has passed beyond the boundaries of the land belonging to the owner of the land whereon such spring exists; and it shall also not apply to any subterranean source of water supply from which the water does not flow naturally, but has to be raised by pumping or other artificial means.

He proposed to allow the first part of the proviso to remain, but to omit the words "and it shall also not apply to any subterranean source of water supply from which the water does not flow naturally, but has to be raised by pumping or other artificial means." Since they had discussed that amendment he had looked up Mr. Elwood Mead's report, and he found that Mr. Mead pointed out that it was absolutely necessary that the Crown should have control of subterranean water supply. The circumstances of Toowoomba showed that this was necessary, because there the town

supply was obtained from a subterranean source, and there were other places similarly situated. The point that the Hon. Mr. Thynne insisted upon when he moved the amendment was that there should be no interference with a spring until it had passed the boundaries of the land belonging to the person on whose land the spring existed. He moved the omission of the words he had quoted.

HON. W. H. CAMPBELL: The point from which the Hon. Mr. Brown and the Hon. Mr. Thynne fought in connection with this clause was that subterranean sources of water supply, or rather sub-artesian water, should not be placed under the control of the Crown; and if the amendment now proposed was adopted they would lose all they had gained by the amendment.

HON. A. NORTON was afraid that if the clause was amended as proposed it would then apply to all the wells in Toowoomba. A well had been sunk at Gabbinbar just in front of the house, and water was raised from that well by windmill. Indeed, there were dozens of places in Toowoomba where the water supply was obtained from a well.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There is not the slightest intention of interfering with them.

HON. A. NORTON: If the Government did not intend to interfere with those wells, it was all right, but they ought to have an assurance to that effect.

HON. W. H. CAMPBELL thought it was unfair to proceed with such an important alteration in an amendment which had been carried by a large majority.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Carried in a thin House by a small majority.

HON. W. H. CAMPBELL: The mover of the amendment, the Hon. Mr. Thynne, and the Hon Mr. Brown, who supported it very strongly, were absent: and he thought the Attorney-General should not go on with his proposed amendment that evening. If he did, he (Mr. Campbell) would feel inclined to call for a division.

HON. W. F. TAYLOR pointed out that it was unusual to propose to amend an amendment which had been already passed in the way proposed by the Attorney-General, and it was establishing a bad precedent.

HON. W. H. CAMPBELL: It was far better to allow it to go back to the Assembly, as it had to go back in any case.

HON. W. F. TAYLOR: It should not be gone on with to-night, when so few members of the Committee were present. He certainly would not try to form a quorum to accept this amendment.

HON. A. NORTON said that this was practically undoing work which was done the other night with the full concurrence of the House in Committee.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If a division was called for, he could not go on.

HON. A. J. CARTER said it seemed to him that this was an unnecessary obstruction, because there was a vast difference between an ordinary well that was sunk and a bore which was put down to strike a subterranean cavern. It was a great pity if, through misconception, they could not come to some decision to-night. It was not likely that any Government would seek to interfere with a well put down by a

*Hon. A. J. Carter.]*

man for his private use, any more than they would interfere with the proper use of that water.

HON. W. H. CAMPBELL: Why are they so anxious to keep it in the Bill, if they are not anxious to interfere with it?

HON. A. J. CARTER: Because the Attorney-General had pointed out, as in the case of Toowoomba alone, they would be quite unable to establish waterworks, because it would interfere with the water.

HON. A. NORTON said they had sunk for water at Toowoomba to 250 feet deep, and they pumped the water up with windmills. They were to be prevented from going on with that because the water supply of Toowoomba was not sufficient.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: So they should, if the water is not sufficient.

HON. B. FAHEY said that, as the Hon. Mr. Campbell had said that if it was put to a vote he would call for a division, they were wasting time in going on.

HON. A. A. DAVEY hoped that the Hon. Mr. Campbell would not call for a division, so that they might settle this matter. It was not likely, if we placed the control of these artesian wells under the State, the State would do anything that would interfere with the development of the country in the West, where they were spending £4,000,000 or £5,000,000 to build railways. He hoped the Bill would be finished to-night. The Hon. Mr. Thynne knew the matter was to be brought on to-night, and he should have been here if he was anxious about it.

HON. W. H. CAMPBELL: An important clause having been passed in a full House, he did not think it was fair to those hon. gentlemen who did not expect that it would come on this evening that this should be passed in a House in which there were not sufficient members to make a quorum.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said he would not press it in view of the hon. member's statement. They had already dealt with the clause where a watercourse intersected the land of a private individual. The first paragraph of clause 6 which originally read—

Where a watercourse or lake forms the boundary wholly or in part of a parcel of land alienated by the Crown before the commencement of this Act, the bed and banks thereof shall be deemed to have remained the property of the Crown, and not to have passed with the land so alienated—

had been struck out, and he thought they should restore it, because it was lost on the casting vote of the Chairman. If hon. members had no objection he would put that in, and postpone the question of the subterranean source of water. They could let the Bill go to the House as it was now, and they could deal with it later on. With the permission of the Committee, he would withdraw his present amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the Committee that the amendment be withdrawn?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Amendment withdrawn accordingly.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL then moved that the first paragraph of clause 6, which had previously been struck out, be restored.

HON. W. F. TAYLOR said he had the same objection to it as he had stated on a previous occasion.

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HON. A. NORTON objected to adopting a clause which took away a right which was stated as having been given in connection with the purchase of land. He did not intend to oppose the amendment, because he believed that as far as possible a substitute was provided for it in the new clause 8, which protected the rights of the landowners.

Amendment agreed to.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL said there was another consequential amendment. The words—

In any such case, whether of land alienated by the Crown before or after the commencement of this Act, such bed and banks shall be and remain the property of the Crown—

in the 3rd paragraph of clause 6 had been struck out, and must be restored to make the clause read properly. He therefore moved that the words be inserted.

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

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: As there appeared to be a feeling against going on with the Bill any further at present, he would not deal with the other clauses to deal with which he had asked to have the Bill recommitted. He therefore moved that the Chairman leave the chair, and report the Bill with further amendments.

Question put and passed.

The Council resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill with further amendments; and the report was adopted.

#### THIRD READING.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, the Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be returned to the Assembly, by message in the usual form.

#### MILES TOWARDS TAROOM RAILWAY.

##### PLANS RECEIVED FROM ASSEMBLY.

The PRESIDENT announced the receipt of a message from the Assembly, forwarding, for the approval of the Council, the plan, section, and book of reference of the first section of this line to Juandah.

##### REFERENCE TO SELECT COMMITTEE.

On the motion of HON. A. H. BARLOW, the plan, section, and book of reference was referred for inquiry and report to a Select Committee, consisting of the following members:—Messrs. Clewett, Fahey, Murphy, Stevens, Barlow, and O'Sullivan.

#### SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

HON. A. H. BARLOW: I beg to move—That the Council, at its rising, adjourn until Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

HON. A. H. BARLOW: I beg to move—That the Council do now adjourn. I thank the Hon. Mr. Power for not pressing on with the consideration of the Assembly's message on the Mines Regulation Bill. That will be the first business on Tuesday, and then we shall take some of the railways.

Question put and passed.

The Council adjourned at twenty-five minutes to 11 o'clock.